Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

## 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)

**Learner name: Olivia Meeks**

**Learner's University Registration Number: 2117923**

# 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.*

**Contents**

| **Workbook** | **Area of Professional Practice** | **Word count** |
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| Task 1 | **Understanding the Police Officer Role** | **2000** |
| Task 2 | **Communication Skills – social media** | **2000** |
| Task 3 | **Leadership and Team Working** | **2000** |
| Task 4 | **Coaching, Mentoring, Assessment** | **2000** |
| | | |
| | **Bibliography** | |
| | **Total** | **8000** |

## Task 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ANSWER:**

The College of Policing has been critical in the development and improvement of policing in Britain. Professionalising policing in the UK has been on the forefront of the College of Policing's initiative. The recruitment of police constables through the means of degree apprenticeships, the development of policing models and ensuring the professionalism of police officers through policies and procedures has been carefully cultivated and managed by the College of Policing alongside civilian staff, police officers and outside agencies (College of Policing, 2023).

The NDM (National Decision Model) was developed to replace existing and redundant models, but to also ensure police officers carry out their duties in accordance with the values, ethics and risk-aversion that is important to the policing mission (Lander, 2011). The NDM was designed around the importance of The Code of Ethics; nine principles and standards of behaviour that is at the moral core of the policing values. These principles and standards include accountability, fairness, honesty, integrity, leadership, objectivity, openness, respect, and selflessness (Police Executive Research Forum, 2016). These nine principles and standards, that frame the Codes of Ethics, also fuse with the five surrounding elements that were designed to assist officers with critical decision making:

- Information: Gather as much information and intelligence as possible.
- Assessment: Assess all threats and risks and develop a working strategy.

- Powers and policy: What powers and policies are at your disposal?
- Options: What other options or contingencies do you have?
- Action and review: Act and review what has happened (Al-Khouja et al., 2020).

The College of Policing has helped the professionalisation of policing by implementing and reinforcing the importance of the NDM. The College of Policing has ensured that a solid framework for police officers to follow can be used to ensure the quality and professionalism of the police while still working in the best interests of the public (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012).

The NDM is a great example as to how the College of Policing is ensuring that officers need to take greater ownership and leadership when conducting their duties, while also improving their knowledge, tactical skills and better safeguarding themselves and members of the public. (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2012). The College of Policing has ensured that models such as the NDM are designed to be versatile and can be used for officers across all operational fields and at all levels of experience and expertise. Not only has the College of Policing been able to use the NDM to help focus the development and skill sets of individual officers, but the model such as the NDM can be used across the board to help strengthen the professionalism that is necessary throughout police forces across the UK (Neyroud, 2011).

Outside agencies that work closely with the policing services across the UK, have also been influential in progressing the professional standards within the police. Victim support charities and organisations that are independent of the police are often providing essential support and guidance to the very victims that police officers have had direct communication with. Victims affected by all types of crimes often experience a range of emotions and trauma that is often hard for them to express or communicate (Bosma, 2018). Victims will often require additional support, guidance, and validation, which cannot not always be provided by police officers. Victims may also want to express their concerns and criticisms about the way in which the police have handled their investigation, and therefore it is important that a third party that is independent of the police can voice these concerns (Holder, 2019).

The above are reasons why organisations such as Victim Support, a recognised and independent charity that act on the behalf of victims across England and Wales, have been essential in the preservation of victim advocacy and empowerment. Victim Support are actively advocating for the necessities that victims require, which has been highlighted in their Strategy report for 2020 – 2023, such as empowerment, growing crime, victim awareness, and campaigning for effective change within the criminal justice system (Victim Support, 2020).

Independent organisations such as Victim Support work alongside police forces to ensure that any gaps in the communication and support of victims is managed while also recommending and providing further guidance on what victims are expecting or requiring from the police (Birdsall, 2017). There will always be room for improvement within the police, and outside organisations such as Victim Support can ensure that the police are offering a professional and caring service to

victims of crime, while re-establishing levels of confidence and trust within the police and criminal justice system (Bradford, 2011). Outside organisations such as Victim Support ensure that the police are held to a professional standard even when not dealing with the crime directly but with their victims, who should be considered as equally important.

