

Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Date of Inspection: 21–22 July 2004



A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

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Context and Force performance

Context

Population served by the Force	Winter – 1.5million	Summer – 8 million
Number of police officers	3,342	
Number of police staff	2,060	
Number of special constables	607	
Budget for training for the financial year:	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget
2003/04	not asked	1.35%
2004/05	£2,206,122	1.4%

Performance

A baseline assessment of the Force was undertaken between March and October 2004.

The findings of HMIC relating specifically to the HR area can be found at:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/dcbaseline1004.pdf

Further details of the Force performance can be found at www.devon-cornwall.police.uk

For details of the rationale and methodology for the Best Value Reviews and inspection of police training please visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/training.htm

Findings

Area Examined	Findings
TRAINING STRATEGY	<p>The training strategy is not compliant with HOC 53/2003, and lacks required information. The Head of Training recognises this, but has issues with the content of HOC 53/2003.</p> <p>There is little strategic communication and connection in the strategy between the BCUs and HQ training</p>
QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>Although the CTP supports the NCM costing methodology and requirements, the full cost of training is not known. There are many areas of training that have not been included in the plan, although it has been acknowledged that successive plans will aim to capture more training.</p> <p>HM Inspector was concerned to find that there is little resilience to produce the CTP. Responsibility has recently passed from the Training Department to the Finance Department.</p>
MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR	<p>There is no formal or effective monitoring or updating of the CTP. A rough guide is compiled in terms of staff who attend for courses, but this is in its infancy and there is no substantive plan in place to achieve this.</p>
TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>HM Inspector was made aware that significant elements of training activity (all divisional training, some search training, chemical biological radiological nuclear, traffic, firearms, surveillance, HOLMES and police national computer (policy)) continue to be omitted. There are no documented plans in place to capture such missing training. This remains an aspiration for the future.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS	<p>The client/contractor relationship within the Force is confused, blurred and lacks clarity. Both sides lack the necessary understanding of their role, and of the role of the other participants to make it effective. There are no clear terms of reference in place to guide future performance in this area.</p> <p>BCUs appear to have little confidence in the Training Department, and there are communication and connectivity issues between the BCUs and HQ training. This has resulted in a lack of meaningful engagement between the parties and a fragmented training function. Consequently BCUs are now acting independently of HQ training and implementing their own training regimes.</p>
MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING	<p>The Chief Superintendent HR has overall responsibility for training. He reports to ACC (Personnel) and is reported to by the Superintendent Head of Training who manages the Training Centre. HM Inspector encourages the Force to consider the value of the Head of Training reporting directly to ACC (Personnel) with regard to all Force training issues.</p> <p>Training managers run the tactical implementation of the training function for each of their subject areas.</p> <p>The Head of Training has only limited responsibility for training conducted within the Force. At HQ, this responsibility extends to the training areas of induction, management development, some crime, officer safety (at HQ), dogs, driving, and public order. Other training conducted, such as crime training, firearms training, divisional training and BCU based officer safety training (and the trainers who provide this training) remain outside the professional management of the Head of Training.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION OF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Learning • Training Matters • Diversity Matters • Foundations for Change 	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see clear and evidenced knowledge of the recommendations from <i>Managing Learning</i>, <i>Training Matters</i>, <i>Diversity Matters</i> and the FfC within the Training Department, each supported by an audit trail of achievement to date on the continuous improvement database.</p>
CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN	<p>The current IP does not reflect the full areas for improvement that the Force has prioritised and is planning to work on.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see an FfC action plan in place.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>The IP is effectively monitored through the continuous improvement database within the Strategic Development Department, which involves an element of PA monitoring.</p>
<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</p>	<p>HM Inspector was concerned to find little quality QA in place within the Training Department. QA across the wider training function is disparate and not defined in the training strategy, training plan or a QA policy.</p> <p>There are very limited development processes for trainers in place.</p> <p>HM Inspector acknowledges that the Force retains full IIP status.</p>
<p>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</p>	<p>There is a sound and workable training evaluation strategy in place and a useful matrix for assessment of the required level of evaluation used at the training design stage. However, there are independence issues of the position of the evaluator. HM Inspector recommends that, in the longer term, the evaluation function should be placed outside of the Training Department.</p> <p>Level 1 and 2 evaluation activity is patchy and lacks consistency. There is no evidence of resultant data being used to develop staff or courses.</p> <p>There is some evidence of Level 3 evaluations, with an audit trail of resulting actions accruing from this data. The Force Training Management Board commissions this Level 3 evaluation in the first instance.</p> <p>There was limited evidence of ‘other higher level evaluations’, particularly in relation to organisational impact. HM Inspector was shown one such example in relation to driver training and this is acknowledged as a useful piece of work. However, no further examples were presented, and HM Inspector encourages the Force to continue with their efforts to conduct such evaluations as the merits of the process were clearly shown by the example provided.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING</p>	<p>Good examples of community involvement were found within dog, diversity and crime training where there are established links with community and victim groups.</p> <p>Overall community involvement is still in its infancy within the Force, and much more work is needed to realise benefits.</p> <p>Although there are no formal plans HM Inspector was encouraged to hear ideas around the inclusion of the community in the validation of course content and lesson plans and develop closer links with local IAGs.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – OTHER EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</p>	<p>There is sound evidence that collaborative arrangements within the Devon and Cornwall region are in place across public and private sector organisations. These involve collaborative partnerships across many organisations and Training Departments.</p> <p>The dog and traffic training units have been particularly active in external collaboration.</p> <p>Of particular note is the ASPIRE project, enabling emergency services and public authorities to share information, knowledge and expertise, in conjunction with another external training provider, IODA.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS</p>	<p>There is a good exchange of information at regional level around all FfC issues. The Head of Training has been instrumental in formulating the FfCs and his expertise is widely used within the region.</p> <p>The intra-Force collaboration is not particularly strong, but is a developing area. The Force has identified this as an area for improvement.</p> <p>The dogs, firearms and driver training elements of the Training Department are the most active collaborators, interacting with most of their regional counterparts, as well as at national levels.</p>
<p>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</p>	<p>The national guidance has not been fully adopted or applied within Force.</p> <p>HM Inspector was concerned at the level of frustration amongst training staff who do not appear to get the development time needed to fully develop or implement national guidance.</p> <p>Regional work is ongoing to have a collaborative approach to TNA, delivery and evaluation.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</p>	<p>To review the disparity of training facilities across the Force</p> <p>To develop greater emphasis on individuals buying into there own learning experience and taking control of there own learning requirements.</p> <p>To review the IT infrastructure to support NCALT and other internet based alternative learning strategies.</p> <p>To fully develop and implement the training administration system within the Force, to inform the identification of skills gaps.</p>
<p>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</p>	<p>Outside of the Training Department the Force has continued to apply Best Value principles to organisational change. There are areas of good practice for example Plymouth BCU training and within the central training schools, but the Best Value regime is not established within the training function.</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>An IP is in place and is active to support the introduction of ICF but software problems have delayed implementation. There are clear plans to develop effective connections between PDRs and the planning of training.</p>
<p>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</p>	<p>PDRs are monitored by either BCU or HQ personnel units. This monitoring is quantitative. Completion rates are around 75 per cent for the Force, but 100 per cent for the Training Department.</p> <p>There is no effective link between Level 3 evaluation and PDR and managers do not seem to be aware of the potential of such meetings.</p>
<p>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</p>	<p>The business planning cycle in Force illustrates the structured and systematic business planning process for training. However, because the training budgets are devolved and not currently engaged with the HQ training function the training plan has little chance to impact on budget setting.</p>
<p>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>There is a clear strategic prioritisation model for training that engages both the client and contractor sides, via the Force Training Management Board. However, this is only applied to 'new' training events. Consideration will need to be given to a further prioritisation of ALL training provision (including all divisional training).</p>

