

HMIC



# Leading from the frontline



THEMATIC INSPECTION

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# **LEADING FROM THE FRONTLINE**

**Thematic inspection of frontline supervision  
and leadership, at the rank of sergeant  
in the Police Service of England and Wales**

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Summary of recommendations</b>	<b>10</b>
The role of a 24/7 frontline sergeant	11
Preparedness and promotion	11
Use of the Personal Development Review	12
Status and standards	12
Supporting the frontline	12
Critical incidents	13
Conclusions	14
<b>Menu of options: ‘snapshot’ opportunities</b>	<b>16</b>
Clarity of role and purpose	17
Training and preparation	17
Status and standards	17
Support	18
Critical incidents	18
Looking ahead	19
<b>Chapter 1 – The thematic inspection</b>	<b>20</b>
Introduction	21
Context of the inspection	22
Original brief for the inspection	24
Literature review	26
Methodology	30
<b>Chapter 2 – The role of a 24/7 frontline sergeant</b>	<b>34</b>
Introduction	35
Findings	36
Summary	44
Recommendations	45
<b>Chapter 3 – Preparedness and promotion</b>	<b>46</b>
Introduction	47
Findings	49
Summary	67
Recommendations	69

<b>Chapter 4 – Use of the Personal Development Review</b>	<b>70</b>
Introduction	71
Findings	72
Summary	76
Recommendations	77
<b>Chapter 5 – Status and standards</b>	<b>78</b>
Introduction	79
Findings	80
Summary	92
Recommendations	92
<b>Chapter 6 – Supporting the frontline</b>	<b>94</b>
Introduction	95
Findings	96
Summary	112
Recommendations	113
<b>Chapter 7 – Critical incidents</b>	<b>114</b>
Introduction	115
Findings	116
Summary	129
Recommendations	130
<b>Chapter 8 – Conclusions</b>	<b>132</b>
Recommendations	135
<b>Annex A – Inspection Reference Group members</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Annex B – Questionnaire</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Annex C – Generic role profile</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Annex D – Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management in Scotland</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Annex E – Statement of expectations – Patrol Sergeant (PL33), Borough of Lewisham</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Annex F – Questionnaire demographic data</b>	<b>176</b>

## Foreword from Sir Ronnie Flanagan GBE QPM

### Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary



*Leading from the frontline* is the result of a substantial inspection programme involving a questionnaire to frontline sergeants – eliciting over 4,200 responses – and site visits to forces, where the HMIC team spoke to over 570 staff in the course of their observations. This thematic inspection would not have been possible without the commitment and support of many people and I extend my warmest thanks and appreciation to all who have so willingly given their views and time.

The purpose of HMIC's work is to drive improvement in law enforcement. *Leading from the frontline* uncovers issues that must be addressed by the Service – but that should not lessen in any way the outstanding work delivered by so many in the 24/7 response environment. *Leading from the frontline* focuses on the frontline sergeant. I commissioned this thematic inspection because the role of the frontline sergeant is critical to public reassurance and safety. This is the individual who is a leader, 24/7, and who makes a fundamental difference to the quality of service experienced by local people in communities when they call upon the police for help.

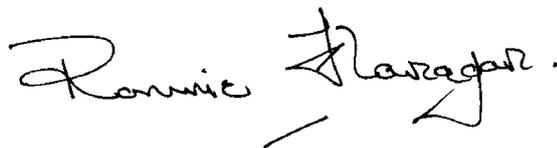
In my recent Review of Policing I reflected on the far greater range of demands which the Police Service now faces compared with 40 years ago. I emphasised that, given the nature of the continuing complexity and growth of demands, it is essential that the Police Service is positioned to combat threats, minimise harm and manage risks. I concluded that the Service must do everything possible to deliver dynamic and flexible policing, able to prioritise and respond to changing needs. *Leading from the frontline* reinforces the key role of the frontline sergeant in translating vision and strategic intent into day-to-day policing reality. The quality of the leadership provided by frontline sergeants to their teams is the one key factor that makes the difference. I want to see individuals who are clear about their role, understand the expectations of them, are prepared for the demands of the rank in a timely fashion, and are able to focus on aspects of delivery valued by the organisation and the public. This means greater emphasis on appropriate development and support to ensure frontline leaders are confident to deal with the varied challenges they could face in any shift.

The Service will need to consider the perceptions of frontline sergeants and the lack of value they feel the Service places on them as individuals, and consider in particular support for staff from minority groups. In particular I want to emphasise the importance of frontline sergeants as ‘guardians of excellence’ in service delivery. It is essential that clear standards are set and understood and that leaders are confident in applying and upholding those standards. This inspection reinforces the need to enhance active, visible leadership by reinforcing the clear expectation that challenging poor performance and upholding standards is an essential responsibility of rank. This is particularly pressing as the implementation of the Taylor Report and new misconduct procedures rely upon the earliest appropriate intervention.

This thematic inspection concludes with a consideration of the understanding of critical incidents. This issue will be subject to inspection by HMIC later this year; however, that this work has provided some advanced reality checks that indicate – notwithstanding personal confidence reported on an individual basis – that national guidance has not been subject to the depth of implementation advisable given the environment in which the Service operates.

*Leading from the frontline* seeks to identify good practice, and there are some inspirational examples included in my report. Greater consistency across the Service and sharing of successful approaches is now needed. My report makes a number of recommendations and includes a menu of options that could be actioned immediately.

My inspection team noted evident commitment to deliver a highly professional service with an emphasis on quality, the ability to employ greater discretion and for the response function to be clearly valued. Given the context in which the Service operates, this is not a luxury but an imperative. Frontline sergeants are central to the 24/7 challenge to tackle threat, minimise harm and manage risk.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie Flanagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'F' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Sir Ronnie Flanagan GBE QPM**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



## *Executive summary*

- i. *Leading from the frontline* has its origins in the growing recognition over recent years that the role of the frontline sergeant – the sergeant – has been underplayed and undervalued.
- ii. The Police Service has at its core an abiding commitment to policing by consent – which now means securing the active engagement and participation of local people. The policing landscape has become complex and the agenda has enormous breadth and depth, including protective services, local policing, and the need to identify and manage risk and utilise effectively valuable resources. Ultimately the 24/7 service is delivered by people often in the earliest years of their service and experience. They must be well led, coached and given guidance to fulfil their role, which is about keeping people safe and feeling safe.
- iii. *Leading from the frontline* recognises frontline sergeants as **leaders** of people and **guardians** of excellence in service delivery. Policing strategies are developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) with other stakeholders, but ultimately they are only effective and meaningful in communities through the quality of local service delivery and the capability of those working in the 24/7 environment to translate strategic intent into reality on the ground.
- iv. This thematic inspection found that, while different deployment models and approaches exist across the forces of England and Wales, the core of 24/7 policing is remarkably consistent. Given the demands on this aspect of policing, it is essential that sergeants, as leaders, are confident, capable and effective. Frontline sergeants need to be well prepared, trained, skilled and supported individuals who have a clear understanding of the expectations of them and the obligations of their role. Whether as the initial ‘bronze’ commander at a critical incident or as the guardian of citizen-focused policing, this thematic has re-emphasised that the quality of leadership is intrinsic to determining public satisfaction and confidence. While aspects of the role are legitimately managerial, priority and emphasis must be given to the leadership qualities and technical skills for this role.
- v. The terms of reference for this thematic inspection are shown in full at paragraph 1.24, but the core brief was to focus on uniformed 24/7 response policing sergeants, and in particular on key areas including:
  - a. their capability as initial ‘bronze’ commanders at critical incidents and thus their ability to identify and manage risk;
  - b. their capability to lead staff and maintain standards;
  - c. the adequacy of preparatory training;
  - d. their current levels of experience and the relationship to delivery;

- e. their workload and priorities; and
  - f. the quality of support for frontline sergeants; and identification of emerging good practice.
- vi. The approach taken included:
- a literature review;
  - a web-based questionnaire sent to all sergeants engaged in response policing in 43 forces in England and Wales;
  - field work in six forces;
  - visits to non-police organisations; and
  - focus groups of frontline sergeants and staff where individuals were drawn from gender and minority groups.
- vii. The inspection team was supported by a secondee from the Police Foundation – Dr Janet Foster. The questionnaire elicited 4,201 replies. Site visits to test data involved speaking with 559 police officers as well as more than 250 hours of live observation. Other visits were undertaken to organisations including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Hertfordshire Police, An Garda Síochána, the Scottish Police College, the British Army and private companies, including Invista.
- viii. The role of sergeant, and particularly of frontline sergeant, has become varied and complex over the years. There is a clear view, from the evidence gathered for *Leading from the frontline*, that in many areas this aspect of policing has not received the investment commensurate with the priority that should be attached to the role and its purpose. A holistic, strategic response is required, making clear the links between response policing, neighbourhood and citizen-focused policing, and the provision of protective services. There is a danger that these individually important issues are being considered in isolation rather than as a collective policing response to community needs.
- ix. The current role profile for a frontline sergeant lacks national cohesion and clarity of purpose. The evidence gathered demonstrates a lack of understanding in some areas of what exactly an organisation expects of its frontline sergeants. HMIC observed at chief officer level that the message was quite clear and unequivocal – namely that quality of service, citizen focus and risk management should be at the heart of service delivery and frontline activity. However, these strategic intentions are not always effectively translated into operational activity, resulting in confusion and lack of coherent pursuit of organisational goals. As one Deputy Chief Constable commented when probed on this issue:

***“Nationally – we’re in a bit of a pickle.”***

- x. Forces need to determine then clearly communicate their exact requirements of role-holders in terms of organisational goals and how this should manifest itself in frontline service delivery and activity. This should then inform their investment choices in terms of selection criteria, promotion processes, training and support mechanisms to enable these guardians of excellence to achieve effective service delivery. Notwithstanding variations in force structure, there is still a need, nationally, to provide consistent standards of leadership and supervision to frontline staff.
- xi. *Leading from the frontline* highlights the widespread fundamental skills gaps at frontline sergeant level. The report also identifies that these gaps have not simply appeared as a result of the length of service of existing post holders, as is often the perception. There is a perception that frontline sergeants are generally new in service and this has often been regarded as one of the root causes of supervisory shortcomings. Likewise, popular comment and anecdote about frontline sergeants' overall workload is that it is unmanageable. The evidence obtained in this inspection somewhat dispels these myths.
- xii. What it does highlight, however, is that, even despite the considerable length of service of many post holders, the necessary capability and confidence are not being acquired, nor adequate training provided, in order for frontline sergeants to be as effective in their role as they could, and indeed should, be. There is an urgent need to re-examine processes for preparing frontline sergeants for the role, and for the significant responsibility it carries.
- xiii. In examining existing preparatory processes, HMIC encountered significant strength of feeling regarding the use and application of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process. As one frontline sergeant succinctly commented:  

***“There is no ‘D’ in PDR.”***
- xiv. In the context of the preparation, readiness, capability and confidence needed to perform the role of frontline sergeant, HMIC found little evidence that the PDR process is being used to underpin and monitor developmental activity towards the role in conjunction with performance monitoring. The process is being stifled by bureaucracy, lack of clarity of role definition, and by the complexity of the Integrated Competency Framework (ICF).<sup>1</sup> All of this is compounded by the apparent lack of understanding of how to apply the process and relevant training. The findings in this report support Recommendation 14 of *The Review of Policing* by Sir Ronnie Flanagan regarding the ICF.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex C.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Ronnie Flanagan, *The Review of Policing: Final Report*, Home Office, 2007.

- xv.** This thematic has found enterprising and committed staff in the role of frontline sergeant; however, HMIC also found enormous variations in their working practices, their standards of professionalism and in the quality of their staff. The evidence and perceptions of individuals whom HMIC encountered, revealed that the status afforded to the role of sergeant in previous generations has been, to varying degrees, eroded. Whether this is through variations in role definition, selection and training, or through lack of appropriate support, the situation is patchy, often lacking coherence and consistency.
- xvi.** HMIC believes that implied in the word ‘value’ is appropriate reward and recognition, and this can be achieved in a number of ways from a simple ‘thank you’ to a formal acknowledgement. It is within neither the terms of reference nor, indeed, the gift of HMIC to examine financial rewards. Interestingly, the pay was not raised as a significant issue during site visits. Nevertheless, HMIC is aware of a view that the differential between senior constable and sergeant is perhaps too close and there are issues around encouraging and rewarding the retention of experienced individuals as frontline sergeants. This, however, is a matter for others to consider and not part of this thematic inspection.
- xvii.** In addressing the issues of confidence, capability, standards and status, HMIC asserts that an opportunity exists to improve in these areas through formal accreditation of the rank of sergeant and the role of frontline sergeant.
- xviii.** *Leading from the frontline* reveals that a critical success factor in creating high-quality frontline leadership and supervision is the tangible presence of support mechanisms at the service delivery level. These support mechanisms range from the organisational and managerial to the moral and emotional. All of these mechanisms need to be underpinned by adequate infrastructure in terms of the provision of sufficient equipment and people to enable effective delivery. The findings reveal that where there is investment in these elements, the positive effect on frontline sergeants – and those they are responsible for – and the resultant quality of service delivered are tangible. Unfortunately, the reverse is also demonstrated with worrying regularity.
- xix.** This report culminates in a detailed examination of the effect all these factors can have, either singly or in combination, on the ability of frontline sergeants to lead and manage operational activity, and to manage risk to the public, the organisation and their staff. There is resonance with observations contained in *The Review of Policing* in terms of preparedness to manage risk effectively.

- xx.** *Leading from the frontline* highlights the regularity with which frontline sergeants are expected to manage the initial stages of critical incidents. The variation in existing levels of understanding of the term 'critical incident' and of capability and confidence to perform this function gives cause for concern.
- xxi.** HMIC believes that, where forces have this expectation of frontline sergeants, there should be appropriate training and support provided in order to meet that expectation.
- xxii.** There are opportunities to address cultural aspects and encourage a greater sense of empowerment to make decisions, and for staff to feel confident and supported in so doing. There are also opportunities for the Police Service to reinforce the value of the 24/7 frontline sergeant, and to demonstrate that there is genuine commitment to a learning environment.
- xxiii.** HMIC believes *Leading from the frontline* to be the most comprehensive piece of research into this area of policing. Appreciation is expressed to all those who have supported this work.
- xxiv.** HMIC believes that the early formulation and implementation of national standards for frontline sergeants is an essential pre-requisite to the creation of a cohesive identification, selection, training and support framework for this critical role. This goes to the heart of ensuring clarity of role and purpose for individuals to develop themselves towards, as well as providing clear direction for investment choices to enable those role holders to deliver on force and community expectations.
- xxv.** This report provides compelling evidence of the need for improvement and is the foundation on which an agenda for change can be built. Some of the recommendations will take time to realise. HMIC concludes that the Police Service should not wait to take positive action to address the issues raised in this report. There follows, therefore, a 'Menu of options' for forces to utilise in the short term and test locally their own position (see page 17). HMIC strongly urges forces to take advantage of the opportunity to obtain their own 'snapshot review' in readiness for implementation of all the recommendations contained herein.

# **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**



### *The role of a 24/7 frontline sergeant*

1. The Association of Chief Police Officers, together with the National Policing Improvement Agency, should develop a set of national standards for the role of frontline sergeant. They need to define a baseline of competence in areas such as leadership, critical incident and risk management, management and development of staff, maintenance of standards of professionalism, and service delivery. Such standards should not be overprescriptive or restrictive, but should allow forces, locally, to build on common foundations of expertise.
2. Police authorities must work together with chief officers to ensure that strategic organisational objectives are clearly and effectively translated into frontline delivery activity, and that the performance management and learning and development frameworks remain consistent with the strategic intent and force expectations.
3. Forces should urgently review policies and ensure that opportunities are maximised for frontline sergeants to provide active leadership and supervision at or during incidents, and to be accessible and visible to their staff, through the review and rationalisation of administrative and/or procedural burden.

### *Preparedness and promotion*

4. The Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Policing Improvement Agency should together undertake a fundamental review of the promotion process, from constable to sergeant in the first instance. The review should take account of the need for forces to identify, nurture and develop talent through the effective use of the Personal Development Review process. This review should refocus the promotion process towards identifying leadership qualities and complementary technical knowledge and experience. The outcome should be used to inform future decision making on the structure of promotion processes up to and including the rank of chief superintendent, placing **leadership** skills alongside **technical competence**.
5. The Association of Chief Police Officers should undertake a fundamental national review of the use of acting sergeants in all forces.
6. Chief officers must ensure that where acting sergeants are deployed, they are suitably qualified and supported, and should develop processes to accurately monitor the extent of use of acting sergeants. An impact or risk-assessment process should accompany the deployment of all acting sergeants.

### *Use of the Personal Development Review*

7. Forces should review their use of the Personal Development Review process and ensure that the balance between performance measurement and developmental activity is appropriate.
8. Forces should ensure that the Personal Development Review is used as a means of documenting an officer's readiness for promotion in terms of individual performance and their development needs. Appropriate and effective use of the PDR should be closely scrutinised.
9. Forces should ensure that their Personal Development Review process contains sufficient objectivity and accuracy to be relied upon as a reference document in considering applications for level transfer as well as for promotion.

### *Status and standards*

10. The Association of Chief Police Officers must be absolutely clear in defining the role of a frontline sergeant and ensuring that associated processes of selection, promotion, training and support complement the role definition.
11. The Association of Chief Police Officers should overtly recognise and publicise the critical role that effective frontline supervision and leadership plays in delivery of the policing agenda on a 24/7 basis, in terms of incident management, quality of service and delivery of citizen-focused policing. It should be valued as a 'specialism' in its own right and, accordingly, frontline sergeants should be viewed on an equal basis with any other 'specialist' police sergeant.

### *Supporting the frontline*

12. The National Policing Improvement Agency, together with the Association of Chief Police Officers, should introduce a process for the formal accreditation of the rank of sergeant and the role of frontline sergeant.
13. In the operating context of citizen-focused policing, forces should ensure frontline sergeants understand the delivery agenda and are provided with regular feedback as to their effectiveness in meeting it.
14. Senior management teams need to demonstrate visible support for frontline sergeants, in both the operational and organisational context, in terms of adherence to standards and policy compliance.

15. Forces should review their infrastructure, support mechanisms (both organisational and individual), operating procedures and resources to ensure they are allocated according to demand, in all departments, and that frontline capacity is not disproportionately disadvantaged.
16. Forces need to develop a culture that enables frontline sergeants to exercise discretion, professional judgement, risk management, and intrusive supervision in support of service delivery and adherence to standards of professionalism.
17. Forces should clearly articulate to all staff the importance attached to effective frontline leadership and supervision and the priority they place on sergeants as leaders, coaches, mentors and custodians of excellence in service delivery. High visibility and a proactive style should be pivotal.

### ***Critical incidents***

18. The Association of Chief Police Officers should develop a framework to implement the National Policing Improvement Agency's *Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management* (2007) in all forces. This should be completed by October 2008.
19. Forces should clarify their expectations of frontline sergeants at or during critical incidents, and ensure that training and support mechanisms enable delivery of those expectations.
20. Forces should develop processes to test the knowledge and understanding of critical incident management principles by frontline sergeants, maintain a corporate record of knowledge levels, and take remedial action to address individual as well as organisational knowledge gaps.
21. Forces should develop processes to ensure that the routine debriefing of critical incidents occurs and that frontline sergeants and staff are part of that process.
22. The National Policing Improvement Agency should develop processes by which individual and force learning from critical incidents, through debriefing, can be promulgated across the Police Service.