During a particular incident in the last year, my professionalism and knowledge of policies and procedures was used due the severity of the crime and involvement of the public. A colleague and I received an emergency call regarding an injured unknown male who had been run over by vehicle, then beaten with a baseball bat by the driver of the vehicle. All throughout this incident, from the moment the emergency call came through, and until the end of our involvement, I was intentionally using the NDM (National Decision Model) to ensure the safest and most appropriate outcome. Due to the seriousness of the incident, my colleague and I made sure we had as much information and intelligence about the victim, suspect, vehicle, and general incident before attending the scene, therefore completing stage one of the NDM. This ensured that we could approach the scene better prepared and ready for the unexpected.

During stage two, it was important that my colleague and I work together to assess any risks and hazards and develop a plan while driving to the scene. This included discussing what the risks could be if the subject was still present, i.e., Would the subject still have the baseball bat to hand? Is there anyone else involved that could still be a threat to the victim or ourselves? Is anyone else at risk? My colleague and I also strategised as to who would deal with the victim and who would deal with the subject directly as to avoid any cross contamination and to ensure the appropriate chain of custody of any potential evidence (Wüllenweber, 2021). This was essential, because any evidence collected at the scene must be handled with precision and in guidance with police training, therefore personal protection must be always used including gloves and police evidence bags. All evidence was to be handled and documented accordingly so a trail could be established to identify the chain of custody and ensure it was accurate and transparent (Badiye et al., 2023).

On arrival to the scene, the subject was in fact still at the scene and had in his hand a baseball bat and was shouting at the victim who was face down on the path. My colleague and I immediately reverted to Stage two of the NDM as the instant threat was the baseball bat. My colleague and I made sure to approach with our vehicle's blue lights and siren on, to make our presence known to the subject. The subject did acknowledge that we had arrived but after being told several times to put down the baseball bat by myself and my colleague, the subject continued to shout at the victim while holding that bat. Having entered stage three of the NDM, it was important that my colleague and I considered what powers and policies we had available, especially during this high-risk incident. Because of the nature of the incident and it being our moral duty as police officers to protect the public, we felt we were within our powers to deploy our parva spray after sufficiently warning the subject the drop the baseball bat. Now during stage four of the NDM, deploying our parva spray deemed our only option for safely subduing and detaining the subject before any further risks to the victim or public could be identified.

While the subject was being arrested and the victim attended to, members of the public began crowding around. To avoid scene contamination, contamination of the suspect and victim, this is where I had to move the public away from the scene quickly. Some of the public began to film the victim and although this was extremely invasive and frustrating, I had to uphold the professional standard of the police and tell the public to move away in a firm yet non-offensive manner. During these moments, is when it became clear that my role as a police officer very much set myself apart from members of the public, as we are constantly upholding a high standard no matter how serious or high risk the incident is. As officers, we need to be seen as the ones in charge of a situation, and this is what separates us from members of the public.

This incident really highlighted how much more confidence I had in myself when it came to making serious decisions during critical incidents. After nearly three years working as a response officer, and working on a various range of crimes, it became clear that I felt more comfortable attending more critical calls while planning on how to deal with such situations. This is one of the significant changes I have noticed as I have progressed into my final year of probation.

Even though I barely have three years' experience within the role, I am one of the more experienced officers on shift. For the most part, it has been a positive experience having the responsibility of being more senior on shift, and being able to share my experiences, advice, and skills with younger more inexperienced officers (Watkinson-Miley et al., 2022). However, because I am still so new on the job, it becomes difficult to make certain decisions when out on calls when you don't know what to do. Although acting as mentor toward younger officers is a great way to build confidence within myself, it proves difficult and even dangerous when out on calls where you are relying on an inexperienced officer for support (McFarlane, 2016). In such situations where there is a perceived level of danger or I have felt the need for senior support, I have ensured that I reach-back into my chain of command, where appropriate. I have found it important to still acknowledge my own limitations, and any skills or experience shortfalls when it comes to particularly unique or complex situations.

My role as a more experienced officer has only changed by the fact that I may be attending calls with more inexperienced officers and guiding them through the challenges within the role. I still experience the same challenges and responsibilities as more experienced officers and there is now a greater expectation to take on more responsibility with the more experience I gain. This is because from the very beginning, student officers are making decisions and are dealing with crimes and incidents that all officers face. It does not matter how much experience you have, your role as a police officer remains the same. Instead, it is self-confidence and the ability to assist your less experienced colleagues that does change with experience (Wolfe et al., 2022).