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

HM Inspector recommends that the Force costed training plan is developed to ensure it captures all training in the Force irrespective of where or by whom it is provided

Recommendation 2

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develop a mechanism to ensure that accountability for standards, costs and planning for all training rests with a single source, irrespective of where in the Force or by whom it is provided

Recommendation 3

HM Inspector recommends that more communication is facilitated between the Head of Training and the Basic Command Units commanders that includes the Head of Training having a position at the Basic Command Unit commanders meeting to facilitate such two-way communication

Recommendation 4

HM Inspector recommends that the Police Authority review the effectiveness of succession planning processes across the training function, particularly where they impact high-risk areas for the Force

Recommendation 5

HM Inspector recommends that better lateral and vertical communication processes are established within the Training Department (and across the training teams) to ensure a two-way process that has the confidence of staff

Recommendation 6

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develop its IT infrastructure support National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies and other internet based alternative learning strategies as a matter of priority

Recommendation 7

HM Inspector recommends that the Force fully develops and implements a training administration system within the Force to inform the identification of skills gaps

Recommendation 8

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a comprehensive Quality Assurance process for all training, irrespective of where or by whom it is provided. The Quality Assurance process should be regularly monitored

Recommendation 9

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a robust evaluation function for all training, with a tasking and reporting process independent of the Training Department. This should include a clear mechanism for commissioning and actioning evaluation projects and their recommendations

Recommendation 10

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a single improvement plan which captures all locally identified improvement actions as well as those which result from this or previous HMIC Training reports. The improvement plan should also capture any improvement actions which have resulted from other relevant sources having an impact on training

Judgements

Judgement 1:

There is a great deal of change underway within the training function and HM Inspector acknowledges that, at the time of the inspection, many of these changes had yet to be embedded. However, it is clear that there are many developmental areas to be addressed. These include poor communication structures, a lack of Quality Assurance and evaluation processes, an incomplete costed training plan and weak succession planning. Furthermore, training is not fully engaged at strategic level. It is clear that there is a commitment at all levels within the Force to drive performance through training, but this needs to be better focused and implemented. Clear regional activity, led in part by the Force, is ensuring that best practice is being identified and adopted in Force.