### ***Conclusions***

23. The Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Policing Improvement Agency should develop a national standard of police leadership, which can be tailored at the local level but with nationally agreed principles, to ensure consistency of expectation and application across all forces.
24. Forces should ensure that resourcing and staffing levels are regularly reviewed against a model or staffing projection. Forces need to review and, where appropriate, adapt management information systems to enable effective resource and asset management in support of effective frontline service delivery.
25. Forces should develop ways of monitoring, scrutinising and supporting frontline supervisory activity.
26. Frontline sergeants should have a voice and contribute to improving structures, systems and operating processes. Forces should ensure that such a feedback and discussion mechanism exists. Police authorities and chief officers should consider the impact of their investment choices on frontline supervision in terms of working environment, fleet and equipment, resilience, capacity and morale.
27. Forces should complete a 'snapshot' review of the issues raised in this report and determine the need for any immediate remedial activity by October 2008. (See below.)



# **MENU OF OPTIONS: 'SNAPSHOT OPPORTUNITIES'**

### *Clarity of role and purpose*

- Publicise force-wide the strategic 'fit', and emphasise where appropriate the importance of frontline service delivery and leadership in the overall force operating context.
- Clarify the imperatives of the role of frontline sergeant.
- Check frontline sergeant's understanding of force expectations in respect of strategic intent being clearly translated into tactical service delivery.
- Examine whether the existing force structure and operating procedures provide sufficient opportunities for frontline sergeants to be accessible and visible to those they supervise.

### *Training and preparation*

- Review the extent and use of acting frontline sergeants to ensure they are being used appropriately, and that those in the role are suitably qualified and supported. (See 'Clarity of role and purpose' and Greater Manchester Police model).
- Are you confident that officers taking up the role of frontline sergeant on promotion are adequately supported for the transition?
- Are you confident that officers taking up the role of frontline sergeant on level transfer from other areas of policing are adequately supported for the transition?
- Are your succession planning processes robust enough to keep the need for acting frontline sergeants to an absolute minimum?
- Do you have risk management measures in place for the preceding four points?
- Does your PDR process for existing and aspirational frontline sergeants monitor individuals' development as well as performance?
- Do your human resources management information processes enable you regularly and accurately to monitor the extent of the use of acting frontline sergeant?

### *Status and standards*

- Are mechanisms in place for regular dialogue between frontline sergeants and inspectors and senior managers?
- Are you confident that your force places sufficient emphasis on the complexity and importance of the role of frontline sergeants, and publicly acknowledges it?
- Does your force have published minimum standards of dress and behaviour?

- Are your frontline sergeants confident and capable of enforcing those standards, and are they encouraged and supported in doing so?
- Are you confident that your senior management teams (SMTs) set and maintain appropriate standards of professionalism?
- Are you confident that effective tasking and co-ordination of frontline activity is routinely taking place?

### *Support*

- Do your SMTs provide clear direction for frontline activity and provide tangible support to frontline sergeants in delivering high-quality, citizen-focused policing?
- Are you confident that your SMTs actively support and encourage frontline sergeants in challenging poor performance and/or adherence to standards of professionalism?
- Are you confident that your SMTs are actively and effectively supporting frontline sergeants in managing operational and organisational risk?
- Do your SMTs conduct and document any form of impact assessment on frontline delivery capacity, capability and morale as part of resource allocation decision making?

### *Critical incidents*

- Clarify force expectations of frontline sergeants in critical incidents and assess whether existing skills levels are adequate.
- Disseminate national best practice guidance to frontline sergeants immediately.
- Review existing training arrangements for critical incident management for frontline sergeants and inspectors – the National Policing Improvement Agency can provide a mobile Hydra-Minerva facility.
- Review risk management models and assess whether they support management of risk or generate risk adversity. (See Surrey Police's 'Harm's Way' policy, page 126.).
- Assess whether arrangements are in place to include frontline sergeants in the routine debriefing of critical incidents, to improve individual and corporate learning.
- Consider implementing a process to test the understanding and knowledge of identification and management processes for critical incidents for frontline sergeants or those charged with responsibility for initial scene management. (See Surrey Police's COMSIM process, page 129.)

### *Looking ahead*

- Are you confident that good practice in frontline service delivery in basic command units is promulgated force-wide?
- Do you have a clear understanding of the level of confidence among your frontline sergeants to manage organisational and operational risk?
- What level of importance do you give to leadership qualities in identifying potential promotion candidates?
- Are you confident that, at point of selection, your frontline sergeants have the skills and experience to deliver your strategic objectives at the tactical delivery level?
- Do you encourage your managers to 'talent spot' and nurture future leaders, irrespective of level?

# Chapter 1

# **THE THEMATIC INSPECTION**



## Introduction

- 1.1 This report is the product of an inspection that was established on the premise that the frontline sergeant in the 24/7 response policing environment is a **leader** of people and a **guardian** of excellence in service delivery. Within that leadership and guardianship role there are also supervisory and managerial responsibilities.
- 1.2 This duality of role sees the Police Service placing responsibilities on frontline sergeants that include fast-time decision making in the operational context as well as coaching, mentoring and developing their staff. They are also managers of risk, both to the reputation of the Police Service nationally and to individuals and the public in their localities. Additionally they are responsible for managing necessary bureaucratic processes for the effective management of assets, resources, finance and of course people.
- 1.3 The concerns that mark the origin of this thematic inspection come from both literary and anecdotal sources. The most recently published study examining frontline activity is the report entitled *24/7 response policing in the modern police organisation – views from the frontline*, (see paragraph 1.30), which examined the operational context of frontline delivery and how organisational changes have impacted on service delivery (see literature review at paragraphs 1.26 to 1.34). This highlighted excessive demands on frontline staff and their resultant struggle to perform all the core functions expected of them.
- 1.4 Over recent years Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), in exercising its responsibility to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Police Service, has encountered similar strongly held views in visits and dealings with individual forces – creating a cumulative concern among HM Inspectors.
- 1.5 Consequently, this thematic inspection was commissioned by the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, in 2007. Led by HM Inspector Jane Stichbury, the brief was to obtain a '**snapshot review**' of the frontline sergeants' role and related matters, the objective being to test the findings of other research and the anecdotal evidence and to make recommendations for change, as appropriate.

- 1.6 Each chapter focuses on a key issue but should not be considered in isolation. The topics covered are inextricably linked and have been identified and explored through the well established methodology of **‘go where the evidence takes you’**.
- 1.7 **It is essential to acknowledge outstanding work delivered by individuals and teams on a daily basis, often unheralded. This inspection has sought to identify good practice but does also focus on ‘gaps’ and ‘deficiencies’. While making no apology for this, HMIC emphasises that the examples included in this report are intended not to negate all that good work but to help drive an agenda for change and improvement.**

### *Context of the inspection*

- 1.8 Each generation probably considers that the challenges and demands on policing have never been greater. It is certainly true that the context of policing is changing, and yet at the same time there is remarkable consistency at the heart of what the public expect from policing – primarily to be safe and to feel safe in the midst of a complex and often fast-moving environment.
- 1.9 Looking ahead in 2008, key predicted demands on policing will require the Police Service to continue developing its approach and capability with regard to protective services and all that entails, from the protection of vulnerable people through to the most demanding operations in support of counter-terrorist activity or indeed civil emergency. Implicit within these challenges is the ability to identify and manage risk.
- 1.10 At the same time as tackling such global threats, the Police Service also needs to respond to communities and work effectively with partners, both locally and nationally. Sir Ronnie Flanagan’s recent *Review of Policing* noted:
- “The Home Office’s Comprehensive Spending Review settlement of inflation-only increases will translate to tougher police funding settlements, which will demand greater efficiency and productivity if the Police Service is to continue to deliver high quality policing to the public.”** (page 4)
- 1.11 The delivery of a responsive service, closely engaged with local people, is addressed primarily through neighbourhood policing and the overarching agenda of citizen-focused policing: one strategy addresses reassurance in the community and the other goes to the heart of individual satisfaction and confidence. Individual

experience of policing services will shape satisfaction, and ultimately may influence an individual's willingness to give evidence and support the criminal justice system. Underpinning these two key aspects of the policing agenda, which are not mutually exclusive, is the need to utilise and manage assets and resources far more effectively, and also to seek learning and innovation to secure the future.

- 1.12 Policing strategies are developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) with other stakeholders; they are only effective in communities, through the quality of local service delivery and the ability of those engaged at a local level to implement strategic intent.
- 1.13 One of the remarkable consistencies in policing services remains what is generally understood to be the 24/7 response policing function – the initial attendance at an incident by police officers and police staff following a call for those services from members of the public. While numerous different deployment models and structures exist across England and Wales, this fundamental frontline service is still delivered on a 24/7 basis.
- 1.14 The leadership and supervision of that function is therefore critical to ensuring the delivery of an effective policing service. This thematic inspection was established on the premise that, in order to fulfil current and future demands, 24/7 sergeants as acknowledged 'leaders' need to be confident, capable and effective. Clarity of role is essential; accountability and assessment, with clear linkage to strategic organisational goals and underpinned by coherent support mechanisms, are interdependent parts of a framework for effective service delivery.
- 1.15 Within this framework, effective leadership and supervision are manifested through the empowerment of well prepared, trained, skilled and supported individuals who have a clear understanding of the expectations of them internally and externally and are able to deliver. Whether an officer is acting as the initial 'bronze' commander responding to a critical incident,<sup>3</sup> or as the guardian of a citizen-focused approach, experience has shown that quality of leadership is vital in determining the ultimate outcome in terms of public satisfaction and confidence.

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<sup>3</sup> The ACPO-approved definition of a critical incident: "Any incident where the effectiveness of the Police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community."

- 1.16 This thematic inspection has examined the role of the sergeants who lead and supervise 24/7 frontline staff in the context of response policing. Although the term ‘frontline supervisor’ is an accepted generic descriptor for sergeants in this role, in reality the role demands more than ‘supervision’ (which sometimes has a somewhat passive or managerial connotation); it requires reactive and proactive leadership. For that reason, this report will generally refer to this role as ‘frontline sergeant’.
- 1.17 HMIC has sought to identify whether current practices, in terms of preparation for that role and organisational support for it, are adequate. If, however, the context of support and working conditions directly impact on the ability of individuals to perform their role in a professional way, this varied environment will almost certainly result in variation in the service provided. This thematic inspection seeks to identify issues that may imply additional potential risks – and which could be mitigated – to the reputation of the Police Service.
- 1.18 HMIC contributes to the improvement of law enforcement through rigorous objective assessment, which is subsequently published. This thematic inspection provides a ‘snapshot’ review; evidence has been taken from a questionnaire directed at frontline sergeants in forces in England and Wales, and from site visits. The outcome is intended to offer insights which will help the Police Service and stakeholders build an agenda for change.

### ***Original brief for the inspection***

- 1.19 The role of the frontline sergeant is vital to ensure the quality of service delivery and the quality of first response to calls from the public for policing services. The constantly changing operational context and the need to be vigilant in handling critical incidents demands high-quality frontline leadership and supervision in order to ensure the effective management of incidents and resources, in terms of both decision making and initial incident management.
- 1.20 The primary focus for this thematic inspection has been the work of frontline sergeants. In recognising the importance of sergeants as frontline leaders and the part they play in delivering a professional service to the public, HMIC wanted to establish how post holders were being identified, selected, prepared for and supported in this role by their force.

- 1.21 Other areas for investigation were preparation and training for the role, leadership and management of staff, and maintenance of standards of service delivery and standards of professionalism. All of these were to be reviewed against the backdrop of an increasingly complex operating environment, where the frontline sergeant is often at the centre of activities ranging from the provision of protective services through to the management of central and local performance frameworks, and providing leadership in demanding operational incidents.
- 1.22 It is also important to remember that this leadership and guardianship role is routinely the first step as a supervisor, so for many it represents an unfamiliar and challenging change in responsibilities.

#### Quote from a Chief Constable

Chief Constable:

***“Sergeant is a leadership role – very different from constable ... Sergeants should coach, appraise, mentor and lead people, manage operational risks to the force and the public, the most important tier of leadership.”***

- 1.23 An Inspection Reference Group was established, with representatives from the Police Federation Sergeants’ Central Committee, the Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales (PSAEW), ACPO, the Association of Police Authorities (APA), the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), the Workforce Modernisation Programme, the Home Office, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and other key stakeholders (see Annex A).
- 1.24 The terms of reference for the inspection, after discussion and consultation, were agreed as follows:

- to focus predominantly on uniformed 24/7 response policing sergeants;
- to examine the skills levels of 24/7 response policing sergeants to effectively perform the role of initial ‘bronze’ commander at critical incidents;

***[Note: While the inspection will attempt to identify minimum levels of professional skills necessary for delivery of effective supervision and organisational risk management in the context of these terms of reference, it will also seek to determine how these skills may need to be developed/extended in the context of the current and the developing operational environment.]***

- to examine the capability of frontline supervisors to lead and manage staff and maintain standards;
- to focus predominantly on uniformed 24/7 response policing sergeants;
- to examine the skills levels of 24/7 response policing sergeants to effectively perform the role of initial 'bronze' commander at critical incidents;

***[Note: While the inspection will attempt to identify minimum levels of professional skills necessary for delivery of effective supervision and organisational risk management in the context of these terms of reference, it will also seek to determine how these skills may need to be developed/extended in the context of the current and the developing operational environment.]***

- to examine the capability of frontline supervisors to lead and manage staff and maintain standards;
- to examine the level of preparatory training afforded frontline supervisors and whether current training is adequate;
- to examine the current levels of experience of frontline supervisors and explore the relationship between experience and high-quality supervision and service delivery;
- to examine the relationship between organisational and individual priorities;
- to examine the quality of support (managerial and infrastructure) provided to frontline supervisors;
- to identify transferable good practice emerging from the inspection; and
- to deliver a final thematic report.

1.25 This report, although focused specifically on the terms of reference, also highlights any additional concerns raised during the course of the inspection which may require further research.

### ***Literature review***

1.26 A literature review was undertaken to examine whether existing evidence could help to inform the thematic focus on frontline sergeants. While there was a mass of literature on 'leadership', in particular at the more strategic levels in policing, little work has been undertaken specifically focusing on frontline sergeants.

1.27 Although not in abundance, there were reports that provided an interesting insight into relevant issues. For example, an academic study conducted in the United States in the early 1980s found that:

**‘Sergeants have rarely been the explicit target of police studies. When they have been studied, it has been incidental to the broader examination of a particular police function. The few studies concerned with general police administration have usually lumped sergeants into the lower order of police agencies and have concentrated instead upon the management activities and perspectives of high departmental officials.’**

It could be argued that 25 years on, little has changed.

1.28 A Home Office study in 2001 was also helpful. It was based on 378 completed field work diaries and 72 interviews with officers who were engaged in operational and community beat policing in seven basic command units throughout England and Wales; 20 of them were supervisory police officers, including sergeants. The research suggested that:

- officers on patrol deserved better and more flexible support over the 24-hour period;
- officers felt undervalued and wanted “to spend more time on patrol and have more time to deal with victims”;
- they perceived that patrol was considered to be of low status; and
- morale, minimum staffing levels, too much paperwork and poor IT infrastructure or use of existing IT were all issues.

The report concluded that ‘the status of operational policing’ needed to be improved and that working practices should be addressed – specifically by allocating resources to patrol, offering round-the-clock support from civilian staff, and improving individual time management.

1.29 A report undertaken in 2005, commissioned by the Police Federation of England and Wales, included an online questionnaire completed by 1,927 sergeants; interviews with 72 sergeants in a major metropolitan police force; and focus groups involving sergeants with varying roles and responsibilities. This research suggested that:

- the police sergeant is at the fulcrum of delivering effective operational policing, having the unique dual function of responsibility for both first-line management and for frontline operational supervision;

- sergeants reported insufficient time and ever-increasing demands as barriers to performing their role;
- sergeants perceived that their forces did not attach the same degree of importance to responsibilities that they considered crucial to the effective management and supervision of police work – this may in part explain why sergeants find they have insufficient time to give these areas of responsibility the priority that they appear to deserve; and
- rank is central to the effective delivery of policing – this is a core theme emerging from the research, with ‘rank’ cited consistently throughout the interviews as an essential feature underpinning operational effectiveness and the continuity of service delivery.

1.30 A 2006 report on 24/7 response policing<sup>4</sup> was commissioned by the Sergeants’ Central Committee of the Police Federation. Fifteen police forces in England and Wales took part in the research, following evidence from their local joint branch boards that the under-resourcing of the response function was creating a serious resilience problem which threatened the safety and well-being of 24/7 response officers. The research suggested that:

- Major factors determining the nature of 24/7 response work were abstractions; the influence of call centres on the number of incidents that response officers have to attend and the pace they work at; a rise in incident follow-ups (due to new standards of incident recording and crime reporting, the drive to increase detections etc.) that have increased the work of 24/7 officers; the demands of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on 24/7 response officers; the burden of bureaucracy on officers; time spent in custody facilities; and performance and management targets ‘pressurising’ some officers.
- For all the reasons mentioned above, 24/7 officers found it difficult to perform all the core functions expected of a 24/7 response officer in the manner laid down by force and national requirements.
- The introduction of neighbourhood policing and workforce modernisation were also highlighted as issues placing more pressure on 24/7 response officers.
- There were some positive views of the impact of civilians performing traditional roles as a means of freeing up police officer time; as many civilian posts had only recently been introduced, however, there was little evidence to work from. Concerns were raised regarding the perceived breakdown into small pieces of police officers’ role, leading to a loss of the role’s

<sup>4</sup> *24/7 Response Policing in the Modern Police Organisation: Views from the Frontline*, Chatterton and Bingham, 2006.

richness and diversity and a reduced range of tasks for officers to perform.

- 1.31 In addition to the studies above, there is a large literature base on leadership and management in the Police Service, although most of this focuses on generic leadership qualities rather than the leadership requirements for sergeants.
- 1.32 Nevertheless, one report in 2004<sup>5</sup> is worthy of mention, namely a study of 150 police officers across ranks and a postal questionnaire to police authorities, police officers and staff which looked at what constituted effective leadership. The authors argue that “there has been no generally accepted leadership theory against which practice could be tested, and no clarity about how police leadership might need to change”. The report concluded that:
- an evidence-based model of the key elements of police leadership was required;
  - transformational leadership was needed throughout the Police Service;
  - training designs and leadership development processes commissioned through the Police Learning and Development Programme (PLDP) should be installed both locally and nationally as soon as possible;
  - recruitment and selection processes for the Police Service across all ranks needed to be able to identify candidates who would have a positive impact on subordinates through the kind of leadership they provided; and
  - the PLDP should develop a strategic plan for ensuring appropriate police leadership standards throughout the Police Service. This plan should detail how to tackle poor leadership and use positive role models to best advantage.
- 1.33 As the discussion in the following chapters indicates, there were many similarities between the issues raised in the literature review above and those identified in this thematic report.
- 1.34 These studies highlight a number of important issues that have been recognised since at least the 1980s. This begs the question as to what impact they have had and what the Police Service has done to date to address their findings. It will not be acceptable for the issues raised in this report to be ‘left on the shelf to gather dust’ or filed in the ‘pending’ box.