I have found this to be commonplace amongst most shifts that I have interacted with. There are very few police officers with experience over five years, and with most of the offices on shift barely in their second year on the job (Burnett et al., 2020). However, it is the inexperienced officers such as myself, that are still having to attend calls or solve crimes no matter our experience, simply because there are

not enough experienced officers available (Hoel, 2020). I have learnt that reverting to and upholding my training, processes, and policies (such as the NDM) in this environment provides me with a structured method and empowers me with the tools to overcome any uncertainty.

Since I have entered my third year of probation, there has been no change in my responsibilities in terms of the type of crimes or calls I am attending. It is merely that I can pass on helpful advice and information onto less experienced officers.

**Word count – 2,052**

## Task 2

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

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

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

*Consider the force policy on using social media for professional information and engagement purposes.*
*What social media platforms are used by policing?*
*What are the benefits and risks of using social media?*

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

**ANSWER:**

Social media has intertwined itself in our everyday lives, and it has increasingly influenced the decisions we make, how we perceive ourselves and others and most importantly, how we absorb the information that it offers (Venegas-Vera et al., 2020). Social media's influence can impact trends, social changes, and the way in which information is channelled and processed by society, whether in a negative or positive manner (Power and Phillips-Wren, 2012). The impact and power that social media can have over individuals and society can be both beneficial and destructive and it is a tool that should utilised but also never underestimated (Chauhan et al., 2021).

Gwent police has a social media policy in place to provide guidance on how social media can be used in a safe and effective manner, to ensure that it represents the force in the best possible light and used responsibly as a valuable tool to better serve the community. Gwent police has highlighted in their policy the importance of using social media in a responsible manner due to the significant influence and perceptions it can have on members of the public (Chen et al., 2020).

Gwent police has also highlighted that social media, although highly accessible, is not necessarily accessible to everyone in society. This could be due to several reasons, such as those unable to afford internet access due to poverty or homelessness (Holmes and Burgess, 2022), elderly members of society that may not understand social media (Bozek et al., 2022) or those who actively choose to stay off social media. Because of this, Gwent police has highlighted the

importance of not solely relying on social media as a method of communication as to not isolate those who may not have access to it.

The Gwent Police social media policy also explains the obligation the organisation and its employees have when it comes to posting on social media and the content complying with the Codes of Ethics. The Codes of Ethics are a set of exemplary standards of behaviour that all officers must abide by when conducting their duty (Police Executive Research Forum, 2016). These standards of behaviour are not only expected when officers are directly facing members of public but extend to how social media is exhibited online. Gwent police have highlighted the importance that any social media content is to be non-offensive, non-discriminative and in compliance with Gwent Police standards. Following the Code of Ethics standards on social media ensures that Gwent Police maintain a professional standard that reflects the organisations values and perception of their public image.

There are several different social media platforms, all of which have been designed to provide a slightly different service depending on the user requirements (Yang et al., 2018). Choosing the right social media platform is essential as it will depend on what type of content is to be shared and who the target audience is (Ralph, 2020). The two of the most common social media platforms used by police in the UK are Twitter and Facebook. There are are number of beneficial reasons why both platforms are utilised by the police.

Twitter (now known as ‘X’) is a simple platform that can be easily accessible even without an account. The type of information shared on Twitter is fast moving, short snippets of feed either with or without an image. This information is often related to current affairs which makes it an excellent source of quick news (Leppert et al., 2022). As Twitter is used as a news outlet, it has allowed police forces to utilise it as a tool for their own benefit. Twitter has been a great source of police promotion, particularly for promoting police recruitment (as Twitter is often used by a younger audience (Fallik et al., 2020)). Because of the fast nature of Twitter news feeds, police forces will also use it to encourage the public for help if a vulnerable person or young child has gone missing (Ferguson and Soave, 2019). Police forces will often post the details along with a picture of the missing person onto Twitter, along with regular updates, asking for the public’s assistance. Using Twitter in this manner reaches a much larger audience and can be targeted to areas that may be out of a force area. Using Twitter to aide in the search of a missing person by engaging with the public can encourage new information, sightings and tips that could have otherwise been missed if officers only resorted to traditional methods of an investigation (Ciobotaru et al., 2022).

Although Facebook is more commonly used by an older audience (Anderson and Perrin, 2017) worldwide, it too can be a useful tool when trying to engage with the public or when searching for a missing person. Facebook could be considered a slower paced form of social media that is mainly used by those aged 50 and over (Yachin and Nimrod, 2020). However, that is not to say that Facebook users are any less vital to a police investigation or engagement. Facebook is an excellent tool for community engagement as local groups will often promote themselves on the platform by having their own page with details that can be easily accessible.