HM Inspector concludes therefore that the quality of the service is **'poor'**

Judgement 2:

The Best Value Review process was undertaken in line with national guidance and there is clear evidence that the improvement plan has been regularly monitored, implemented and seeks to impact on performance in the workplace. The Police Authority has been, and continues to be, actively engaged in the process. Future intentions are documented in the revised improvement plan, which largely reflects the Foundations for Change as well as other development areas. The significant majority of the action plan areas in the improvement plan have yet to be defined and approved before implementation can begin.

HM Inspector concludes therefore that the prospects for improvement are **'promising'**

For further information on the judgement criteria refer to Appendix H/Annexe A of the below document.

BEST VALUE AND PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR POLICE AUTHORITIES AND FORCES.

Adult Learning Inspectorate

Summary of Findings

The Adult Learning Inspectorate undertook an assessment of several training sessions. A summary of their findings is shown below:

Achievement and Standards

- Many learners demonstrated good standards of work in the learning sessions observed. High levels of competency were evident in many practical skills. These included dog handling, firearms use, and the gathering, recording and communicating of key information by learners on the control room induction course.
- Most learners had a good understanding of the issues involved in applying these skills in a work environment. Learners on the domestic violence course demonstrated a good understanding of many of the issues involved. Learners on most courses also showed good awareness of health and safety. It was not possible to gather data on retention or pass rates.

Quality of Education and Training

- Most of the training observed was good. Courses are well-planned, with an effective combination of theory and practical, and a clear strategy for the development of skills. Many course plans are amended to match the requirements of each particular group of learners.
- Trainers are knowledgeable and experienced, and make very effective links between the topics being taught and practical situations involved in working in the police. In one particularly effective session, learners on a domestic violence course watched a very good play aimed at raising their awareness of the issues involved. These learners were then able to informally interview members of the cast, who stayed in role, to explore some of the reasons why women may not leave an abusive relationship. Useful resources were used to support learning on some courses. Individual coaching within groups was very effective and learners were given opportunities to practice their skills.
- Regular assessment is a feature of most courses. The promotion of health and safety was good. In the learning sessions judged to be satisfactory there was a narrower range of teaching methods being used and insufficient questioning of learners to monitor understanding during explanations by trainers.

- There are good resources for sport and firearms training at the training headquarters in Exeter. Learners have access to a large swimming pool, squash courts, a large sports hall and a very well-equipped gymnasium. The firearms range is modern and well-designed, and can be re-organised to simulate a range of real-world scenarios for training purposes.
- Many of the training rooms at headquarters are spacious and well-equipped. Access to ICT facilities is satisfactory. The library is also satisfactory, although some of the book stock is outdated. Some of the training accommodation is poor and there is limited access to ICT facilities. The lack of appropriate ICT facilities throughout the area managed by the Force restricts opportunities to develop alternative learning strategies, such as the use of e-learning.
- All trainers at headquarters either have or are working towards a basic trainer qualification from Centrex or a teaching qualification. The training resources at some of the venues throughout Devon and Cornwall are inadequate. There is no formal requirement for trainers outside headquarters to have training or teaching qualification. At some venues there are insufficient staff to provide all the training required.
- Some assessment practices are weak. All training courses have clear aims and objectives. Some courses, such as firearms training, dog training and driver training, also have clear assessment criteria. However, many other courses have no formal assessment criteria. The identification of key competencies and appropriate levels of performance on these courses is the responsibility of individual trainers. There is no formal verification of assessment decisions on many courses. Arrangements for progress reviews are satisfactory.
- Reviews are an integral part of most courses that last for more than one week. Action-planning is used to promote progress and these plans are reviewed regularly. However the effectiveness of action-planning is reduced by the lack of detailed assessment criteria on some courses.
- There is a wide range of training courses available to learners. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary offer more than 300 different courses for 2004-05, many of which are available several times during the year. Courses are prioritised by the Force Training Management Board, depending on whether they are mandatory, necessary to address skills requirements, directly beneficial to individual performance, or potentially useful to have.
- Courses offered include operations training, driver training, traffic management, dog training, tactical firearms, crime investigation and reduction, probationer training, ICT, and management training. Most courses are made up of standard units or components, designed to ensure that all learners reach the same level of knowledge and understanding. Trainers sometimes amend standard training plans to provide learners with additional information or opportunities to practice skills.
- Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners have appropriate access to information on courses and arrangements for induction are generally effective. There is no formal strategy to support any learners that may have literacy, numeracy or language needs. Additional support to address these needs is available during probationer training at Centrex, but not within the Force.

- There have been some attempts to address individual needs during the design and provision of courses, but many of the courses are standardised packages with little recognition of the range of abilities of learners. However, much individual support is provided by training staff and action-planning is used to improve skills and monitor performance. Support on personal issues is satisfactory. It is provided by an employee assistance scheme with additional support if required from occupational health.