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<sup>5</sup> *Police Leadership: Expectations and Impact*, Dobby, Anscombe and Tuffin, 2004.

## Methodology

- 1.35 The research for *Leading from the frontline* was divided into three phases. The **initial phase** involved the design of a web-based questionnaire (see Annex B); this was developed with the assistance of the Police Foundation to provide academic rigour and integrity, and was administered by an independent research company – ORC International – to ensure impartiality and objectivity. A questionnaire was seen as valuable in terms of potentially providing a ‘baseline’ for future work, as well as offering a ‘snapshot’ of how frontline leaders regard their role and, for example, the support they receive. Clearly, the results of the questionnaire needed to be assessed and ‘triangulated’ from further work. An underlying principle was nevertheless that those working in frontline service delivery roles should have an opportunity to express their views and propose ideas for change.
- 1.36 The questionnaire was made available to sergeants in the 43 forces in England and Wales who met the following criterion: **“Does your role, either wholly, or in part, entail the frontline supervision of uniformed police officers and/or police staff who are engaged in a) responding to emergency and non-emergency calls from the public, or b) supervision of uniformed police officers and/or police staff as part of a graded response model or system?”**
- 1.37 To quality assure the data gathering, the questionnaire was designed with the consultation and guidance of Dr Janet Foster from the London School of Economics, who is currently seconded to the Police Foundation – an independent charity whose mission is to identify and promote improvements in policing in England and Wales. Dr Foster has worked extensively with the Police Service for over 20 years, and has had significant involvement in, among other things, reviewing and reporting on the Police Service’s implementation of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations.
- 1.38 The questionnaire contained 80 questions based on the terms of reference, two of which were ‘open’ questions where respondents had the opportunity to comment in free text. The first of these looked at critical incidents, and the second provided an opportunity for respondents to raise any issue that they considered relevant to their role but was not specifically covered elsewhere in the questionnaire. The entire process was confidential and anonymous, and the facility to contact HMIC directly was provided in case any individual wanted to speak to the team confidentially.

- 1.39 Of the 78 ‘closed’ questions, respondents were asked to answer by ticking one of five options – strongly agree, agree, don’t know, disagree and strongly disagree – or either yes/no, as appropriate.
- 1.40 The **second phase** involved a team of eight from HMIC visiting six forces to test the data produced by the 4,201 completed questionnaires<sup>6</sup> (representing 49% of the estimated number of sergeants who fulfilled the criteria). The questionnaire data informed the decision on where to deploy the field team to maximum effect. Lewisham and Redbridge were the first Metropolitan Police Service boroughs to host the HMIC inspection team. Norfolk, Surrey, Humberside and Greater Manchester Police were the remaining four forces.
- 1.41 As work progressed and emerging issues were identified, shorter visits were made to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (to look at its mandatory training programme for new sergeants and its code of ethics), Hertfordshire Constabulary (for its collaborative training arrangements), West Midlands Police (for its Personal Development Review (PDR)/promotion process), An Garda Siochana (for its training arrangements), and the Scottish Police College, Tulliallan (for its National Diploma).
- 1.42 **The field team was not given access to the questionnaire data** until the conclusion of the site visits. This was to ensure that their objectivity was not contaminated, and to facilitate unbiased triangulation between the questionnaire data, the field evidence and the terms of reference.
- 1.43 In addition to these visits, access was secured to a number of non-police organisations which had been identified as offering potential good practice with regard to identifying and developing junior leadership candidates. These were EDF Energy (a multi-thousand employer), Invista (a subsidiary of Charles Koch Industries, the largest private company in the world), Vodafone (for its talent spotting and PDR system), British Army (for its leadership selection process and its appraisal system).
- 1.44 Finally, a focus group of frontline sergeants and staff was held with officers who were female, from black and minority ethnic groups and/or from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community. This was held because the very dynamic nature of the field visits meant that it was not always possible to ensure that focus groups were representative, and because there were indications in the survey

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<sup>6</sup> Not all respondents answered all questions. Percentages displayed in later sections are of the total number of responses to a particular question.

data of differing views between gender and minority groups on some issues that HMIC felt were important to explore.

- 1.45 This approach provided the opportunity to **triangulate** a comprehensive data set from the **questionnaire** with one-to-one and focus group **interviews** and with **observations** by the field-team.
- 1.46 The variety of forces that hosted a full visit provided HMIC with the opportunity to examine activity in urban, semi-urban and rural environments. A full visit lasted for seven days, typically Monday to Sunday and included weekends and night shifts. The field team comprised a chief inspector from PSNI, six inspectors from Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Hertfordshire and Merseyside (all of whom had recently been in frontline roles) and one equivalent grade police staff member from West Yorkshire.
- 1.47 In total, 571 police officers and staff, of whom 257 (45%) were sergeants, were seen by HMIC in focus groups and one-to-one interviews. The field team also conducted 255 hours of live observations of frontline sergeants in the workplace during a mixture of shifts including weekends and night shifts; the purpose was to observe sergeants' activity during periods where access to managerial and other support was readily available, and during periods when this was less the case.
- 1.48 The **third phase** consisted of analysis of the fieldwork evidence (interviews and observations) and the questionnaire data,<sup>7</sup> cross-referenced against the terms of reference, and the production of the final report.
- 1.49 *Leading from the frontline* is the distillation of 4,201 questionnaire responses from sergeants (including over 1,300 personally written perceptions of handling critical incidents and over 1,000 personally written accounts of their experiences in their role), feedback from 571 police officers and staff across all ranks and grades of their experience of issues surrounding frontline leadership and supervision, 255 hours of direct observations in 13 basic command units and benchmarking in seven organisations outside the Police Service of England and Wales, all cross-referenced against the terms of reference.

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<sup>7</sup> The figures relating to 'non-white British' respondents are to be treated with caution in statistical terms. The officers who declined to give a reply to their ethnicity have been added to this group and therefore it is not possible to gauge the accuracy of this figure.

- 1.50 HMIC believes *Leading from the frontline* to be the most comprehensive piece of research into this area in policing history. HMIC is grateful to the organisations and forces that supported the work and is confident that this report will provide compelling evidence to support a foundation for change.

# Chapter 2

## **THE ROLE OF A 24/7 FRONTLINE SERGEANT**



## Introduction

- 2.1 Given that the frontline sergeant is a **pivotal figure in delivering corporate aims and vision** and, through these, the quality of service to the public, it is not unreasonable to assume that the expectations on the individual carrying out this role may reflect a common service standard. The benefits of such an approach would include the ability to move resources and respond to incidents where forces require additional support. In a world characterised by the need to collaborate, such demands are likely to increase rather than diminish. Yet the picture to emerge from this thematic proved substantially at odds with this view.
- 2.2 At the start of this inspection, HMIC asked each of the 43 forces in England and Wales to provide the latest version of its role profile of a frontline sergeant. The responses varied considerably.
- 2.3 A generic role profile for a ‘patrol sergeant’ has been in existence since 2003. It was designed on behalf of the Police Service by Skills for Justice, the dedicated sector skills council and Standards Setting Body for the Justice sector. The standard is supported by an Integrated Competency Framework (ICF) based on nine core responsibilities, and associated ‘activities’ and indicators. The overall role is described in the following way:

**“To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and respond to calls from the public.”**

- 2.4 The standard contains core competencies, which all sergeants should meet, and a number of optional ones designed to cater for variations in the roles performed by sergeants. Annex C contains a generic role profile of a patrol sergeant as supplied by Skills for Justice.
- 2.5 To be effective and efficient, staff in all ranks and roles need to have a **clear understanding** of their role and the **expectation** their force has of them in that role, together with clear and **unambiguous direction** as to the purpose of the role and where it fits in overall force activity.
- 2.6 This is particularly true of frontline sergeants. They are the leaders of frontline activity and are responsible for supervising some 80% of demand for policing services (according to Home Office figures). Frontline sergeants have a key role in a range of activities, including the provision of protective services; community engagement; performance management; and staff development, coaching and

mentoring. All of this is undertaken in the context of a citizen-focused approach to service delivery, in a society where the basis of policing is securing the consent and the active engagement of the public.

- 2.7 HMIC believes that, given its complexity and the responsibility it carries, this role ranks alongside any other perceived **'specialism'** in policing terms. In this context HMIC views it as vital that those charged with this level of responsibility are appropriately **trained, equipped, skilled and 'prepared'** to do so.
- 2.8 This prompts the question **"What does a 'good' frontline sergeant look like?"** In answering this, it is important for the senior leadership of the Police Service to engage in this debate and restate some of the fundamental 'ingredients' that need to be present for strategic organisational objectives to be translated into frontline service delivery.
- 2.9 However, from the evidence of this inspection and wider feedback, HMIC can confidently state that frontline sergeants need to be:
- **leaders**, with the **skills, capability** and **confidence** to direct activity in support of organisational objectives;
  - **trained** to a sufficient standard (in terms of both content and timeliness) to be able to **effectively supervise** and manage those under their command, including by undertaking **necessary** bureaucratic processes;
  - **equipped** with the right assets and resources to meet demand; and
  - **prepared** – in terms of their previous policing and life experience, and their **readiness** in terms of **capability and confidence** to perform the role.

### *Findings*

- 2.10 This inspection revealed marked inconsistencies in forces' definitions of, expectations from and approaches to a role that HMIC views as fundamental to the effective delivery of frontline policing services.

### *Role profile*

- 2.11 On examining the reasons why there are such wide variations in the role of frontline sergeants, HMIC found that a number of forces no longer have a specific 24/7 frontline sergeant post. From the responses received, HMIC found that various definitions were in use, including:

- patrol sergeant (15 forces)
- tactical patrol team (6 forces)
- response sergeant (5 forces)
- generic sergeant (5 forces)
- core patrol (2 forces)
- neighbourhood patrol sergeant (2 forces)
- incident resolution sergeant (2 forces)
- divisional uniform (1 force)
- neighbourhood response sergeant (1 force)
- sector sergeant (1 force)
- core section sergeant (1 force)
- sergeant (uniform duties) (1 force)
- uniformed 24/7 (1 force)

Note: Although the above list adds up to 43, six forces did not respond, and others sent more than one definition, giving a total of 43.

- 2.12 Elements of the current ICF appeared in the majority of the definitions supplied, but there was limited consistency, and two forces made no reference to the ICF at all. While this may sound surprising, on closer examination it appears to be because force structures vary considerably, with some having the ‘response’ function divided between different teams either on a geographical basis or by grade or urgency of response, or a combination of both. In some forces, the response officers retained responsibility for crime recording and initial investigation, and in others they did not.
- 2.13 There were also differences in how the roll-out of neighbourhood policing models was implemented, which provided yet more variation: in some forces, neighbourhood teams took responsibility for non-emergency calls within their specific area and some did not; some had responsibility for primary investigation of reported offences in their patrol area and, again, some did not.
- 2.14 In the questionnaire, **81%** of respondents stated that their force has a **clearly defined role profile** for a supervisor of frontline staff. Only **63% of these**, however, then stated that their role profile accurately reflects what they do. Therefore, overall nearly half of respondents felt the force’s role profile did not accurately reflect their daily activity, and **15%** stated that it **distinctly did not reflect their role**.

- 2.15 Despite these variations, HMIC found remarkable consistency in the day-to-day functions of the frontline sergeants we encountered. This tends to corroborate HMIC's assessment that role profiles for a 24/7 frontline sergeant are too complex and varied and are, therefore, unlikely to be achieved. Clarity would provide unequivocal focus on 'what is most important'.
- 2.16 The existence of numerous variations on this theme is, therefore, somewhat puzzling. HMIC accepts that forces reserve the right to adapt role profiles to take account of local differences and needs, but asserts that there should be a basis of fundamental commonality.
- 2.17 HMIC views it as a fundamental issue for the Police Service urgently to clarify the role definition of a frontline sergeant, given their critical role in service delivery. With the enhanced mobility of the modern Police Service, HMIC suggest that this definition should have national baseline characteristics which can be built on locally to address local needs (see recommendations).

#### ***Clarity of role, purpose and expectations***

- 2.18 This inspection has identified an absence of strategic direction in frontline activity. The fieldwork included interviews at all levels of the Police Service, from frontline constables and police community support officers (PCSOs), through to heads of departments, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and police authority members. Unsurprisingly, the higher in the Service HMIC looked, the more strategic the views and perceptions of expectations and purpose of frontline activity and supervision became.
- 2.19 What HMIC did find surprising was that the strategic objectives of each force visited were being translated into frontline activity with varying degrees of clarity. Many senior officers and managers knew well the organisational imperatives of citizen focus, community safety and engagement, counter-terrorism activity and so on, but it was rare that this was effectively translated, either in communication strategies or by visible and supportive middle management through regular dialogue, consultation and feedback with frontline staff.

- 2.20 For example, in one force the Chief Constable maintained that frontline activity was explicitly geared towards, and clearly linked to, organisational priorities as described above. HMIC tested this by reviewing the performance framework for frontline sergeants, and found that all the indicators contained in their Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) were centred on **quantitative**, as opposed to **qualitative**, outcomes (sanction detection rates, arrest rates, stop/search and stop/account frequency, 100% compliance with the PDR process etc.).
- 2.21 HMIC felt that the strategic intentions of that particular force were unclear and misunderstood by frontline staff, and that basic command unit (BCU) senior management teams (SMTs) were not effectively ‘bridging the gap’. This was not a unique finding.
- 2.22 Forces need to ensure that frontline staff are clear about their purpose and know what is expected of them. A critical element is effective frontline leadership and supervision. Forces must address the importance of frontline activity and its place in determining public satisfaction and confidence. If this important strategic message is not communicated and supported, it is difficult to envisage how frontline activity will accurately and tangibly reflect organisational requirements.
- 2.23 Frontline sergeants are critical to this success. **Clarity in their role purpose and of the expectations of the force is, therefore, vital.**

### *Confidence, capability, and capacity*

#### **Questionnaire quote**

*“There appears to be too many sergeants who are unwilling to actively supervise staff. This is especially common in not challenging sloppy practices and accepting poor work or paperwork. There is a clear lack of active supervision of inexperienced staff and a belief that we should move to management rather than supervision. I accept my views are slightly old-fashioned, but we are not an insurance company, we are a disciplined service where both discipline and self discipline are crucial to frontline policing.”*

- 2.24 The author of this quote appears almost apologetic for holding the views they do. HMIC asserts that frontline sergeants (if not all supervisors) should be leading activity, supporting and developing their staff and holding them accountable. In order to do so, it is essential that those charged with these responsibilities have the **confidence, capability and capacity** to do so.
- 2.25 This has particular relevance in the context of operational and organisational risk management and in the maintenance of fundamental standards of professionalism, which will be examined later in Chapters 5 and 6. However, HMIC felt it appropriate to consider some of the wider implications of ‘capability’ and, to that end, considered various elements of the frontline sergeants’ responsibilities to determine if current capability and confidence levels were adequate.
- 2.26 In addition, HMIC sought to identify actual frontline team numbers compared with budgeted workforce targets, and to gain evidence of the perception that resourcing levels can have on capacity to deliver, and to identify ratios of supervisors to frontline staff. Table 2.1 shows the responses to questions about budgeted versus actual resource levels of frontline staff.

**Table 2.1: Respondents’ actual vs budgeted strengths at time of questionnaire**

Role	a) What team composition should be	b) Present composition	c) Number who have fulfilled role in past 12 months	d) Number unable to deploy
Inspector	0.82	0.87	1.21	0.07
Sergeant	2.55	2.55	2.7	0.25
Constable	14.86	13.1	9.55	1.9
PCSO	2.16	1.84	1.35	0.19
Police staff	0.80	0.59	0.47	0.03
Other (e.g. special constables and volunteers)	0.74	0.48	0.36	0.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.93</b>	<b>19.43</b>	<b>15.64</b>	<b>2.47</b>

- 2.27 What these responses show is that, on average, the number of constables in respondents' teams should be 15 (as determined by the forces themselves), but that the actual number is 13, representing 13% below the budgeted target. In addition, on average, a further two officers per team are unable to be deployed either through health or discipline-related restriction, representing a further 13% deficit. These figures do not take into account annual leave and other abstractions (training, specialist roles etc.), and it was not possible to determine an accurate average abstraction for those reasons.
- 2.28 This effectively means that when the questionnaire was conducted, respondents' teams were, **on average, 26% below strength** in terms of budgeted deployable targets. **HMIC is concerned** at this level of resourcing deficiency and the potential risk it presents in terms of standards of service delivery to communities. Furthermore, it is unclear how much oversight and monitoring of resources is carried out on a day-to-day basis.
- 2.29 The data also reveals that the **average ratios** of frontline sergeants to frontline constables on budgeted workforce totals **ranged from 1:4 to 1:9**. The inspection found little if any 'science' applied to supervisor ratios, beyond attempts to identify the minimum that might be acceptable.
- 2.30 Many police constables stated that they did not always see a sergeant during their shift, with one example of constables and PCSOs not being able to see a sergeant without making an appointment. HMIC suggests that forces should review their frontline delivery infrastructure to address issues such as these (see recommendations). To assist in that consideration, there follow a number of typical quotes showing questionnaire respondents' perceptions of resource levels and their adequacy.

### Questionnaire quotes

*“As a frontline supervisor with 20 years’ service (nine as a sergeant) my biggest challenge is to manage resources and prioritise the response. There are not enough frontline officers working 24/7 to give a quality public service. Those officers working front line are invariably young in service and inexperienced.”*

*“The main issue I believe affects response teams currently is the lack of officers. This may appear to be an old argument but the fact is the officers on my team have very little time to use their skills and knowledge to be proactive, rather than constantly reactive. Often staffing levels are so low we struggle to meet the demands of emergency calls.”*

*“Due to the lack of frontline officers the number of frontline sergeants has reached a situation where there is now a critical lack of coverage.”*

- 2.31 Concerns were also expressed in a focus group of PCSOs and special constables, where the group were in agreement that quality supervision existed within the BCU. The main concern expressed was that sergeants, and indeed inspectors, have to answer low-grade calls due to the lack of resources and this prevents them supervising the team for periods of time during the day. One stated:

*“[frontline supervisors] are run ragged.”*

- 2.32 In balancing these concerns, however, an interview with a BCU chief superintendent, asked about resource levels, revealed a view that there were no blockages to sergeants being able to deliver quality supervision. An example was cited that, in the summer of 2006, overtime had been made available to ensure that there were always two sergeants on the late-turn shift. Last year the same was offered, but the sergeants themselves had stated that the money could be better spent elsewhere, and that it was not necessary.