Having the ability for communities and community type activities to be so accessible also allows the police to engage with these communities online and allows information to be shared with a wider audience who may otherwise not engage with the police in person (Jeanis et al., 2019).

Although there are great benefits when the police use social media, there are also risks that must be considered. Many forces such as Gwent Police have a strict social media policy that covers not only the force's direct use of social media, but the personal use of social media from its own officers and staff (Latham, 2024).

Forces must be very careful in what they post on social media, such as on Facebook or Twitter. The tone of the post, the type of content and what images are posted must be in line with the social media policy and should not in any way be perceived as offensive or vulgar (Stohl et al., 2015). However, even when social media posts are carefully scripted while following social media policies, members of the public can still perceive something as offensive or inappropriate. With comment opportunities available with each post, this allows the public to express their concerns and opinions whether warranted or not, thus creating a toxic and unsettled environment that could have negative consequences (Smith and Gallicano, 2015).

Comments, likes and shares can also be detrimental to a police force's reputation. As trust in the police is currently under scrutiny from the public (Bullock, 2017), police forces must try and carefully balance their social media presence so that it is both engaging, inoffensive, and informative, while also trying to avoid upsetting individuals and communities, and losing public confidence (Beshears, 2016).

Individual police officers also play an important role when it comes to the use of social media. Officers who have their own personal social media accounts are encouraged to not post anything that could reflect badly or distastefully toward their own force, as inappropriate social media posts could be picked up by members of the public and used as a weapon against the individual officer or their force (Goldsmith, 2015). Personal social media accounts used by police officers should also note the safety and security concerns when posting content online. If officers make it known that they are a police officer and share personal details such as their names and locations, then members of the public that may have a negative attitude toward the police, may seek them out to cause them harm (Cooper and Inglehearn, 2015).

Another much greater risk that police officers face when it comes to the use of social media is the public's ability to create their own content that can be shared to millions of people that may reflect negatively or positively toward the police (Walsh and O'Connor, 2018). Because the police are under the public's scrutiny now more than ever, the public are not afraid to film the police, whether that is officers conducting arrests, house visits or even just walking down the street or sitting in a police vehicle. The public can film whatever they please, which leaves police officers vulnerable to being exploited online (Lev-on and Yavetz, 2020). For example, a police officer may attend an address where a serious assault took place. When the officer arrests the offender, a member of the public could start filming the police restraining the offender while commenting on police brutality.

Even though the offender was also assaulting officers five minutes earlier before the filming took place. This just highlights how important it is for officers to be cautious when out in the public eye, as any form of unprofessionalism can be caught on camera and quickly shared online, adding further fuel to any anti-police rhetoric or perception (Eneman et al., 2019). Officers must also note that when someone is filming them and posting content online, it can be managed in a way that makes the police look bad, even if they have in fact carried out their duties in a professional and acceptable manner (Eneman et al., 2019).

I have personally used Twitter and Facebook when conducting an investigation that had an overall positive outcome. A vulnerable male with learning and mental health difficulties was reported missing by his family, and so he became a high-risk missing person instantly. Because of his vulnerabilities, I was able to use social media early on to try and establish the male's location. The male was known to catch trains from his local area before, and so I posted a detailed post on Twitter and Facebook that highlighted the male's personal information along with a photo, asking members of the public if they had seen this male in the area. I was able to use hashtags with the names of local train stations and towns that the male frequented, which could help identify target audiences in these areas. I was also updating Twitter and Facebook with regular updates about the missing male, such as what clothing he may be wearing and a last sighting photo of him that was captured on CCTV. Eventually, the male was sighted by a member of the public at a train station nearly 200 miles way from his home address. This meant that local officers in that area were able to detain the male and have him escorted back home where he was escorted by family members to a mental health facility. Without the ability to spread awareness of the missing male to a large and far-reaching audience so quickly, there could have been a much more serious outcome.

Overall, social media can be a great tool that is easily accessible for members of the public and the police. It allows the police to engage with members of the public, both young and old and engage with those that may not normally interact with the police in person (Bullock et al., 2020). It also allows the police to utilise social media's far-reaching capabilities that can benefit investigations as it can encourage public involvement (Ralph et al., 2022).