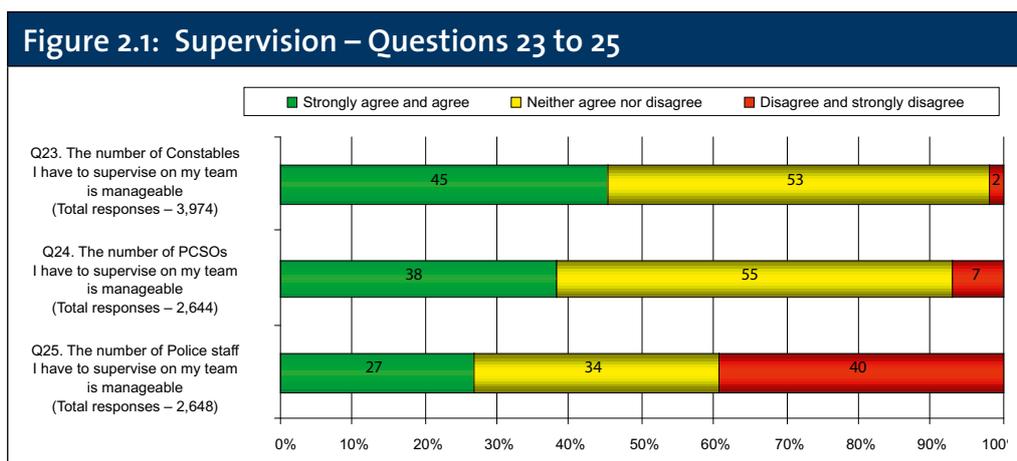
- 2.33 *The Review of Policing* by Sir Ronnie Flanagan noted:

**“Despite the significant increases in the numbers of officers and staff over recent years, the Service’s resilience remains a crucially important issue in the light of the range of risks which it is asked to manage at the local, regional and national level”** (page 45).

- 2.34 Given the wide span of demands, and the need for a depth of skill, professionalism and specialism, balancing the resource mix in an informed and skilful way will be a real challenge for the Police Service. The ability to scope and project skills and resources needed is essential, and within the current environment the resource mix is very finely balanced indeed. The work of this thematic inspection entirely supports the conclusions of *The Review of Policing* that careful workforce planning and demand management is an essential feature of policing today.



- 2.35 HMIC recognises that resource levels are a constant source of debate and *Leading from the frontline* is not intended to examine the relationship of resource levels to demand. This will naturally vary from BCU to BCU and force to force. Nevertheless, HMIC does assert the need to make an assessment of impact on frontline capacity before considering re-allocating frontline resources to other areas of policing.
- 2.36 In further examining ‘manageability’ and capability, in terms of numbers of staff respondents are responsible for, the responses showed that 84% of respondents indicated that the number of police constables on their team is manageable, and only 9% said specifically that it was not manageable; however, this is not universally the case.



2.37 In one force visited, HMIC found one frontline sergeant who had responsibility for staff at nine deployment sites and spent an average of two hours at the start of each tour of duty on the phone establishing who was at each site and organising logistics such as officers having to collect or return vehicles. HMIC is pleased to note that, having raised this example with the force concerned, the situation is under active review and this structure is intended to be rationalised from nine sites to three in 2009.

2.38 This report supports the conclusions of *The Review of Policing* that careful workforce planning and demand management is an essential feature of policing today.

### Summary

2.39 **Clear definition of the role** is a prerequisite for effective performance.

2.40 The **differences in role profile** for sergeants who are performing essentially the same role, albeit in different parts of the country, was stark. From the observations made throughout this inspection, HMIC notes the **remarkable consistency in the day-to-day functions** of a frontline sergeant in the forces visited.

2.41 HMIC found great **inconsistency in approaches** that forces have in terms of role definition and clarity of purpose, to what is fundamentally the same function. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the level and quality of **service provision varies** so considerably.

2.42 From both the questionnaire and the fieldwork carried out as part of this thematic inspection, it is clear that there is **variation in understanding** as to what the role profile of a frontline sergeant should be and how the ICF should, or should not, underpin this

role definition. There is also a **question about how accurate the ICF definitions are for this role** (see Chapter 4 for more detail). The findings of this thematic inspection strongly support further examination as recommended in *The Review of Policing* (recommendation 14).

- 2.43 **Frontline sergeants need to be visible** to their staff. The evidence gathered during the inspection points to a mixed picture across the Police Service. Sergeants have regularly cited that they are constrained by a number of factors from providing the levels of ‘hands-on’ and visible leadership and supervision that they would wish.
- 2.44 Despite the fundamental issues that require addressing as described above, it is encouraging that, overall, frontline sergeants responding to the questionnaire generally felt that **staffing levels were manageable**, particularly in relation to constables.

### *Recommendations*

1. The Association of Chief Police Officers, together with the National Policing Improvement Agency, should develop a set of national standards for the role of frontline sergeant. They need to define a baseline of competence in areas such as leadership, critical incident and risk management, management and development of staff, maintenance of standards of professionalism, and service delivery. Such standards should not be overprescriptive or restrictive, but should allow forces, locally, to build on common foundations of expertise.
2. Police authorities must work together with chief officers to ensure that strategic organisational objectives are clearly and effectively translated into frontline delivery activity, and that the performance management and learning and development frameworks remain consistent with the strategic intent and force expectations.
3. Forces should urgently review policies and ensure that opportunities are maximised for frontline sergeants to provide active leadership and supervision at or during incidents, and to be accessible and visible to their staff, through the review and rationalisation of administrative and/or procedural burden.

# Chapter 3

# **PREPAREDNESS AND PROMOTION**



## Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter examines how the Police Service currently prepares sergeants for frontline leadership in the context of 21st-century policing. In order to explore this critically, it is important to examine how the role has evolved to its current form and discover whether preparatory processes and practices remain fit for purpose.
- 3.2 As previously stated, HMIC is clear that the frontline sergeant has a critical role to play in terms of leadership, high-quality supervision and risk management, especially as the Police Service is embarking on a period of change arising from recommendations contained in Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *The Review of Policing*, and the wider reform agenda (including the forthcoming Green Paper), which places quality, engagement with local people and managing risk at its heart.
- 3.3 In the past decade, the Police Service has experienced a period of unprecedented change. Forces have responded to the need to professionalise what were previously viewed as general policing functions. This period has seen the creation of specialist departments to manage high-risk cases such as:
- sexual offences;
  - high-risk offenders in communities;
  - numerous volume crime investigation models;
  - protective services (counter-terrorism and extremism, serious and organised and cross-border crime, civil contingencies and emergency planning, critical incident management, major crime – requiring the appointment of a senior investigating officer – public order, strategic roads policing and protecting vulnerable people); and
  - high-tech crime.
- 3.4 These have all caused forces to review and adapt their investment choices, and difficult decisions have had to be made. Additional pressure has also been created in responding to:
- the National Workforce Modernisation Programme;
  - criminal justice reform;
  - the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR);
  - the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS);
  - information management;
  - police reform;
  - the implementation of the National Intelligence Model (NIM);
  - dedicated neighbourhood policing teams; and
  - the developing Citizen Focus agenda.

3.5 The questionnaire responses and the fieldwork revealed the view that many of these changes have been implemented at the expense of resourcing frontline policing.

3.6 Within this complex metamorphosis, remains a consistency – the need to provide a policing response to calls from the public on a 24/7 basis. A further consistency is the fact that the frontline sergeant has a critical role to play in providing an effective response to any or all of the demands listed above. As one Assistant Chief Constable commented:

***“Sergeants are pulled in so many ways. We want them out on the street, but we want them to input details on all their officers, missing persons, risk assessments, PDRs [Personal Development Reviews] etc. We are a slave to government targets. This huge mass creates bureaucracy. Competing pressures – we are victims of our own inconsistencies. I wouldn’t be a sergeant now, it’s a much bigger role than when I did it.”***

3.7 The argument has been made that the introduction of specialist units has reduced demand on general policing. *Leading from the frontline* is not intended to resolve this argument. The intention here is to provide evidence of the ‘here and now’ in order to inform future planning. HMIC is clear that 24/7 policing remains a priority and deserves appropriate resource investment alongside any other ‘specialist’ role.

3.8 HMIC inspects nationally many of the areas mentioned in paragraph 3.3 against agreed standards which are owned by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). It is apparent that there are no national common standards for frontline sergeants.

3.9 HMIC believes that frontline service delivery is core police business, and that frontline sergeants are, more often than not, the first tier of police management at a critical incident where that responsibility increases significantly and expectations internally and from communities increases exponentially. The question has to be asked: **“Is the Police Service preparing people for that responsibility?”**

3.10 Until the introduction of work-based assessment (WBA) in 2004, the promotion process for sergeants was relatively similar across all forces in England and Wales. Candidates had to pass OSPRE<sup>8</sup> Parts I (law examination) and II (practical exercises) before being eligible

<sup>8</sup> OSPRE means Objective Structured Performance Related Examination; this is a two-stage process: Part I is a multiple choice, law-based exam; Part II is a scenario-based exam, using actors in a series of ‘stations’ to test behavioural competence.

to be considered within force for promotion. Currently, 37 of the 43 forces in England and Wales use the OSPRE process for promotion from constable to sergeant.

- 3.11 The remaining six forces are trialling the WBA – also known as TOWBAR (Trial of Work-based Assessments Regime) in the Metropolitan Police Service. This process is currently being considered as a potential replacement for the OSPRE Part II examinations. WBA has four elements:
- Step 1 – assessing an officer for promotion;
  - Step 2 – OSPRE Part I;
  - Step 3 – assessment against competencies and suitable vacancies;
  - Step 4 – temporary promotion and WBA.
- 3.12 So, **“What might a ‘good’ promotion process look like?”** It might include the following:
- The process is seen as effective and fair.
  - The process delivers capable leaders at the right time and place, appropriately skilled.
  - The process identifies leadership characteristics, and trains technical skills.
  - There is opportunity for those promoted to demonstrate their skill and expertise through a form of accreditation.

### *Findings*

- 3.13 *Leading from the frontline* is not intended to review national or individual force promotion processes; however, given the findings of this inspection, HMIC views it as essential that the promotion process is structured to deliver Service requirements in terms of leadership, confidence and capability.
- 3.14 In addressing very similar issues to those identified in this thematic, ACPO Scotland (ACPOS) has recently introduced a diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management. Briefly, the promotion process for sergeants in Scotland will, in 2010, comprise a standardised level of competence across a nationally agreed range of skills and experience, demonstrated through the successful completion of a number of modules (see Annex D). Only on the successful completion of all modules can a candidate apply for promotion to sergeant.

- 3.15 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, Paddy Tomkins, commented:

*"I want us to have the best police service we can, that is fit for purpose and responds to the changing demands of Scotland. To achieve this it is vital that we have the right systems in place to make sure the best and most talented officers have their skills and experience recognised.*

*The promotion process is about identifying officers with the best ability to deliver what is required at each rank above constable. It is essential that the processes through which promotions are managed not only identify the best people but are efficient, transparent and fair. The recommendations suggested in this report will help to make sure they are.*

*In this day and age, it is almost unheard of to have a system where managerial nomination is the only route to promotion. Similarly a system where the vast majority of vacancies are advertised only within the force can't be in the best interests of Scottish policing as a whole. Scottish communities deserve to have their policing managed and led by people who have experienced a range of policing challenges and different policing styles. We need middle and senior ranking officers who are prepared to seek out those challenges and we need policing practice which is cross fertilised with experience from more than one force."*

- 3.16 HMIC believes that the Police Service in England and Wales should seriously consider the model adopted in Scotland and it regards this approach as good practice. This approach, or similar, would provide the opportunity to ensure the broader experience necessary for effective supervision is available to those who are identified as being suitable potential candidates.
- 3.17 The fieldwork for *Leading from the frontline* revealed significant strength of feeling at all levels regarding the adequacy of existing systems and processes for preparing candidates for promotion, many of whose first posting will be as a frontline sergeant.
- 3.18 HMIC found many examples of sergeants who were viewed both by themselves and others, including HMIC, as not having the range of skills and/or experience necessary to supervise service delivery effectively in the challenging context as described. This may owe much to the significant variation HMIC found in the way forces prepare individuals, and individuals prepare themselves, for promotion and for the role of frontline sergeant.

### ***Formal selection and promotion process***

- 3.19 As outlined earlier in this chapter, there are two formal pathways to promotion from constable to sergeant currently in operation across the 43 police forces in England and Wales.
- 3.20 Typically, following successful completion of the OSPRE Parts I and II examinations, constables become eligible to apply for the sergeant promotion process, run internally in various guises within forces that are not trialling WBA.
- 3.21 This process usually takes the form of a written application. Candidates are short-listed for interview and, if successful, are then allocated to a 'pool' to await a vacancy. Shortly before or after promotion, the officer **should** attend an initial sergeant's training course.
- 3.22 In April 2007 HMIC published its report on police promotions<sup>9</sup> and highlighted the limited assessment of operational risk that takes place when placing people in acting or temporary posts. This process is also used in WBA. The report states:
- “Given that the Service knows that officers progressing to step 4 still have development requirements and are yet to demonstrate full competence at the rank, the Service could be putting the individual and the service at risk”** (page 20).
- 3.23 HMIC suggests that before deploying officers at temporary rank, the force should undertake a risk assessment to ensure this is a managed risk. HMIC strongly argues that this also applies to those deployed in the acting rank (see later in this chapter).
- 3.24 The current selection process for promotion from constable to sergeant was frequently raised in focus groups and interviews undertaken during the fieldwork across the forces visited, one of which was a WBA trial site. There were strong feelings that the WBA process was over-bureaucratic, open to manipulation and added a considerable burden to candidates' workloads.
- 3.25 Focus groups were held with officers who were undertaking WBA, officers who were line managers and those who were supervised by WBA sergeants, in order to gain clarity on the perceived impact of WBA on the selection process. The 'tick box' activity and manipulation of the WBA process was mentioned in focus groups of constables and police community support officers. Several examples were given of candidates having to create the opportunity to provide evidence.

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<sup>9</sup> HMIC *Police Promotions Trial Inspection 2007 – Summative Report*, HMIC, April 2007.

- 3.26 An example of this was giving constables unnecessary action plans in order to provide evidence of that activity. During a focus group, a constable produced a list of questions that had been handed to him by his sergeant prior to a briefing parade, together with an instruction to ask the questions on the list at a particular stage during the briefing process. This was so that the candidate could provide evidence of a particular activity on an occasion when the assessor was present.
- 3.27 Additional concerns were raised regarding the amount of time needed to complete workbooks, often abstracting candidates from active supervision and impacting on work–life balance because they had to catch up on their documentation in their own time. The following are common statements from focus groups within the fieldwork regarding WBA:
- **“It widens experience and adds focus to activities.”**
  - **“Bureaucratic and abstracts frontline supervisors.”**
  - **“Standards seem to be lower.”**
  - **“For frontline officers it is not specific enough and demands their time; PCs are aware of the need to tick boxes.”**
- 3.28 HMIC comments in the police promotions inspection report that:
- “There was evidence that even those with completely inconsistent performance would eventually be able to provide some examples of good performance and complete the portfolio of evidence”** (page 21).
- 3.29 In the forces visited, the majority of officers felt that there was still a need for a law-based examination (OSPRES Part I) as this was felt to be relevant. Feedback also revealed a perception that Part II has lost credibility. This perception was, in part, due to the proliferation in training courses, demonstrating how to pass the process by behaving in a way that increases the chance of success, as opposed to remaining a scenario-based process designed to test readiness for the rank.
- 3.30 Focus group participants generally felt that OSPRES did not take previous experience into account and that this was not sufficiently tested before promotion.

Basic command unit (BCU) chief superintendent (summary of interview):

*The interviewee felt that more mature officers have shied away from OSPRE I and II because, after eight to ten years, they do not want to put themselves through the exam or the board. The process suits younger officers who have been trained in the 'OSPRE way'. The older the officer, the harder it is to engage in the process.*

Frontline inspector (summary of interview):

*The interviewee was of the opinion that some people get through the OSPRE process, not because they are competent officers, but because they have been on courses that teach them how to pass Part II.*

BCU superintendent:

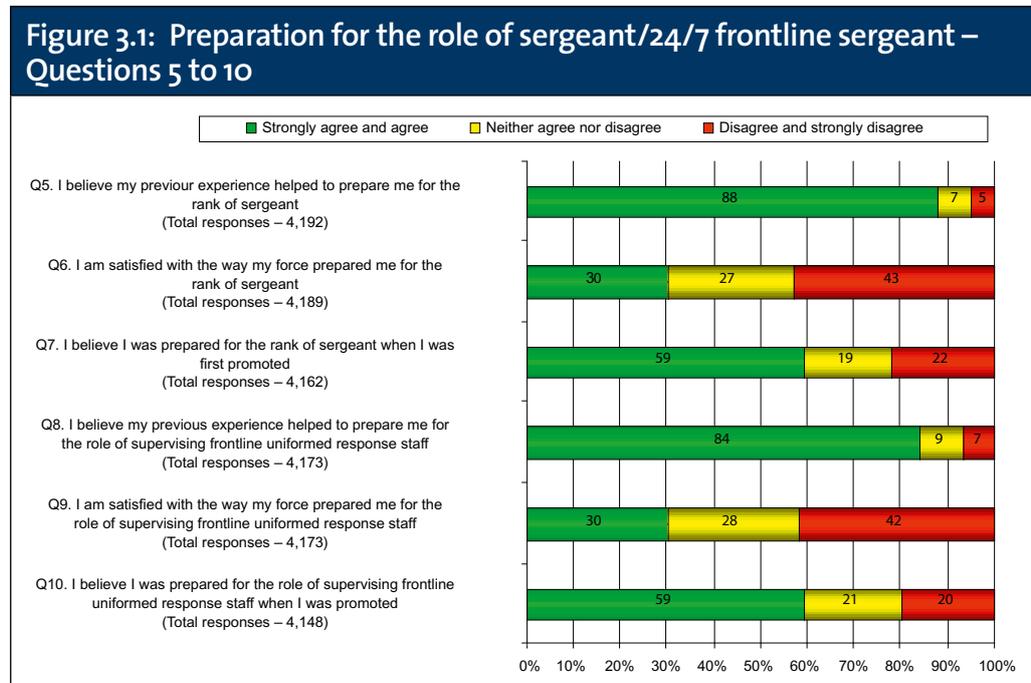
*“OSPRE II doesn't test the capability of an officer to become a sergeant and the force is therefore losing the opportunity to promote individuals with excellent qualities.”*

- 3.31 Officers described very experienced and competent constables they knew who were unable to pass OSPRE; the Police Service was not benefiting from their experience. Many officers felt that a WBA should replace Part II but in a format that is developmental, non-bureaucratic and includes an element of shadowing and mentoring to assist with gaining valuable experience in how to deal with incidents and situations.
- 3.32 HMIC suspects many readers of this thematic report will have encountered, or know, such role models at police constable rank in terms of leadership, capability, confidence and personal standards of professionalism. HMIC refers here to the 'senior' constables within teams, to whom less experienced officers turn for advice and guidance, and whom their line managers recognise as key individuals for engendering an ethos of service delivery and professionalism. The field team, indeed, saw many such officers during this inspection.
- 3.33 HMIC believes that there needs to be a robust debate to **determine if one promotion process can 'fit all' in the future**, and to examine opportunities that could, with safeguards, allow the Police Service to benefit from those individuals' experience in a supervisory capacity as part of, or complementary to, mainstream promotion processes.

- 3.34 HMIC urges the Police Service to seek ways to recognise, value and reward such individuals who support 24/7 policing with a deep commitment and are invaluable to the service provided to the public.

### *Readiness for the rank and for the role*

- 3.35 Of the respondents, **88%** said that their **previous experience helped** to prepare them for the rank of sergeant. However, only **59% felt they were prepared** for the rank of sergeant when they were promoted. It is clear, therefore, that although previous experience helped it was not sufficient preparation alone.
- 3.36 Figure 3.1 shows how questionnaire respondents felt about their readiness for promotion, the role of frontline sergeant and how their force supported them during the process.



- 3.37 Table 3.1 shows respondents' perceptions of their readiness for the rank of sergeant and the role of frontline sergeant by demographic groupings. Of note is the significantly lower positive response from acting sergeants, part-time officers and female officers in response to Questions 7 and 10.

**Table 3.1: Perceptions of preparedness across a range of demographic groups**

	Q7. "I believe I was prepared for the rank of sergeant when I was first promoted"	Q10 I believe I was prepared for the role of supervising frontline uniformed response staff when I was promoted
All respondents	59%	59%
Male officers	60%	60%
Female officers	52%	51%
Substantive sergeants	61%	60%
Temporary sergeants	53%	52%
Acting sergeants	39%	47%
Part-time officers	57%	49%
BME backgrounds	66%	64%
White British backgrounds	58%	59%

3.38 Officers who took part in the diversity focus group made an interesting observation regarding Questions 7 and 10 in particular. Many members of the group interpreted these questions as appearing to be a form of challenge.

***"[It read as if you were saying] were you good enough to be a sergeant when you were promoted?"***

3.39 Clearly, it was not HMIC's intention to challenge competence, but the slightly different perceptions across ethnic groups were interesting.

3.40 The following quotes from the questionnaire and the fieldwork further highlight the perception of the inadequacy of existing preparatory processes.

### Questionnaire quotes

*“My main concern with my force would be the lack of training on promotion on issues such as staff management, incident management and the work of other agencies (there are so many now). There needs to be some consensus between forces as to training requirement for uniformed supervisors.”*

*“I was promoted from a specialist plain clothes role that I had been in for ten years – to NPT supervision. No training, no mentoring, and no support. Nearly sent me off sick with the stress of living up to expectations. Actually considered leaving the job, after 17 happy years. Felt additional expectation to prove I was up to the job of a uniformed officer, and also because I was female and part-time – it all compounded. However, I managed and now realise it was a lot to do with self-confidence – having training and mentoring beforehand would have benefited me hugely.”*

*“Having completed four years within the CID before being promoted into a uniformed sergeant’s role, I have lost touch with what really went on out on the streets. I got promoted with no training either as a supervisor or back into a new role.”*

### Fieldwork quotes

BCU chief superintendent:

*“Good sergeants, more luck than judgement at the moment. There is an issue with telling people they are not ready for promotion.”*

Human resources manager:

*“Corporately we don’t serve our frontline managers very well. We don’t equip them.”*

Frontline constable:

*“Eight or nine months ago the sergeant and inspector brought some case files for me to check because they didn’t know what went in them. The sergeant did not know as he had no experience and the inspector did not know as he had just come back to operational policing from being away.”*

Female frontline sergeant:

*“You’re just left to flounder.”*

Black male sergeant:

*“It would be a good idea to shadow a supervisor who has a lot of experience, but unfortunately ... you hit the ground running.”*

- 3.41 Evidence of this emerging skills gap has been identified in other areas, e.g. by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) in the implementation of the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP). Registration as competent within national occupational standards for PIP level 1 entails an officer being assessed as ‘competent’ in interviewing victims and witnesses; interviewing suspects; and conducting volume and priority investigations.
- 3.42 This fundamental assessment of competence was envisaged as being carried out by sergeants, including frontline sergeants. The PIP Implementation Support Peer Review<sup>10</sup> of level 1 implementation in 39 forces in England and Wales, found that a significant number of **sergeants felt unable to make a judgement of these skills due to their own lack of experience and knowledge**. There is a danger that this skills gap will impact on the ability of level 1 assessment to be effectively undertaken, and the PIP process could be undermined at its most basic level.
- 3.43 Common to this thematic, the NPIA peer review noted significant variations in the implementation of PIP in England and Wales as a whole. It is noteworthy that PIP was endorsed by ACPO but was introduced without an implementation framework. This was rectified by ACPO Cabinet on 7 March 2007 when an implementation support plan (ISP) was agreed.
- 3.44 The recent NPIA peer review also revealed that, since the ISP was agreed, **“forces have made significant progress towards full implementation”**. In bringing the variation in PIP implementation to ACPO Cabinet’s attention, in March 2007, the minutes of that meeting note:
- “The up-skilling of existing staff has concerned some chief officers. National learning and development programmes have been reviewed in light of these concerns in consultation with a number of forces. This has led to the re-design of a learning and development programme which will address the needs of existing volume crime investigators and may be tailored to meet the individual requirements of an investigator or supervisor. This programme will be available later this year and capable of delivery in tailored modules.”**
- 3.45 The similarities between the issues being faced by forces and their application of PIP, and the application of best practice on critical incident management are striking (see Chapter 7).

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<sup>10</sup> PIP Implementation Support Peer Review, NPIA, January 2008.

- 3.46 During the fieldwork the inspection team identified many instances where sergeants had little or no experience of certain scenarios or processes that they were now being expected to supervise, advise on and quality assure. For example, **many had never prepared case files or given evidence in court**. In one case, HMIC interviewed a detective inspector in charge of a busy CID office who had never given evidence in the Crown Court.

Inspector:

*“The volume crime model limits experience, and staff rotation needs to be clearly structured to resolve future problems.”*

BCU chief superintendent:

*“Too many sergeants are being promoted too young in service and they have limited experience. This then causes problems as they do not have the necessary experience to deal with the role, especially in the area of managing staff, many of whom are older than the sergeant. Also they do not bother to learn the skills necessary to become an effective sergeant as they are ‘merely passing through’ on the way to promotion or a specialist posting. This is symptomatic of the recruiting campaigns for policing where people are led to have unrealistic expectations of a career path, especially regarding promotion to high rank.”*

### Focus group quotes

Sergeant:

*“The silo system of work allocation is alive and well in [force]. The issues that have been mentioned in other reviews such as failing to skill and de-skilling are applicable here. The difference identified in [force], though, relates to the autonomy given to the BCU. In [named BCU] there is a cradle-to-grave approach for many of the low level crimes (theft, common assault) with the more serious work being undertaken by volume units or prisoner processing units. In the other three divisions the patrol officers do not hold onto this ‘briefcase’ workload.”*

Sergeant:

*“The geographical nature of [BCU] and its three designated custody suites makes it difficult to have central processing teams like in the other divisions, and as such the logistics mean that it is more effective to continue with existing practice. The problems are exacerbated, though, when one considers that when a constable working on [BCU] gets promoted and is posted at [another BCU] they will be expected to supervise officers with their own investigative and file [enquiries]. With little or no experience of these matters” there is a fundamental risk that supervision will not be of an adequate level unless specific training is given.”*

Frontline constable:

*“Experienced ‘skippers’ are pulled off for other duties, i.e. custody, which have been replaced by a TOWBAR sergeant with no experience, therefore PCs have to ask each other.”*

- 3.47 Evidence of inexperience also emerged from outside observations, e.g. in an interview with the Crown Prosecution Service district prosecutor. His impression was that the frontline sergeants were very inexperienced and therefore their officers were seeking advice for cases from people who had little or no experience in these areas themselves. This had led in some cases to them ‘rubber stamping’ the case files that they were supposed to be reviewing rather than actually looking at the contents of the file. His impression was that they could be easily persuaded by the officers into **“giving it a run and thereby hoping to get the charge and therefore the detection”** rather than directing a better investigation.
- 3.48 The concern about inspectors’ and sergeants’ inexperience was further illustrated in an interview with a detective sergeant who felt that newly promoted sergeants have no one to look up to and therefore have no foundations on which to build experience.

#### Questionnaire quote

*“Promoting officers who have not experienced the full rigours of service in their first five years or more has led to poor supervision. This permeates through the ranks and can cause danger when policy is created by those who haven’t the experience but read a book.”*

#### Case study: inadequate preparation and support

The case was a critical incident involving three vulnerable missing persons intent on self-harm. HMIC debriefed the inspector in charge the next day. By his own admission, the inspector felt completely ill-equipped to deal with the incident due to his long absence from frontline activity, having been in a specialist CID role for a number of years. The three sergeants available were equally challenged, unfamiliar with critical incident procedure and lacked confidence to the extent that one of their constables at the scene took command and acted as ‘bronze’ commander while the sergeant became his radio operator.

Fortunately, through the actions of two constables, a successful intervention was made and the missing persons were prevented from jumping from a high building. The inspector concerned had not been given the opportunity to re-familiarise or attend any refresher training prior to transfer. There was no opportunity for mentoring and the force support mechanisms, in terms of dedicated ‘silver’, did little to bridge the confidence and knowledge gap on this occasion. The sergeants, in turn, had no access to the support and guidance necessary to manage such a difficult, and potentially high-profile, incident due to insufficient preparatory training afforded to the Inspector, and their existing skills levels.

- 3.49 It is not unreasonable for a force to expect individuals to keep abreast of legislative and procedural changes relative to their role, and take proactive steps to prepare themselves for a new role. Equally, it is not unreasonable for individuals to expect their force to have adequate support mechanisms in place through the transition from one role to another.
- 3.50 The **creation** of a set of **nationally agreed standards** for frontline sergeants could address this ‘capability and confidence gap’. With an increasingly mobile workforce and the increasing use of national advertisements for promotion opportunities within forces, the introduction of national standards would go some way to ensuring that a level playing field is created, giving confidence to both the individual and the organisation. This should apply in terms of both the technical aspects of the role, and in explicitly setting out the agenda, including overall vision and values, that the frontline sergeant is expected to uphold.
- 3.51 In the context of the terms of reference for this thematic inspection, HMIC has seen that the variations in role definition of a frontline sergeant used by different forces are undoubtedly having an impact on preparatory processes.

### *Training*

- 3.52 *Leading from the frontline* is not intended to review training strategies or processes, but to reflect accurately the ‘here and now’. It is important to gauge perceptions of the adequacy of training afforded to sergeants on promotion and on appointment to a frontline sergeant post.
- 3.53 At the beginning of this thematic inspection, HMIC requested information from all forces regarding the training (mandatory and optional) provided for newly promoted sergeants. Forty-three different responses were received. These included WBA, the Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) and numerous local training programmes. That is not to say that there were no ‘variations on a theme’ in several forces, but the lack of consistency and commonality was stark.
- 3.54 Of the respondents to the questionnaire, **37%** said they were **provided with specific training** for their role as a supervisor of frontline uniformed response staff by their force at the point of posting or in preparation for posting. This means that **63% of respondents had received no role-specific training**. As one Chief Constable was heard by HMIC to say to a group of staff:

***“Nobody can remember when the sergeants or inspectors had proper training.”***

### Questionnaire quotes

*“The problem with my force is that training for sergeants is not delivered on promotion. You may have to wait up to 24 months to receive courses which become irrelevant.”*

*“I am amazed that after promotion and then given a post, I have had no formal training for my position. I am fortunate to have 14 years’ policing experience which has helped, but for those that may only have a few years’ experience, things must be a lot tougher. Even basic training would have been useful. I have a number of leadership courses arranged, but not until next year when, by that time, I will have had six months in post.”*

*“The only reason I felt ready for my promotion was the fact I spent 16 years in the Army and had undergone extensive training in personnel and incident management. The police have not given any training in either. The OSPRE Part II has no relevance to the role of a sergeant in the real world. I was promoted from a specialist department back to uniform after a seven-year absence with no training or support.”*

*“I have been given very little hands-on classroom environment training. The majority of my training is now via distance learning packages which rely on the individual understanding the concept, and having the computer skills to navigate complicated sites and links ...The distance learning way of teaching legislation and procedures is poor and I feel that cost has overtaken quality in relation to police training.”*

- 3.55 Of the forces visited, only Greater Manchester Police had a mandatory corporate preparatory training course for promotion to sergeant. In the remaining forces, training opportunities were varied and inconsistent. Also of note was the timeliness of rank and/or role-specific training, with some focus group members waiting up to 18 months for their initial sergeant’s training course.
- 3.56 Of the questionnaire respondents, **52%** agreed that they were provided with **specific training for the rank of sergeant** at the point of or in preparation for promotion, **but 48% did not**. Acting sergeants were least likely to have received training for the rank of sergeant. Of the sergeants who responded to the questionnaire, 97% said they would have liked to have had rank-specific training prior to, or at the point of, promotion – 51% saying they would have preferred it before promotion and 46% at the point of promotion.

### *Acting sergeants*

- 3.57 The Service has long utilised a process known as ‘acting-up’, principally to ensure that adequate and appropriate cover is available in each rank. All forces visited provided opportunities to ‘act-up’ as sergeant; the process for obtaining these opportunities ranged from a local ad-hoc agreement to a structured force-level process. This is usually confined to constables who have passed Part I of OSPRE; however, other examples emerged.
- 3.58 The use of constables to ‘act-up’ as sergeants is widespread. Properly managed, this practice provides officers with valuable experience, helping them to consolidate and refine their knowledge and experience and to develop their skills in support of consideration for promotion to the rank of sergeant. Acting roles need to be managed appropriately in terms of both selection of candidates and the support given to them while ‘acting’.
- 3.59 The total number of questionnaire respondents identifying themselves as acting sergeant was 266 (6%). Of the acting sergeants who responded to the questionnaire, **only 25% had received any training relevant to the role.**
- 3.60 HMIC found, during the fieldwork, that the actual proportion of acting sergeants was much higher at 16% of all frontline sergeants encountered, and 9% of all sergeants interviewed. In one BCU, in a metropolitan force, 6 of the 19 frontline sergeants interviewed, representing **32%, were acting sergeants.**
- 3.61 The difference between the questionnaire data and the fieldwork evidence is believed to be partly due to forces’ management information systems not being able to provide accurate data on acting sergeants. Therefore, the questionnaire may not have reached as many of those individuals as HMIC would have liked.
- 3.62 HMIC also found that some officers were being used in acting roles for a single tour of duty, to cover absences or to cover a substantive role, without being qualified for the rank. The following examples include one officer who had been acting continuously for four years in three different roles without an OSPRE Part I qualification.

### Focus group quotes

Frontline constable:

***“I have had 13 acting sergeants on my shift in the last two years.”***  
(HMIC was unable to verify this statement, as management information systems were not configured to facilitate the query.)

Frontline constable:

***“I was telephoned at home during the weekend and asked if I wanted to act from the Monday. I arrived to find I was the only sergeant on duty across the whole BCU – and that was it. Someone had kindly left a pile of paperwork for me to attend to.”***

Frontline sergeant:

***“It’s almost like you need an ‘Equity’ card to work in [this force].”***

### Questionnaire quotes

Acting frontline sergeant:

***“Since starting my acting role I’ve not received any feedback as to how I’m doing in my role. I have not had any positive or negative feedback and perhaps certain situations could be avoided if this occurred. I feel that they offer support at the start of the posting and then it peters off. I am not sure if this is due to them believing I am capable or not.”***

Acting frontline sergeant:

***“I have been an acting sergeant for the past 18 months. My force does not appear to wish to run promotion boards and is effectively using acting sergeants to run teams, while stating there are no sergeant’s posts available. This appears to be getting sergeants on the cheap.”***

Acting frontline sergeant:

***“My force has a policy which means constables are encouraged into acting sergeants’ roles. For a suggested period of three months. However, on many occasions this is extended to save promoting an officer to substantive rank. For example, in the last five years I have spent more time as an acting sergeant than a constable but have not been promoted.”***

- 3.63 The questionnaire data has revealed that **confidence levels** for dealing with critical incidents are **lower for acting sergeants**: 77% felt confident as opposed to 89% of substantive and 86% of temporary sergeants.

**Greater Manchester Police** has a policy that no officer can undertake the role of acting sergeant without first being OSPRE Parts I and II qualified as well as completing and passing a local foundation course. This course has a 'practical' focus and was regularly reviewed through consultation and feedback from officers who had attended it. The period of acting is agreed in advance and the officer is assessed. After promotion to sergeant there is a further course to attend.

- 3.64 HMIC would strongly encourage forces to adopt a similar approach to that of Greater Manchester Police, who have introduced a structured process for the selection of acting sergeants. The force had 22 respondents to the questionnaire identifying themselves as acting sergeants. Interestingly, their responses to Question 10 ("**I believe I was prepared for the role of supervising frontline uniformed response staff when I was promoted**"), were **71% positive compared with the national average for acting sergeants for the same question (47%)**.

### *Substantive sergeants*

- 3.65 There was evidence that officers who were **experienced in other specialist roles struggled when moving to a frontline sergeant role**. There appeared to be little evidence of refresher training for such officers, which made them vulnerable to mistakes and undermined their confidence.
- 3.66 HMIC observed this to be the case in examples of level, as well as vertical, transfer to a frontline sergeant role. Generally, changes in law and procedure were communicated via email or the intranet, which many sergeants claimed was not effective: information largely went unread due both to the volume and perceived irrelevance of much information communicated in this way.
- 3.67 One example included a sergeant moving to a frontline role after a couple of years in a headquarters position. The world had moved on, and this keen and very professional individual was nevertheless effectively obliged to ask the police constables he was supervising about the latest procedures.

3.68 It is clear from the evidence gathered that the level of support for newly appointed sergeants is mixed and could be significantly improved. Clarity of role and purpose has been discussed at Chapter 2, and would improve candidates' ability to prepare. This, coupled with support through mentoring or shadowing and relevant training, would help to ensure that sergeants are more effective and confident in their role from the outset. The Metropolitan Police Service, for example, has implemented a mentoring scheme for sergeants from minority groups in partnership with the Safer London Foundation, where external companies and organisations provide mentoring and support. HMIC encourages the use of such schemes.

### ***Talent spotting***

3.69 In examining these issues, HMIC found that inherent leadership skills on the part of many individuals came to the fore. HMIC observed that many frontline sergeants, despite organisational shortcomings in terms of support and infrastructure, were still providing leadership in the operational as well as personal context. *Leading from the frontline* is not intended to provide a review of leadership; however, much of the evidence may serve to inform the forthcoming future HMIC assessment of leadership, following the promulgation of the NPIA Leadership Strategy. It does, however, provide an opportunity to benchmark with external agencies their approaches to the identification and development of potential candidates for supervisory roles.

3.70 For example, EDF Energy has embarked on a process of **talent spotting** across its organisation, with a view to **identifying future leaders**. The view is that technical skills can be learned, but that inherent leadership skills are a fundamental requirement in ensuring the whole workforce remains motivated and productive. EDF is developing a more psychological approach to management selection whereby personal leadership characteristics and attributes are valued and tested alongside technical ability.