Unfortunately, social media is also a tool that be used to negatively impact the police. If forces do not carefully manage their own social media content or the personal content of their officers, it could have a detrimental impact on society's perception of the police (Colbran, 2018). Police officers must also monitor their conduct when out in public, as it is so easy to film and post a video online in a matter of seconds, which out of context, could also damage an officer's reputation or the reputation of a force (Lee, 2022). The use of social media in police forces should be used as a tool to be more transparent and to help with investigations. However, it should always be used with caution as information and content can be easily manipulated and edited, particularly by those with a bias towards spreading misinformation and negative perceptions of the police.

**Word count – 2,022**

## 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 plays an important role in the daily duties of a response officer, whether it's attending to a serious crime, or whether it's making decisions after a crime has occurred. Either way, response officers will have to act in some sort of leadership manner at some point during their career, and therefore it is important to understand the different type of leadership strategies and how effective these strategies can be (Filstad, 2020).

According to The College of Policing, the very basic foundation level of leadership that police officers are expected to adhere to starts with upholding The Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics is the central moral compass that officers are expected to follow and is at the core of what is morally and responsibly expected (Westmarland and Rowe, 2016). Police officers are expected to uphold the most basic levels of professional standards when conducting their duties, such as acting in a respectful and professional manner, demonstrating integrity, honesty and accountability, and challenging unacceptable behaviours, attitudes or actions that may directly contradict the moral grounds of the Code of Ethics (Maile et al., 2022).

Although adhering to The Code of Ethics and acting in a professional manner may appear to be a simple requirement that may not necessarily be an obvious link to leadership, it is in fact the most basic yet important part of good leadership. Officers that conduct their duties while following the Code of Ethics standards are in fact leading the pursuit for good professional standards that the forces across

the country expect. By following these basic requirements and challenging those who do not comply with these professional standards, officers that lead by good examples are setting the bar high by becoming good examples of what basic leadership includes and how good leadership starts with the basic requirements that follow the Code of Ethics (Adlam, 2006). I have found this to be true from my own personal experience since joining Gwent police. I highly respect colleagues who uphold such values and follow guidelines, and I make a personal commitment to reflect their approach and behaviours myself. On the contrary, when I witness or experience colleagues not acting in a professional manner then I am sure to highlight it and modify my own behaviour as to not engage in or reflect anything that I perceive as a shortfall. Since joining the police, I feel as though I am more adept now at understanding what 'good looks like' from a leadership perspective, and I look to learn from those who I see as good, flexible, and adaptable leaders.

Effective ethical leadership can also have a positive impact in the way in which response officers conduct themselves on the front line and how effective their response to a situation can be (Wijewardena et al., 2014). Ethical leadership starts with those who take charge and act as a role model for others to follow. An ethical leader that abides by the Codes of Ethics and acts in a professional yet sympathetic manner is more likely to make their colleagues feel as though their own personal values also align with the organisation (Yarlagadda et al., 2009).

Leading by a good ethical example can help encourage others to feel empowered and enhance commitment and dedication. Leading by a good ethical standard can also build and develop trust within teams and help evolve working dynamics that can improve work efficiency and willingness to engage in problem solving (Hartog, 2015).

Empathetic leadership is another effective leadership strategy that can help sustain productive teamwork while also improving job satisfaction as it creates an environment of equality, openness, communication, and trust (Kock et al., 2018). Furthermore, showing compassion and understanding can influence the behaviour and reaction of others. These positive empathetic traits are ideal for situations where officers may be dealing with high-risk domestic incidents or mental health concerns where an individual maybe irate, aggressive, or upset. By taking the lead and displaying an empathic understanding toward the individual, this response can often keep an individual calm, whilst also building trust which can be essential when dealing with high-risk individuals or situations (Marathe and Sen, 2021).

According to The College of Policing, the new National Centre for Police Leadership report, 2023, will be focusing on building strong internal and external partnerships and working relationships, both are which are crucial to help eradicate any unwanted or unprofessional behaviour while also encouraging progression and leadership development within the force. This new model introduced by The College of Policing sets standards that are guided by The Codes of Ethics while intent on improving the quality of leadership across all levels of policing, from Police Constables to Executive Leaders. The new model from stage one to stage five is designed to ensure consistency in communication, resourcing, support whilst tackling systematic issues within the police, while also

encouraging officers and staff members at all levels to take a leadership stance while upholding the Codes of Ethics (College of Policing, 2023).

Although good leadership starts with following and maintaining the basic requirements of the Code of Ethics, officers must also develop and implement other leadership strategies depending on the type of situation they may be in (Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008).