3.71 This was also true of West Midlands Police, which has recently introduced a staff development framework. The force has developed a set of five basic requirements against which it bases all promotion processes up to and including the rank of chief superintendent. These requirements are:

- **ability to lead;**
- **service delivery;**
- **relationships;**
- **personal attributes; and**
- **continuous improvement.**

- 3.72 There are a number of behavioural indicators related to each heading and a potential promotion candidate needs to provide sufficient evidence of the areas relevant to the role and/or rank applied for. This framework provides the basis for line management discussion on readiness before embarking on the process. It also provides a framework for identifying individual developmental needs. An added benefit is that it provides line managers with the opportunity to reject a candidate's application on the basis that he or she cannot yet demonstrate the sufficient level of experience of a particular role (managerial or otherwise) required by West Midlands Police. This model has not been subject to evaluation by HMIC, but it is seen as a positive development in testing leadership and personal characteristics alongside technical ability.
- 3.73 Similarly, Dorset Police has invested heavily in leadership development and implemented a leadership development framework. The force is currently engaged in a three-year evaluation of leadership in the force and HMIC awaits the outcome with interest. As a potential indicator of the impact the investment has already had in terms of confidence and capability, HMIC found that Dorset Police was one of only three forces nationally to report a 97% response of 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to Question 50, "**In general, I am confident in my ability to deal effectively with a critical incident**", compared with the national average of 88%. This may indicate a link between an investment in leadership and increased confidence and capability.
- 3.74 As a result of a number of comments from interviewees who had experience within the armed services, the **military model** of identifying leaders was frequently mentioned, as was the Personal Development Review process used by the military. In order to explore the assertions that the Police Service was 'missing a trick', access was sought to attend the Army Officer Selection Board at Westbury in Wiltshire. This is an intensive process lasting four days, which is now used army-wide for the selection of warrant officers. But HMIC accepts that it may not be practical at all levels in the Service.
- 3.75 However, it was noted that there were clearly transferable principles. For example, the Army seeks to identify the leadership potential of individuals as well as their technical potential, the theory being that if an individual possesses the 'right' qualities, the technical skills for a particular role can be taught. The Army tests under three broad headings of: **mind, body and soul**, from which 11 sub-categories are used to test across a range of attributes.
- 3.76 HMIC had the opportunity to observe a selection process in its entirety and holds the view that lessons can be learned from this methodology. The opportunity to test leadership skills as well as

technical skills as part of a promotion process should be given consideration.

- 3.77 This sort of approach is particularly relevant at sergeant rank, as improved selection of the first tier of police leadership will provide a foundation on which subsequent processes can be based and be a worthy investment in the future of the Police Service.
- 3.78 HMIC feels there is scope, and indeed a need, to review promotion processes and incorporate **more emphasis on the human qualities needed to lead others** as opposed to the current emphasis on process management and understanding of management techniques. These are of little value if they cannot be translated practically and confidently into dynamic leadership in the operational environment.

### Summary

- 3.79 Given the increase in the complexity of the context for delivery of frontline policing services, HMIC holds the view that existing **preparatory processes are not currently providing frontline sergeants with the requisite skills**, or with exposure to a sufficient range of experience necessary for high-quality, effective leadership and supervision in the vast majority of cases.
- 3.80 Once clarity of role and purpose has been agreed (see Chapter 2), addressing this situation will result in the Police Service's ability to **properly identify suitable candidates** and design preparatory processes that will, in turn, enable frontline sergeants **to deliver strategic organisational objectives** into frontline 24/7 delivery. This work should be undertaken without delay.
- 3.81 Work-based assessment is due to begin a phased roll-out across forces from April 2009. Given the impending review of the Integrated Competency Framework, **urgent consideration needs to be given to the content of the WBA framework** to ensure it meets future service outcome requirements in the context of frontline service delivery.
- 3.82 HMIC takes the view that it is both necessary and legitimate to test a candidate's knowledge of law as a prerequisite of promotion to sergeant, but that it is equally **necessary and legitimate to test a candidate's ability to lead and manage staff**.

- 3.83 HMIC is concerned that **neither the OSPRE nor WBA processes has the ability to test leadership objectively in its current format**, and that it is possible to undermine both through either the 'creation' of evidential opportunities or the ability to 'buy-in' specific training focused on how to overcome a scenario, as opposed to testing readiness for the rank.
- 3.84 **The absence of a common standard of technical skills** among frontline sergeants observed during the fieldwork is a fundamental issue for the Police Service. It is difficult to envisage how frontline sergeants can effectively lead, manage, coach or mentor an officer or member of staff under their command in the absence of sufficient levels of knowledge and experience.
- 3.85 The proliferation of specialist units over recent years appears to have exacerbated the situation, and the variations in force structures appear to have resulted in a **reduction of opportunity to attain the broad range of exposure to different aspects of policing** that are essential to the ability to deliver competent frontline leadership and supervision.
- 3.86 **The variation in the provision of training supplied before, at the point of and after promotion is significant.** It is not within the remit of this inspection to assess the training delivered, but it was noted from the questionnaire results that those forces that supplied training did not reflect a higher proportion of officers who felt they were prepared for the rank compared with those from forces that did not supply training.
- 3.87 **Experience gained prior to promotion was a factor that scored highly** with officers who felt it helped prepare them for the rank of sergeant and the role of 24/7 frontline sergeant. This is an area that requires further research to clarify the underlying issues.
- 3.88 Some appear to believe that length of service automatically guarantees competence. In fact, evidence suggests **that breadth of experience is the key factor**, while accepting that this is usually achieved over a substantial period in a role. HMIC contends that, in itself, **length of service is not the predominant determining factor; what is crucial is the diversity of experience** an individual seeks out, or has made available to them, in a given period.
- 3.89 **The promotion process nationally lacks consistency.** The *HMIC Police Promotions Trial Inspection 2007* was unable to supply evidence that the WBA was producing improved operational performance or a better standard of sergeant. This is ongoing work outside the remit of this inspection.

- 3.90 **HMIC is concerned at the level of use of acting sergeant.** Properly structured, it is accepted and encouraged as a valuable developmental opportunity. The observed regular use of the facility to back-fill through inappropriate succession planning appeared commonplace in all but one of the sites visited.
- 3.91 HMIC strongly suggests that forces review their practices in respect of their appointment of acting sergeants and place **greater emphasis on ensuring continuity of competent qualified supervision**. Failure to do so presents significant risk to individuals as well as the wider organisation.

### *Recommendations*

4. The Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Policing Improvement Agency should together undertake a fundamental review of the promotion process, from constable to sergeant in the first instance. The review should take account of the need for forces to identify, nurture and develop talent through the effective use of the Personal Development Review process. This review should refocus the promotion process towards identifying leadership qualities and complementary technical knowledge and experience. The outcome should be used to inform future decision making on the structure of promotion processes up to and including the rank of chief superintendent, placing **leadership** skills alongside **technical competence**.
5. The Association of Chief Police Officers should undertake a fundamental national review of the use of acting sergeants in all forces.
6. Chief officers must ensure that where acting sergeants are deployed, they are suitably qualified and supported, and should develop processes to accurately monitor the extent of use of acting sergeants. An impact or risk-assessment process should accompany the deployment of all acting sergeants.

# Chapter 4

# **USE OF THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**



## Introduction

- 4.1 *Leading from the frontline* examines capability and preparation for the role of frontline sergeant. The use of the Personal Development Review (PDR) is intrinsic to the role and also to individual development – the issue of PDR processes, and how they are utilised and regarded, cannot be ignored. The validity and value of the current PDR format provoked significant strength of feeling during focus groups and interviews: in the spirit of following the evidence, 93 PDRs were reviewed as part of this inspection. Little evidence was found of the PDR being used as a framework for assessing individual performance and addressing aspiration, for either lateral or vertical development.
- 4.2 This thematic highlights the importance of developing a learning organisation. Processes such as briefing, debriefing and capturing learning are essential if we are to drive increased professionalism, confidence, capability and capacity. It is also critical that PDRs are not just about the ‘organisation’ or a particular incident, but ultimately about people. Each member of staff should understand how he or she can make a contribution to the overall aims of the organisation – indeed it is their obligation to do so.
- 4.3 In accordance with Home Office circular 14/2003, every officer is required to have an annual PDR. Based on the Integrated Competency Framework, the PDR process should set clear objectives for officers that are linked to their role, and encourage them to focus on their future development, their career aspirations and the needs of the force. The PDR process should be used to underpin officer development, and to ensure that officers are equipped to discharge their duties efficiently and effectively.
- 4.4 **What does a ‘good’ PDR system look like?** It should:
- be fully understood by all parties;
  - have an ‘appraiser’ who is appropriately trained;
  - be a fair and transparent process;
  - incorporate clear and SMART<sup>11</sup> objectives;
  - balance qualitative with quantitative measures;
  - hold individuals to account for their contribution; and
  - provide a route to signpost and agree personal development.

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11 Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

## Findings

- 4.5 The PDR system is a vital part of the overall framework to develop people and improve performance. **It should do what it claims to:** 'Personal Development Review'. This should be an ongoing process throughout the year – an opportunity for line managers to assess and support staff, review performance against objectives and identify potential development. It should not be a bureaucratic paper exercise. However, the findings of this inspection were mixed, and ultimately disappointing.
- 4.6 As a direct result of views provided by officers to HMIC during field visits, it proved necessary and beneficial to examine the use and application of the PDR process, and its role as both a development framework for those aspiring to the rank of sergeant and a means of ensuring that strategic organisational goals are effectively translated into service delivery.
- 4.7 HMIC reviewed 93 PDRs (44 of sergeants, 42 of constables, five of inspectors and two of chief inspectors – covering substantive, temporary and acting ranks) to determine how the PDR was being used as a tool for developmental activity and as an assessment of performance in a given role. In addition, 166 training records were reviewed to examine how effectively training provision supported existing and newly appointed frontline sergeants. However, HMIC cannot report on this with confidence, as many records were incomplete or not sufficiently detailed for this purpose.
- 4.8 The exception in the latter respect was Greater Manchester Police, which has a **robust and documented process for providing acting and substantive sergeants with relevant training**. Additionally, within the Metropolitan Police Service, HMIC found that those undertaking the Trial of Work-based Assessment Regime (TOWBAR) process were also provided with relevant training that formed part of the requirements for completing the assessment process. The process in other forces was less clear.
- 4.9 Almost without exception, HMIC found that the PDR process is currently being used to support performance frameworks and the achievement of both local and force performance measures. Two forces used the PDR to support the promotion process, with a score being awarded that went on to count towards an aggregate score (to be considered alongside other elements of the force promotion process).

- 4.10 Many sites had 100% compliance, with the completion of PDRs being one of their supervisory officers' annual objectives. In reviewing these, HMIC found that completing the documentation had become the object of the exercise, as opposed to any form of individual development.
- 4.11 HMIC found significant discontent with the PDR process in its current form: it was felt to be over-bureaucratic and people felt that **little or no common understanding or relevant training existed on how it should be completed**. There was also confusion over the use of the ICF within the PDR process, and many staff felt the process was of little value to the individual. It was looked upon as merely something that had to be done to satisfy a performance measure.

#### Perceptions of PDRs

##### Focus group quotes

Frontline sergeant:

*"The PDR process is a waste of time – people only make use of it for promotion or for going on to another position."*

Police Federation sergeant:

*"If I [as a manager] identified training that an individual needed and put this in his PDR, nothing would get done about it."*

Constable:

*"The PDR system was not used for anything."*

Inspector (when asked if he would support his sergeants whose objectives were quality of service rather than sanctioned detections):

*"Are you joking? I would be sacked!"*

A basic command unit temporary superintendent:

*“The PDR system is not used to any effect. It is too hard to use and it doesn’t mean anything as it is not used for anything. This means that the skills, experiences and abilities of officers are not considered during the promotion process. The whole process rests on the ability of the officer to perform on the day of internal assessment.”*

An inspector:

*“PDRs are a complete nightmare – nobody knows whether they are coming or going – we have had three ACPO [Association of Chief Police Officers] leaders in recent succession and they all have different ideas.”*

A PCSO:

*“PDR processes are a waste of time and are only there to achieve the tick for Investors In People.”*

- 4.12 One inspector reported that he had undertaken an internal assessment of completed PDRs on an operational command unit. He had inspected 90 such documents and stated that only 5% contained meaningful objectives and were of any development use whatsoever.
- 4.13 This concern was reinforced in HMIC’s review of the sample of PDRs. It was clear that **the vast majority of PDRs were ‘candidate-driven’**, i.e. the evidence was supplied by the appraisee, with little apparent checking or validation by the appraiser. This challenges the usefulness of PDRs as a developmental tool, as only the appraisee is supplying evidence of good performance, and this may only equate to a small proportion of their overall performance for the year. Even if PDRs are completed in a more balanced way, they do not appear to be utilised within wider HR management processes (e.g. workforce planning, promotion, training, etc.).
- 4.14 The utilisation of the PDR for the purposes as described in paragraph 4.2 is generally poor. Despite efforts to the contrary, HMIC considers that the Police Service is generally lost in the bureaucracy of the process rather than seeing the PDR as a tool for professional development. As a result, considerable effort is expended with little or no benefit. These findings are echoed in the recent HMIC publication *HMIC National Inspection of Performance Management 2007: Lessons Learned*.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/docs/lessons-learned-report-2007>.

- 4.15 The relatively simple concept of the ‘contract’ between an officer and the organisation – and both sides’ commitment to each other – has become over-complicated by the need to evidence individual performance against a range of indicators. In addition, the need to evidence ability against some, or all, of the indicators contained in the ICF has resulted in the process becoming the object of the exercise. The objective should be to document the relationship between the two sides, and act upon it to achieve mutual benefit.
- 4.16 In contrast, during external benchmarking HMIC found that where PDRs were based on such a ‘contract’ between the employer and the individual – with both parties having a vested interest – they were generally found to be valued, and an integrated part of business and individual development.
- 4.17 For example, the lycra manufacturing company INVISTA has a process called ‘Discussion on Contribution’. This is simply the documentation of regular dialogue between the organisation and the individual. It asks an individual to state what contribution they are going to make to the continued development and success of the organisation over an agreed time period, and then documents training and development needs for that individual in order for him or her to achieve that success. This is regularly reviewed, and sanctions and rewards are discussed and documented. This process exists across Koch Industries – Invista’s parent company. HMIC noted that there was a belief in the process and complete buy-in from all parties.
- 4.18 The appraisal process used by the British Army is almost entirely the responsibility of the reporting officer, with quality assurance being provided by a panel of senior officers. HMIC observed that the main distinction of the Army system was that technical competence and individual characteristics for roles appeared clearly defined, resulting in a reporting officer being able to inform a candidate that he or she either was or was not ready for a particular promotion or posting because he or she had or had not yet obtained a sufficient skill set or level of personal development. The individual has the opportunity to comment on his or her report, but the transparency and honesty in the process have meant that there have been few challenges. HMIC observed that the process is perceived as fair, open and consistent.
- 4.19 A further example is the process used by Vodafone, which is based on a 360-degree approach (see Figure 4.1). Again, this process is based on the individual contributing to organisational success, with the attendant developmental needs also being an integral part. The process is used by senior managers for ‘talent-spotting’ potential promotion candidates: each indicator is assigned a score that is then

aggregated by category, providing an overview of an individual's performance.

**Figure 4.1: Vodafone executive development assessment framework**

Strategic leadership			Operational leadership				
Market-driven – proactively anticipates and responds to trends	Organisationally aware – understands how relationships and events affect Vodafone	Displays strategic insight	Impacts and influences others to act	Takes initiative – acts on opportunities	Relentlessly executes and strives for excellence		
People leadership			Personal leadership				
Displays team leadership beyond their dedicated roles	Holds people accountable for higher standards of performance	Displays strategic insight	Actively contributes across the business	Role-models the Vodafone values	Empathetic towards others	Demonstrates flexibility while staying focused on strategy	Constantly challenges the status quo

- 4.20 Forces need to refocus on the principles underpinning the use of the PDR. As evidenced above, external benchmarking has shown that, used effectively, the PDR can be a valuable tool for both organisations and individuals. From this evidence, HMIC confidently concludes that the PDR process in the Police Service of England and Wales is misunderstood.

### Summary

- 4.21 It appears to HMIC from the evidence that **the PDR process within the Police Service is in disrepute** – it is perceived by officers to be no more than a paper exercise. It should be used to underpin the development of individual officers and to provide a mechanism for translating strategic intent into operational activity. This applies to both frontline sergeants – in terms of their personal development and how they are held to account – and to the officers and staff they lead.
- 4.22 HMIC regards the current use of the process as a significant failing and a **missed opportunity**. Used correctly, the PDR provides a development framework for individuals (in agreement with their organisation), and a monitoring framework for the organisation (in agreement with the individual). Both elements are vital to ensuring clarity of purpose and to maximising efforts to achieve individual and corporate objectives.

### *Recommendations*

7. Forces should review their use of the Personal Development Review process and ensure that the balance between performance measurement and developmental activity is appropriate.
8. Forces should ensure that the Personal Development Review is used as a means of documenting an officer's readiness for promotion in terms of individual performance and their development needs. Appropriate and effective use of the PDR should be closely scrutinised.
9. Forces should ensure that their Personal Development Review process contains sufficient objectivity and accuracy to be relied upon as a reference document in considering applications for level transfer as well as for promotion.

# Chapter 5

# **STATUS AND STANDARDS**



## Introduction

- 5.1 *Leading from the frontline* explores a range of issues, focusing particularly on frontline sergeants as the guardians of excellence in service delivery. Intrinsic to this is the need to set and maintain the highest standards of professionalism for the individual, for those they supervise and for the Police Service.
- 5.2 The wider organisation needs to make clear its expectations in terms of adherence to standards, and that message needs to be reinforced at all levels of the command chain. Consistent messages enable and empower staff to maintain standards.
- 5.3 However, HMIC is clear that high standards of professionalism and service delivery will only be achieved through the provision of effective leadership and management at sergeant level. The role of frontline sergeants becomes even more critical, as in the vast majority of these cases, individuals are charged with ensuring the maintenance of standards at the initial point of face-to-face interaction between the police and the community.
- 5.4 It is also vital that, sergeants line managers support sergeants when they are enforcing standards – as this is rarely enjoyable. Failure to do so often leads to feelings of frustration and isolation, and a loss of a sense of value.
- 5.5 **What do ‘good’ status and standards look like?** The force would need to ensure that:
- there were values, mission and a vision for the organisation, understood by staff and properly communicated;
  - expected standards were clearly spelt out by chief officers and re-inforced throughout the organisation;
  - there were opportunities to feed concerns back in a meaningful way, securing a meaningful response;
  - expectations of the obligations and responsibilities that accompany rank were clearly stated;
  - there was appropriate training to address ‘intrusive (i.e. active not passive) supervision’;
  - the organisation discernibly ‘valued’ the supervisory role; and
  - there was a genuine commitment to a ‘learning culture’.