An example of this from my own personal experience would be when a new student officer on my shift was placed on an emergency call, I made the decision to attend the call with this officer has they were very inexperienced. The call was described as a mental health call, which can often be very challenging, unpredictable, and often dangerous. While driving to the mental health call, I was in constant communication with the control room to try and gain as much information as possible about the individual involved and the overall situation. At this point, after my colleague and I had received as much information as the control room could offer us, I took ownership of the situation by explaining to my colleague about what could potentially happen when we arrive and what our options could be.

When we arrived at the destination, a third party who had made the call lead us inside an address to where his sister was apparently having a mental health crisis. The female was displaying erratic and aggressive behaviour, so I made sure to communicate that other officers would need to attend as the female also had warning markers for carrying weapons. After much negotiation, my colleague and I were able to to speak with the female inside her address. I took charge of the situation by using an empathetic approach to which my colleague followed my manner of behaviour. As I began talking to the female in a calm, quiet and understanding manner, the female began to calm down and started talking to us. My colleague's behaviour matched mine and therefore we both appeared less intrusive and scary toward the female. Because I could see that the female was clearly displaying characteristics of someone going through a serious mental health crisis, I made the decision to not leave this female on her own and that she must receive mental health support as soon as possible.

After convincing the female into coming with police voluntarily to a mental health facility, we were able to get her outside of her property. However, as we soon reached our vehicles, the female became aggressive and erratic toward us and began lashing out. At this point, our own safety as well as the safety of the female was paramount, and I therefore made the ethical decision to detain the female under the 136 Mental Health Act. This decision did not come lightly and is a serious decision that officers may have to make, as it essentially allows police to detain an individual so they can be assessed by mental health professionals. It can be an ethical dilemma for officers at times to make the decision to detain an individual under the mental health act as you are stripping away that individual's right to freedom. Therefore, it is important that officers use this power with great care and responsibility, and it should not be used lightly (Hine et al., 2018).

Assessing an individual's mental health capacity is extremely testing for police officers, as we are not mental health professionals. Making the decision to detain

someone if we feel they are displaying concerning mental health characteristics is challenging and should only considered after all other options have been ruled out. I made the decision to detain the female after she began to become aggressive and refused to be taken to the mental health facility on a voluntary basis because I feared that if she did not seek help that same day, she was deemed a physical threat to herself and others. I made the decision based on my own moral compass as well as my understanding of what the force is ethically and morally obligated to do as part of our duty as police officers. Based on the decision I made, the female was transported to a mental health facility where she was assessed and then detained for long-term treatment, The fact that the mental health facility detained the female for longer than the initial mental assessment made me feel validated that the decision I made, although difficult, was the right decision.

The decision I took using an ethical and empathic leadership approach during a mental health emergency call, although was a difficult decision to make, I did feel it was the right approach. I felt I approached the female in an understanding manner and made sure to actively listen to her concerns while trying to also make her feel that she able to open-up to me and communicate with me. I felt I was able to communicate effectively with the female because I made sure to present myself in an approachable manner and not to come across as intimidating or authoritative. I felt I made critical decisions in a timely manner after considering other options that might have been available to the female in need.

However, I could have improved on my direct communication to my colleague. Instead of working alongside my colleague and guiding them, I did take over the situation and could have explained that steps I was going to take with the female and possibly let my colleague take a more active role during the situation.

I could improve my communication skills when working alongside less experienced officers by taking a step back and slowing down when dealing with a situation such as the above. Sometimes when acting too quickly errors can be easily made, and there are opportunities missed. Therefore, next time when taking the lead, I will try and ask my colleague for their opinions and thoughts on the situation and communicate what concerns I have and what actions could be taken. Acting in a leadership manner is necessary within our role as police officers, but it is also necessary to work as a team and encourage others to take the lead (Driskell et al., 2018).

I now better recognise that leadership does not always mean taking the lead role and assuming control, it can equally mean supervising a situation, supporting, and guiding the actions of those, perhaps less experienced, who are dealing directly with the situation in-hand. Good leadership is also recognising professional and ethically moral behaviour and following such behaviour as this creates a more professional environment to which the police is actively encouraging.