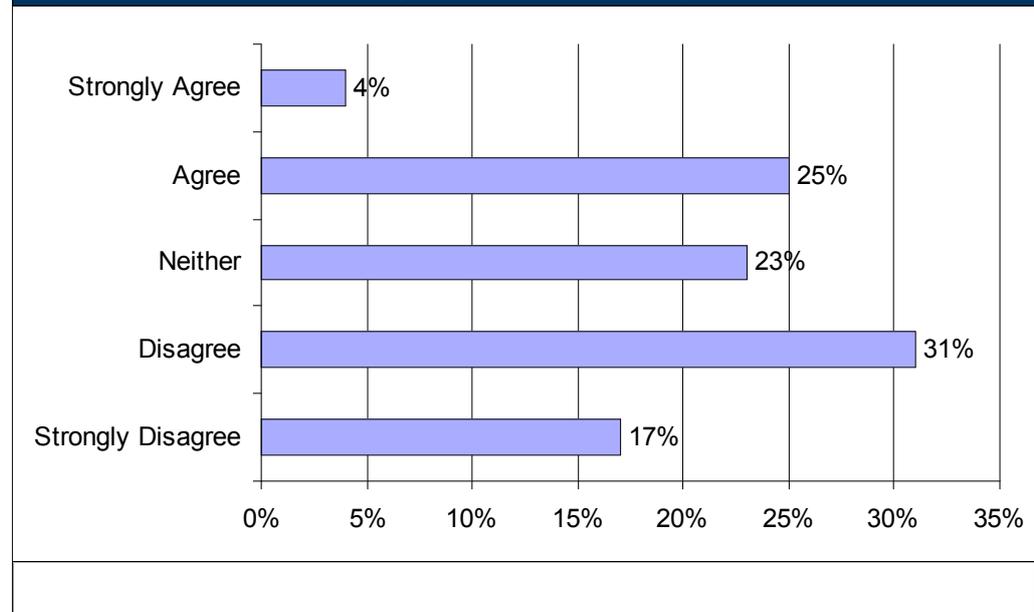
## Findings

- 5.6 The questionnaire contained a number of questions relating to support and recognition that sought to identify how important respondents considered the **role** of a frontline supervisor to be, and how they felt that they as **individuals** were valued by their respective forces. Some of the responses make uncomfortable reading.
- 5.7 As the fieldwork progressed, HMIC came across numerous questionnaire responses that appeared to confirm a steady erosion of the status of the rank of sergeant. A significant and concerning theme emerged, which can be separated into two distinct (but interlinked) headings: status and standards. These two topics generated much debate and emotion.

## Status

- 5.8 Perceptions of how the role of frontline supervisor was valued by each force were tested in Question 29, where respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement **'I believe my role is valued by my force'**.
- 5.9 Overall, only **4%** of respondents to **strongly agreed that their role was valued by their force**. Some 31% disagreed and a further 17% strongly disagreed, as Figure 5.1 below shows.

Figure 5.1: Q29. I believe my role is valued by my force



## Perceptions of status

### Focus group quotes

Frontline sergeant:

*“Frontline sergeants on this [basic command unit – BCU] do not feel valued. The work of the Response Team is never recognised in the [BCU’s] newsletter, while the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, CID and TSG often feature.”*

Sergeant:

*“I am fed up with the amount of times I have to justify myself to PCs when I’ve given them a lawful order.”*

Sergeant:

*“Response is at the bottom of the pile – the pride has gone out of the job.”*

Sergeant:

*“I don’t feel valued by the senior management team – in three years no one has come to me and said ‘Good job, well done’.”*

Assistant chief constable:

*“No, we don’t need to change the status, we just need to support and encourage frontline sergeants. The status hasn’t been lost.”*

### Questionnaire quotes

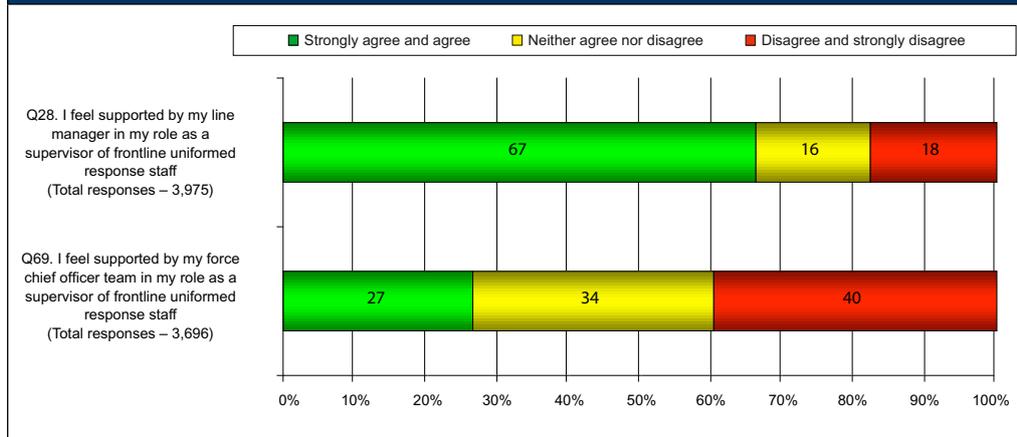
*“I feel the role of 24/7 response supervisor is neglected and held in low status as a result of the push for Neighbourhood Policing. I also feel pressurised to achieve performance figures from Command Team and chief officers. This is often at the expense of shift morale/staff development and customer service delivery.”*

*“I am lucky as I am a skipper on an SNT [Safer Neighbourhood Team]. My role is clearly defined, with a very manageable workload and a family-friendly shift pattern. The majority of my service has been on the response team, and the way they are treated is appalling. They have no defined role and are required to deal with everything other units cannot be bothered with, even if it falls within their remit (CID!), and despite the fact that officers have been taken off team to create said unit. Management seem to consider the response team as the bottom of the heap and as a result officers on team feel that they are.”*

*“Being a uniform patrol team sergeant is regarded by [force] and senior management as the lowest common denominator. This is a stark contrast to the highly publicised Safer Neighbourhood Teams. I personally feel they are both of equal importance. The demands placed on patrol teams are great, they are under-resourced, under-rewarded, thought little of and yet highly accountable in microscopic detail.”*

- 5.10 In the questionnaire, 22% of the respondents stated that the 24/7 role carries the status and regard that it should, but **62% actively disagreed that the role carries the appropriate status.**
- 5.11 Another common comment was, where there were specialist teams within their forces with the ability to say ‘no’ to work, ended up supplying the resources for the task, adding further pressure to the teams and making them feel that they were ‘bottom of the pile’. A superintendent told HMIC that **“the sergeant role (particularly the critical incident sergeant) should be the one that people aspire to”**. This highlights a difference of perception between senior management within the Police Service and frontline officers, which will be explored further in Chapter 6.
- 5.12 HMIC believes that it is essential that the role of frontline sergeant is properly valued. In using the word ‘value’, HMIC means recognising the importance of this particular role, and this can be achieved in a number of ways from a simple ‘thank you’ to a celebration of good work in force awards and newsletters. It is within neither the terms of reference nor, indeed, the gift of HMIC to examine financial rewards. Interestingly, pay was not raised as a significant issue during site visits. Nevertheless, HMIC is aware of a view that the differential between senior constable and sergeant is perhaps too close and there are issues around encouraging and rewarding the retention of experienced individuals as frontline sergeants. This, however, is a matter for others to consider and not part of this thematic inspection.
- 5.13 HMIC also sought to establish whether line management and organisational support has an impact on the effectiveness and perception of value of a frontline sergeant. Figure 5.2 shows a marked contrast in the perception of support for the role of frontline sergeant between the respondents’ immediate line manager and their force chief officer team.

Figure 5.2: Questions 28 and 69



- 5.14 On examining standards and status, a theme emerged during the fieldwork that was common to both topics – the levels of support being provided to frontline sergeants. HMIC uses the word ‘support’, in this case, in a wider context, as it strayed from the organisational and managerial to include the moral and emotional. It became clear that where a mixture of those types of support was present, its effect was positive, particularly in relation to the maintenance of standards. Unfortunately, the reverse was also true.
- 5.15 Throughout the field visits, although not being specifically reviewed, there was an unavoidable truth that some forces simply presented themselves better than others. Thinking of the Citizen Focus approach, first contact with police and the issues of fundamental professionalism, HMIC observed how greatly different investment choices affected a force’s overall image.
- 5.16 For example, Surrey Police benefited from the ‘Surrey Standard’ (see the box at paragraph 5.23), which had a positive effect on dress code and general behaviour. Surrey Police also invested heavily in vehicles and equipment for frontline officers. The field team observed that there was pride in Surrey Police and pride in the role of a frontline officer. To quote the field team:
- “there was a real buzz among frontline officers in Surrey.”***
- 5.17 Again, the reverse was also true. Where those standards were not set, and those levels of investment were not evident, the team observed and felt a distinct difference in mood and outlook. In other forces, the choice of fleet and equipment was visibly affecting morale as the vehicles being used were considered ‘not fit for purpose’ for frontline activity on a 24/7 basis due to, e.g., their size or state of repair. HMIC recognises that budgetary pressures will affect investment choices, but feels that these issues should be afforded greater priority by forces.

- 5.18 HMIC is aware that some forces are taking steps to address the perceptions of feeling valued. Kent Police has recently completed an in-depth consultation process that has identified similar issues to those contained in this report. Their report, *Blueprint for Success*, provides a framework within which these issues can be raised, explored and addressed as part of the force business planning process. HMIC welcomes this approach and would encourage other forces to consider undertaking similar work.

### **Standards**

- 5.19 HMIC was surprised at the extent to which a **perceived erosion of basic levels of adherence to fundamental standards of professionalism** was mentioned. The comments below are typical of the feedback from the field visits and the questionnaire. HMIC felt that there is a link between these issues and leadership, a risk averse culture, and officers' confidence and capability as frontline sergeants and officers.

#### **Risk and confidence** **Focus group quotes**

Frontline sergeant:

***"I've got to get this right so I'm protected."***

Frontline sergeant:

***"Sergeants do not feel supported when dealing with staff. It's like having one hand tied behind your back as a supervisor."***

Frontline inspector:

***"Sergeants are not confident to challenge standards as the support from senior management is not there."***

Constable:

***"They [sergeants] do not have the bottle to challenge."***

Chief inspector:

***"Managers are seen as intimidating because they challenge."***

### Dress and behaviour

Police community support officer (PCSO):

*“Poor dress and behaviour are often overlooked. Sergeants will challenge PCs, but allow poor performing PCSOs to go unchallenged.”*

Chief superintendent:

*“We pondered whether we should challenge staff about poor standards but had to admit that we [superintendents] often had poor dress – e.g. no ties or epaulettes.”*

Detective sergeant:

*“Standards are poor on the [BCU]. There is no adherence to simple dress codes such as ties and not wearing hats. Their failures are not being picked up by sergeants on the frontline.”*

Assistant chief constable:

*“We are not vigorous in applying these standards. We have occasional purges but we are swimming against the tide.”*

Female sergeant:

*“I saw a sergeant say to a PC on his team. ‘You need a haircut.’ He said: ‘You can talk. You look like a bag of [expletive]’. But the thing is, the sergeant didn’t do anything”*

Frontline constable:

*“There is no consistency from sergeants in maintaining and challenging standards. Some sergeants just let things go, probably because they are afraid of grievances, while others use a sledgehammer to crack a nut.”*

Chief superintendent (professional standards department):

*“Significant gaps between different ranks have been blurred, PC – sergeant – inspector. Relationships now very informal, eroded over the years and individuals called by their first names, particularly at sergeant level. Are we managers or leaders? Service can not decide on the style it wants. Softer approach, more professionalism, not treating them like children. Yet they behave like children so would a stronger style of supervision be more effective? Sergeants and inspectors need to be more old-fashioned, they need to command staff, delegate work, and ensure staff are accountable for their actions. Sergeants can’t have stripes and be one of the lads.”*

### BRIEFING

- 5.20 During the fieldwork, the standard of briefings was also an area that raised concerns. There is a national briefing model and the intelligence packages should be supplied by those designated by the force to deliver the information.
- 5.21 *Leading from the frontline* raises concerns about the conduct and professionalism of observed briefings. The briefing process should be a forum in which supervisors set clear objectives for that day's activity in support of BCU and wider force objectives. In the light of some of the witnessed examples below, it is difficult to see how this could possibly be achieved effectively.

#### Case studies: briefing and debriefing

**Briefing for Bonfire Night:** Additional resources were rostered in the evening due to anticipated anti-social behaviour by local youths. The briefing contained lengthy and complex information on firework legislation. The observed sergeant conducting the briefing was dismissive of the item, stating, "I am not going to read all that [expletive]. I don't know how to sort out a baby firework from an adult firework". HMIC members present were surprised that the inspector, who was present and witnessed the behaviour, did not intervene.

**Shift debrief:** The team was asked by the sergeant, "Has anyone got anything to say?" The staff remained quiet. The team inspector, who was also present, was not invited to make any comment or to address the team. The result was the officers just rushed out of the room and went home.

**Shift briefing:** The sergeant presented a number of intelligence items projected on to a whiteboard. The intelligence lacked clarity, and details of people and addresses were missing. There was no tasking of the team; however, tasking allocations were shown later in the daily management meeting. It is not clear how these taskings were communicated to patrolling officers. There was no evidence of debriefing material from the previous shift being made available to the incoming shift.

**Shift briefing:** The briefing took place on time with four staff present. There was no tasking allocated. The sergeant read out a number of intelligence items from prepared notes and enquired as to what each officer had planned for that day. Call signs were then allocated and the briefing ended. The sergeant was debriefed by HMIC regarding the quality and content of the briefing, during which the sergeant acknowledged that they were supposed to use the force-wide electronic briefing and tasking system, but stated that they "didn't like using the computer". The sergeant further complained that the intelligence needed to be more bespoke for that area and that intelligence submitted by the officers rarely appeared on the system. As a result, the station kept a 'day book' from which the sergeant briefed.

- 5.22 HMIC did, however, witness some good practice in respect of briefing.

#### Good practice

Observation on a public order operation. The sergeant was briefed by the public order inspector for the evening operation. The Inspector then later briefed the entire shift. Once on the personnel carrier, the sergeant then carried out a second briefing, reinforcing the inspector's key points and setting out the standards they expected. The sergeant then paired the officers off, ensuring that there was a mix of skill and experience for each pair. The youngest student officer was paired with the sergeant.

- 5.23 It was clear that some forces have recognised that the delivery of a truly professional service requires that a clear expectation is set from the top.

#### Good practice

In **Surrey** they have set out the 'Surrey Standard', which was agreed, through consultation with staff and is now embedded. The Standard exists to promote excellence in the provision of policing services, customer care and standards of professional behaviour and integrity. The Standard is contained in the local policing plan and is therefore available to the general public. Evidence was found by the field team that the Standard was being followed by staff and enforced through the chain of command.

In **Norfolk** clear standards of dress and performance have been set by the Chief Constable who has personally challenged staff regarding their standards of appearance. This challenge has reverberated force-wide and has had the effect of empowering sergeants and line managers to maintain that standard.

The **Police Service of Northern Ireland's Code of Ethics** (2008) clearly sets down standards of behaviour expected of police officers and provides guidance on how they should conduct themselves in this "honourable profession". Article 10 of the code, 'Duty of Supervisors', is of specific interest to this review and goes to the heart of effective supervision.

Article 10: This is an important part of the Code of Ethics. It requires Supervisors to be role models promoting good conduct and working within the spirit of the Code.

If you are a Supervisor, it is your responsibility to ensure your Officers are **supported and given guidance on their professional performance** and encouraged to further their professional development. A key of this duty is ensuring Officers keep proper and accurate notebooks and records, which are vital in a Court of Law.

Supervisors have a duty to deal with alleged breaches of the Code of Ethics 2008 by Officers for whom they are responsible, **directly challenging and addressing** any behaviour that is, or may, violate the Code. Supervisors may be failing in their duties under Article 10 if they report such breaches anonymously without taking any future direct action. (PSNI 2008, pgs 25–26). The Code and its application forms a part of an initial sergeant's training course.

- 5.24 Although these issues were not specifically mentioned in the terms of reference for this inspection, HMIC felt them to be so fundamental that they were worthy of further investigation. In doing so, a direct link was found, yet again, to capability and confidence.

#### **Organisational support**

- 5.25 HMIC also observed that the 'support' issues have a knock-on effect in other areas of a frontline sergeant's role. There were numerous examples of performance management interventions taking place, but they were either unsuccessfully applied or undermined by the presence of risk-averseness at another level.
- 5.26 There was a perception from a number of frontline sergeants encountered that their interventions either are not or would not be supported by their line managers.

### Focus group quotes

Chief superintendent:

*“There is no enforcement of the dress code. The sergeants do not have the necessary fibre to challenge the constables. This is due the culture of counter-bullying, where constables who are challenged take a grievance out against the sergeant who challenged them, stating they have been bullied in the workplace. Some of the grievances have made their way through the system and eventually ended up with an Assistant Chief Constable who had then given in and overturned the local supervision. This in turn led to sergeants giving up as they know that the organisation will not support them.”*

Sergeant:

*“PCs now get away with blue murder as people are afraid to challenge due to HR legislation and are not supported by managers.”*

Police constable:

*“Sergeants are worried about discipline and the backlash of being accused of victimisation if they implement unsatisfactory performance procedures.”*

Frontline sergeant:

*“It’s a hell of a task to bring someone to book. Only severe cases are worth doing.”*

Frontline sergeant:

*“We do address poor performance by using action plans. However, the process is ‘long winded’: to address one person it takes 20 minutes per day to ‘spoon feed’ tasks and 30 minutes per day to document what we have just done.”*

- 5.27 One focus group of sergeants reported having had to learn the unsatisfactory performance procedure (UPP) policy through the force intranet. They had no formal training in how to deal with these issues, and one sergeant in the group did not even know the policy was there.
- 5.28 There was a widespread reluctance among sergeants to address issues such as UPP and standards for fear that they would be labelled a bully and/or subject to a grievance. Several examples where the ‘bullying card’ was used resulted in the issue not being addressed, but the individual being moved to another shift. A view was also expressed that they would not be supported by the

organisation if they did challenge poor performance, as, in the past, they had been let down by the senior management team (SMT).

- 5.29 This apparent capability and confidence gap on how or when to challenge behaviour or performance appeared to be driven in two ways:
- fear of reprisal or counter-challenge; and
  - a sense of lack of support at line manager and/or SMT level.
- 5.30 During the police site visits, regular mention was made of student officer training, and the perception that student officers today leave initial training with a ‘pre-loaded’ risk aversity and readiness to challenge (not always appropriately), and that the ethos of discipline within the Police Service has been somewhat eroded in recent years.
- 5.31 These views and their manifestation are evident in some of the issues raised in this chapter regarding counter-challenges to standards enforcement and the erosion of status of the frontline sergeant and perhaps the rank of sergeant per se.