**Word count – 1,911**

## 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:**

Since the beginning of my probation as a student officer with Gwent police nearly three years ago, I have experienced several positive and negative encounters with my mentors and fellow officers. For the most part, the guidance and coaching I received was beneficial to my career and personal goals, with focus on skill and personal development as the main goal (College of Policing, 2023). Most encounters have been beneficial to my learning and professional progress. However, there have been occasions when encounters with my mentors and fellow colleagues has not been as beneficial or positive to my professional growth, requiring me to self-reflect, critique, and differentiate good from bad.

During my twelve-week tutorship with my mentor, I found working the normal shift pattern with the rest of my colleagues under the guidance of my mentor was a great way to ease into the role as a police officer. Having someone by my side during all types of situations provided me with reassurance and helped boost my confidence when carrying out my duties as an officer. My mentor was also very helpful when it came to explaining how the processes for dealing with different situations worked and how to write up investigations. As officers, we deal with a wide range of crimes, from domestic violence, theft, fraud, sexual offences and more. Each offence has a different way in which it needs to be investigated and processed. The systems that we use to investigate and process the offences were thoroughly explained to me, with my mentor showing me first-hand how to use these systems using incidents that we attended together as examples.

Having the ability to ask my mentor for assistance and guidance throughout my twelve-week initial training greatly contributed to my overall professional development as I was able to gradually build-up my confidence in my abilities as a police officer. My mentor could also gauge when I should use my own initiative

during certain situations, allowing me to take on a primary role to gather experience whilst they supervised. Being able to take the initial lead as my confidence built, allowed me to reflect on how I first started my training and how I had greatly improved. This self-reflection allowed me to analyse and evaluate situations that I had attended in the past, and better prepare myself when attending new situations more thoroughly (Tyler and McKenzie, 2011).

I found the first few weeks starting out on probation to be extremely stressful and it greatly affected my anxiety levels. The combination of being thrown into the deep end as a response officer and not knowing what the right procedures are when attending incidents, affected my mental health in a negative manner. I felt as though my confidence had plummeted and I constantly questioned if I was doing the right thing or not. Having a supportive mentor during those critical first few weeks of probation allowed me to have someone to confide in and trust. My mentor was crucial in reducing my stress and anxiety levels after a few weeks, as I felt I could approach them when I did have questions. Having that support helped boost my confidence, self-worth and taught me to use my own initiative more often (Gill et al., 2018).

What I did find unproductive and not beneficial during my initial training was having my mentor taken off my shift on several occasions and being made to take shifts in custody. When my mentor was not on shift, I was supposed to be in the care of another officer mentor. However, this was not always the case. I would often be placed under the guidance of an inexperienced officer or an officer who had not worked alongside students before. By being placed with several different officers that had little to no understanding of the needs of a student officer, proved to be very frustrating, inconsistent, and not beneficial. When mentors are assigned to student officers, their duties as a mentor should take priority over any other requirements to ensure consistency and the student's progression is not delayed or obstructed (Eby et al., 2010).

Working alongside my colleagues during my first two years as a student officer has provided me with both negative and positive experiences. Working with officers from varied backgrounds and years of experience in the force has provided me with access to a wide range of opportunities within the force. I have been able to experience departments with other officers which has allowed me to narrow down what spectrum of the force I would like to specialise in (Winch and Addis, 2020). Being able to shadow officers within different departments in the force has encouraged me to focus on my professional goals while also driving me to continue working hard to produce good quality work within my current role as a police officer. Developing a better understanding of the number of different roles within the force has also helped me to develop a better understanding of current role as a police officer and how these different departments can all work together coherently and efficiently (Belur et al., 2020).

However, there have been draw-backs to working alongside other officers and departments. I have found that when I was allowed to shadow officers from other departments, I was not given sufficient time to work alongside them. On some occasions, I was only able to shadow an officer for two shifts at the most, then I would be placed back on my current shift as a response officer. The lack of time

spent shadowing officers in other departments meant I was not able to experience the full breadth of their roles and I felt I only witnessed a small aspect of what they were achieving. Although it is a great opportunity for student officers to join other departments and work alongside other officers, more time shadowing should be provided to maximise the exposure and ensure student officers are provided a full holistic experience that is realistic and beneficial (Chivers and Flatten, 2006).

Having a dependable and approachable Sergeant as a student officer has been essential for my development. I was extremely lucky to have a supportive and attentive Sergeant during my first two years of probation. This Sergeant ensured that we had regular work review meetings whereby they would assess my workload in detail and would help me progress outstanding actions and explain in detail what actions needed completing or what areas of my work needed improvement. These detailed and consistent reviews with my Sergeant have allowed me to improve in certain areas such as building case files and taking more detailed statements. They also provided an opportunity for self-reflection, feedback to be provided, and goals to be set for the following weeks and months.

Without my Sergeant's input, small mistakes or room for improvement may have never been brought to my attention. My Sergeant also played an important role when it came to my professional development. My Sergeant was always encouraging me to enrol in courses that would help benefit my professional development such as PNC (Police National Computer) training and further interviewing training. This further training would not only broaden my skill set but would open more doors for my professional career as other departments often require officers to have certain skills before joining (Honkimaki and Tynjala, 2017).

Before having a reliable Sergeant on shift, I had multiple temporary Sergeant's filling in for my shift. As I was still a very new student officer during this time, not having the consistent presence of a Sergeant was very disruptive and I believe it did delay my development during this critical time on my probation. Officers, especially new student officers, need the stability of a present Sergeant to help keep the shift functioning as it should, while also making sure officers are not becoming overrun with too much work.

I have found receiving feedback from my colleagues and Sergeant about all areas of work extremely helpful for the most part. I welcomed receiving feedback from my colleagues about how I handled certain situations, certain individuals and how to process information. Feedback is not always guaranteed within the role, and any feedback received whether it is positive or negative is always welcomed. Negative feedback if delivered in a professional and respectful manner is just as useful as it allows for growth and room for improvement. Positive feedback is always nice to receive and is helpful in that it reaffirms that what you've completed is correct and that you are working in the right direction (Faulconer et al., 2021).

However, negative feedback if delivered in a non-professional or demeaning manner can greatly affect an individual's confidence and productivity. During the early stages in my probation, I did experience negative feedback from more experienced officers, that was delivered in an unprofessional manner. This feedback as not constructive and was expressed in such a manner that it made me

feel dismayed in my abilities as an officer. Negative feedback is a useful tool to help develop skill sets, however, when negative feedback becomes spiteful and unprofessional, it is unhelpful and detrimental to a student's development and confidence (Choi et al., 2018). I have subsequently learnt not to take too much notice of such comments, to call such behaviours out when I see others being subjected to them, and to only value feedback when it is provided constructively and in a structured and professional manner.

I am content in delivering positive and negative feedback to my Sergeant, mentor, and other officers. I believe that providing feedback can help prevent any future issues or miscommunication if addressed accordingly. I believe it is important to address any issues or concerns that may arise when officers are in their probation period and when working alongside the university. Addressing any issues and providing feedback early on can hopefully prevent the continuation of the issue (Bottini and Gillis, 2020). I believe it is also important for my line management to better understand my own personality traits so they can adapt their mentoring and coaching approach towards me.

Issues that I have raised and provided feedback on include Protected Learning Days days being cancelled, which delays the progress of a student's university workload, and student officers still very new to the role being sent to incidents on their own or without the support of more experienced officers. I try to ensure this feedback has been provided in a professional manner, either addressed in an email or directly in person. I will always try and incorporate a positive action or comment when providing negative feedback, so it doesn't come across as unconstructive (Harvey and Green, 2022).

Overall, I have found my probation period as a student to be a positive one, with only a few negative experiences. Having a dedicated mentor that was able to guide me throughout my initial training was critical in my professional development, while also building my own confidence. Although my mentor was sometimes pulled-off the shift and I was not under their mentorship, I was able to rely on the support of my Sergeant and my colleagues. My Sergeant was constantly monitoring my workload and keeping my professional development on track. The consistent management of my workload allowed me to develop my skill sets as a response officer, with positive and negative feedback allowing me to improve on areas that may otherwise have been overlooked.

Having colleagues on shift that were always available to support me professionally and personally, made starting out as a student officer less problematic. Although there were times when negative feedback was raised in an improper manner, I learnt not to take it personally and to take away the constructive feedback, negative and positive, that would benefit my professional and personal objectives.

The probation period for student officers is an extremely stressful time during their careers, especially during their first few weeks of initial training. I found the first few weeks of training increased my stress and anxiety levels due to the wide range of situations an officer must attend, while also trying to learn the systems and processes that officers use daily. Having the support from my mentor, Sergeant and fellow officers made the initial training much more pleasant and allowed me to

manage my stress and anxiety levels, while also building up my confidence and skill sets. As I progress through my final year of probation I feel as though I have both benefitted greatly from my personal experiences of good mentorship, whilst also better placed to deal with any negative experiences.

**Word count – 2,091**

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