#### Focus group quotes

Tutor constable:

***“While coaching a student constable, I watched as the officer took 15 minutes to risk assess whether they needed to wear their fluorescent jacket at the scene of a road traffic collision.”***

Sergeant:

***“A newly qualified constable was asked to go and assess an incident in which a dangerous dog was loose in a garden. The constable refused to go stating that they were ‘not going to put [themselves] in danger’. The constable had to be contacted by the sergeant who explained to the officer that they could assess the situation without putting themselves in danger, i.e. stay within the house. They then had to be ordered to go.”***

Sergeant:

***“There is a problem with initial training ... the new recruits have a force-field around them and it is like they are saying ‘challenge me if you dare’.”***

- 5.32 Student officers typically complete 18 weeks of initial training, at which point they are posted to their respective BCUs. After ten weeks on their BCUs they return to the force training department for the next phase of their training. One trainer proposed a different reason for officers' bad attitudes:

***“When they come back [from BCUs] they have ‘gained’ 15 years’ service in ten weeks, with all the bad habits and have lost the discipline instilled in initial training. We then have to spend time ‘re-programming’ them into being student officers again.”***

- 5.33 Whatever the truth, this overall situation may require a review of the way forces induct and train student officers. HMIC observed on visiting the British Army that a key element of the induction process is the embedding of the Army 'ethos' from day one. This is reinforced throughout their service and preserving this ethos appeared to HMIC to be part of the culture.
- 5.34 In common with many other findings of *Leading from the frontline*, levels of capability and confidence in dealing with what HMIC considers to be fundamental supervision and leadership issues varied considerably in the sites visited. The ***Review of Police Disciplinary Arrangements*** (the Taylor Report)<sup>13</sup> places emphasis on the resolution of disciplinary issues at the lowest appropriate level instead of instigating a bureaucratic and litigious process from the outset.
- 5.35 Such a process will rely heavily on the confidence and capability of sergeants, in particular, to deal positively with poor performance or indiscipline. Responses to Question 67 of HMIC's questionnaire – ***“I am confident in dealing with poor performance from my officers and staff”*** – revealed an average positive response rate of 90%, while 3% said they were not confident.
- 5.36 However, these responses were in **stark contrast to feedback** given to, and activity witnessed by, the inspection field team. For example, many concerns were expressed regarding the use and application of the UPP process. As this process is directly linked to the Personal Development Review (PDR) process (PDR is suspended while UPP is in effect) and taking into account the level of confidence in the current PDR system (see Chapter 4 for details) this is unsurprising. Poorly documented PDR evidence to support a UPP will undermine the UPP process from the outset, which, in turn, creates difficulty for senior managers later in the process.

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<sup>13</sup> *Review of Police Disciplinary Arrangements: Report* (the Taylor Report), Home Office, November 2005.

### *Summary*

- 5.37 HMIC identified a perception that the **status of the frontline sergeant is not as high as it should be**, given their pivotal role in service delivery and the maintenance of standards of professionalism. It should be regarded as a 'specialism' and yet it is not. It has often been said that an individual's perception is their reality. Based on the evidence from both the fieldwork and the questionnaire, HMIC is concerned by the level of value felt by respondents and interviewees. Should the issue of status not be urgently addressed, a real risk will be presented to the future ability of frontline sergeants to effectively lead and manage staff.
- 5.38 Success in ensuring that standards of professionalism are maintained is partly reliant upon middle and senior management providing support and encouragement to those charged with that responsibility. The recommendations from **the Taylor Report will require a shift in culture** from passing professional standards issues on, to dealing with them at the earliest appropriate intervention level. This culture change will require robust support from middle and senior managers. These changes may provide the platform from which frontline supervisors can be empowered to challenge and resolve such incidents.
- 5.39 Maintenance of **standards varied considerably** in the sites visited; however, where clear standards existed, enforced by empowered managers, there was demonstrable evidence that this had had a positive effect.
- 5.40 HMIC feels there is a **clear link between the issues identified in the PDR process and the capability and confidence of the frontline supervisors** encountered to utilise other processes effectively, such as UPP. HMIC feels that the links can also be made to the issues outlined in Chapter 3 (preparedness for the role etc.).

### *Recommendations*

10. The Association of Chief Police Officers must be absolutely clear in defining the role of a frontline sergeant and ensuring that associated processes of selection, promotion, training and support complement the role definition.
11. The Association of Chief Police Officers should overtly recognise and publicise the critical role that effective frontline leadership plays in delivery of the policing agenda on a 24/7 basis, in terms of incident management, quality of service and delivery of citizen-focused policing. It should be valued as a 'specialism' in its own right and, accordingly, frontline sergeants should be viewed equally with any other 'specialist' police sergeant.

# Chapter 6

# **SUPPORTING THE FRONTLINE**



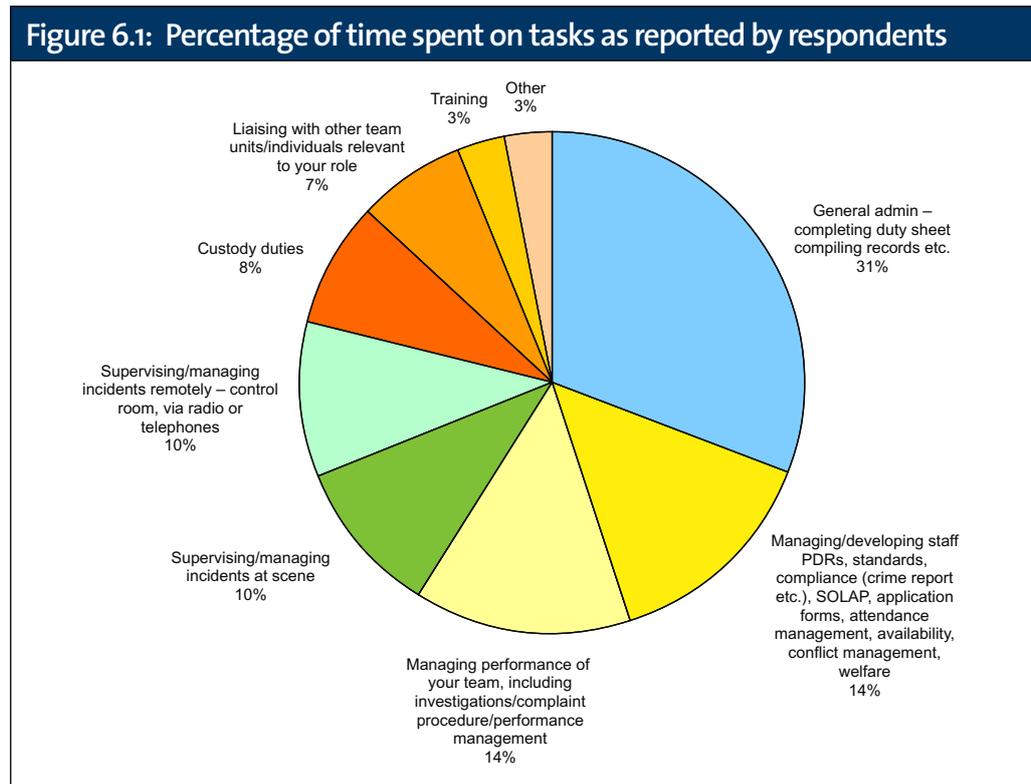
## Introduction

- 6.1 In previous chapters, *Leading from the frontline* has sought to identify and present specific issues relevant to the terms of reference, highlight emerging and existing good practice and identify where change is needed. In doing so HMIC has identified a consistent theme that transcends each specific area of this work's focus: the level of 'support' afforded to frontline service delivery.
- 6.2 The evidence and observations indicate that the types of support necessary for effective frontline service delivery ranges from the organisational and managerial through to the moral and emotional. 'Support' for frontline activity can also be viewed in the way forces make investment choices, in terms of resource and asset provision, and in the way systems and processes are structured.
- 6.3 An undeniable outcome of this structuring process is, inevitably, the creation of bureaucratic systems to monitor activity and accountability. The bureaucratic burden is recognised as a major issue for the Police Service.
- 6.4 This chapter outlines how respondents perceived, and how HMIC observed, frontline sergeants are supported by line managers, their senior management team (SMT) and the wider organisation in delivering frontline activity, and how frontline policing links to strategic organisational objectives.
- 6.5 **What does 'good' look like?** A force structure and support should ensure that:
  - support and infrastructure are allocated to enable frontline sergeants to fulfil a clear role;
  - priorities are understood, e.g. that a key element is leading the 24/7 provision of high-quality citizen-focused policing;
  - unnecessary bureaucracy is actively tackled and frontline sergeants are empowered, indeed obligated, to suggest and promote changes;
  - visible leadership on the ground is a priority – time spent on this activity increases and time on administrative tasks decreases when this issue is actively monitored; and
  - SMTs play an active role in shaping frontline delivery and in determining how time is spent – there is clarity as to priorities and focus on delivering strategy.

## Findings

### Bureaucracy and workload

6.6 Question 78 of the HMIC questionnaire asked officers to specify how they spent their time on a typical day. The results are shown in Figure 6.1 below.



6.7 Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *The Review of Policing* examined the bureaucratic burden placed upon the Police Service and concluded **“Officers still spend 20% of their time on paperwork”** (page 49). The questionnaire reveals this figure to be significantly higher at frontline sergeant level. As Figure 6.1 shows, 20% of time is spent supervising incidents either directly or indirectly, whereas **45% of a frontline sergeant's time, according to respondents, is spent on non-operational duties.**

6.8 This may, therefore, indicate that a **significant proportion of the bureaucratic burden in the Police Service is falling at sergeant level**, given that this figure is more than double the overall estimate contained in *The Review of Policing*.

### Questionnaire quotes

*“I do not feel that I am allowed to supervise correctly in my current role as I am more or less tied to a computer. I seem to spend all my time chasing performance targets rather than actually doing the job of a sergeant.”*

*“I am swamped by paperwork and emails. The first hour of my shift is often taken up by clearing emails.”*

*“Click click tap tap’ best describes my job – mainly recording performance figures or showing what we’ve done and what we are going to do, and then duplicate it somewhere else!”*

*“I feel that currently my main work focus is that of an admin role and I am frustrated by the ever-increasing paperwork that as a sergeant I have to complete. I strongly believe that as a sergeant a good proportion of my time should be as a visible presence on the streets observing and coaching team members and leading by example. Further, I think that the target-orientated system that we currently adhere to not only lowers morale, but prevents effective police officers being a visible presence within the local community.”*

### Focus group quotes

Frontline sergeant:

*“Sergeants are the dustbins of the empire. Everything comes up or down the chain to the Sergeant. The admin tail is wagging the supervisory dog.”*

Frontline sergeant:

*“On my door it says ‘Patrol Sergeant’ and I often giggle to myself as it should say ‘Admin Sergeant’.”*

BCU chief superintendent:

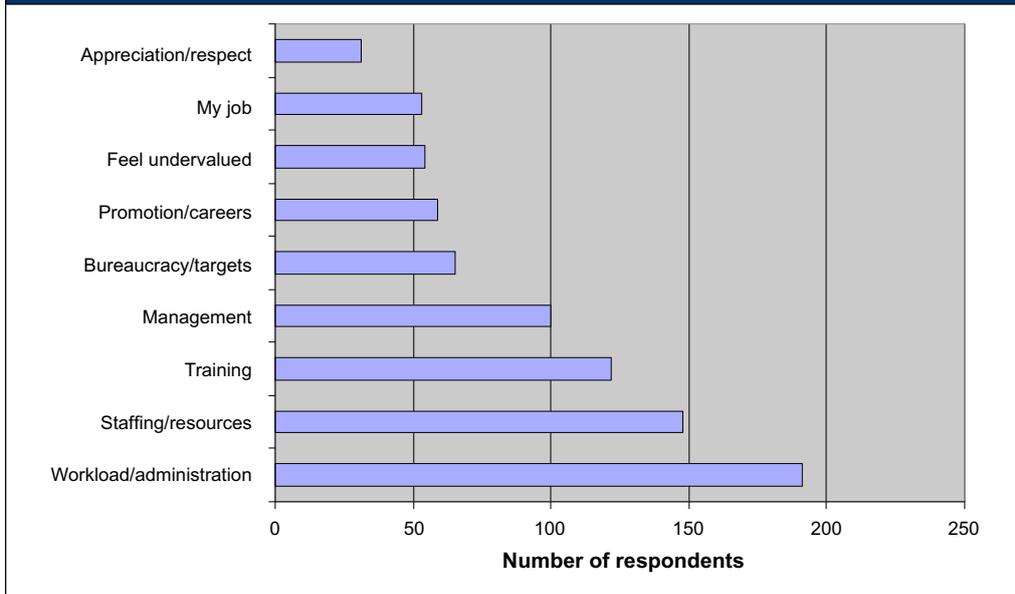
*“The amount of time they spend on the street, PDR, performance, missing persons, risk assessments, complaints and crime recording – we push that all down because it comes to us.”*

Sergeant:

*“Perhaps the biggest drain on time for Sergeants is SOLAP [Student Officer Learning Assessment Portfolio]. On a shift of 14 officers, 7 are student officers. The sergeant tries to ensure compliance with policy and makes time to go out with the student officers so we can evidence at first hand how they perform – thereby corroborating the evidence in the SOLAPs ... writing one of the reports about an officer could take up to five hours to complete ... not all sergeants on other shifts are able to perform this degree of intrusive supervision.”*

- 6.9 These quotes may reflect reality but an alternative view might be taken that the comments expressed are symptomatic of other issues, e.g. feeling undervalued, or indeed working in a culture where high visibility is not prioritised, and administrative tasks all too easily absorb additional time.
- 6.10 Question 26 asked respondents to comment on the statement, **“I am able to manage the overall workload I have as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff”**. Of the respondents, **63% stated that they can manage their overall workload** with 23% stating that they cannot manage. Question 27 posed the statement, **“I am comfortable with the level of pressure placed upon me in my job”**. In response, **50% stated they were comfortable with the level of pressure** whereas 34% stated they were not.
- 6.11 This was an important finding to emerge from the thematic, i.e. that the majority of frontline sergeants were confident they could manage their overall workload, contrary to other anecdotes and comments.
- 6.12 Respondents from a black and minority ethnic background are less likely to feel comfortable with the level of pressure placed upon them (44% compared with 51% of White British respondents). Non-heterosexual respondents are also less likely to say that they are comfortable with the level of pressure placed upon them (41% compared with 52% of heterosexual respondents). Similarly they feel less able to manage the overall workload if they are a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff (56% compared with 65% of heterosexual respondents). Those from a non-White British background are less likely to say they feel satisfied with their force than White British respondents, 23% compared with 34%. HMIC considers this so important, particularly in relation to retention and progression of officers from minority groups, that it is worthy of further examination.
- 6.13 Question 79 in the questionnaire asked, **“If there are any further issues you would like to comment on, or issues that have not been covered within the survey, please outline them in the open text box below”**. All the responses to Question 79 have been grouped into the key themes commented on by respondents. Each area is examined in more detail throughout this report.

Figure 6.2: Themes from Question 79



- 6.14 Figure 6.2 shows that the highest number of responses related to workload/administration and reinforces the need to review bureaucratic processes that do not add value to service delivery. It must be recognised that the Police Service will always have a bureaucratic burden as it has to remain accountable, but where the burden indicates a level of diversion from core activity to the extent that these responses indicate, this should be reviewed.



- 6.15 In the context of capability and confidence, it is clear from the evidence that appropriate infrastructure and organisational support need to be present if the levels of capability and confidence commensurate with effective frontline supervision and leadership are to be achieved.

6.16 It was clear from the stance taken by **An Garda Siochana**, that a significant investment has been made in their succession planning processes in order to remove the need for acting sergeants. HMIC holds the view that this type of investment is essential to securing the presence of, at the very least, qualified leadership and supervision at service delivery level. Additionally, HMIC observed that this approach had tangible benefits in terms of the status of the sergeant as it was viewed as a crucial role, and therefore its continuity is invested in.

### *Strategic to tactical*

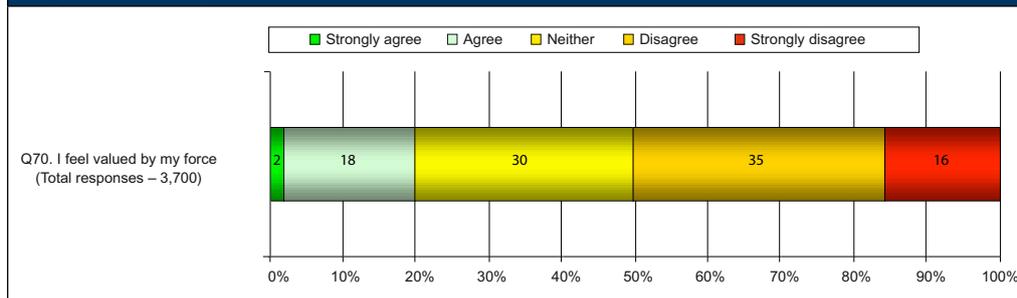
6.17 Generally, the managerial structure of a force consists of a chief officer group (COG), SMT, basic command unit (BCU)/operational command unit (OCU) commanders and departmental heads, and the ranks of superintendent and below. Consistency of message can only be achieved where there is clear understanding throughout the organisation, and when measurement frameworks have a demonstrable link to organisation goals at all levels.

6.18 Figure 5.2 (see page 83) gives an indication of how respondents felt the level of support for them in their role varies between their immediate line manager and their COG.

6.19 In exploring these findings during the fieldwork, HMIC observed that organisational factors played a significant part in perceptions of support and feeling individually valued. Question 70 in the questionnaire explored the statement, **“I feel valued by my force”**. Overall, **2% of respondents stated that they strongly agreed with this statement, whereas 16% strongly disagreed**. The average positive response was 20%, with highest average in one force being 43% and the lowest 7%.

6.20 Part time staff tend to be more positive in relation to the organisation, with more saying they feel valued (34%) and satisfied with the force at the present time (43%). As was found in the section on Support, respondents with larger shift patterns are less likely to feel satisfied and valued. Just 11% of those with predominantly 12-hour patterns say they feel valued and 19% say they are satisfied with their force. This compares with 26% and 40% of those with 8-hour shifts respectively. Age also plays a factor, with negativity towards the organisation increasing with age. Just 12% of those over 51 feel valued by their force, compared with 20% of those aged 26 to 30. Similarly 35% of those over 51 have confidence in their SMT compared with 43% of those below 51.

Figure 6.3: Question 70



- 6.21 Officers interviewed from black and minority ethnic groups, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and female officers held particularly strong views regarding perceptions of value from their colleagues and the organisation.

### Focus group quotes

Black female sergeant:

*“The worst thing anybody could say to me is I am where I am, because of what I look like, because I sat that exam with everyone else. I’ve put in the hours. I have to put in the hours every single day. I never phone in sick. I’m there and I’m dedicated so if you say that to me I’m actually really, really insulted because it means you’re saying to me I’ve haven’t worked as hard as you have and I have.”*

Black female sergeant:

*“You all get promoted on equal footing – everyone has to fight just as hard to get promoted. It’s when you get promoted that the problems come. That’s when you get the comments like: ‘You’re only a sergeant because you’re black and female.’”*

Gay female sergeant:

*“As a supervisor I think you’re more aware either of your sexuality or your race etc. if something goes wrong because that’s what the blame is rather than who you are as a person. If you make a mistake [they say] bloody typical woman isn’t she or something like that, rather than I’ve made a mistake ... You think, God, I’ve really got to be clear on my decisions here or I’ll be criticised because I am woman.”*

- 6.22 HMIC is concerned that the variation in perceptions held by individuals of the value placed on them, and on their role, is at odds with the level of expectations forces have of frontline sergeants in terms of risk management, citizen focus and quality of service delivery. So how can the gap be filled?

- 6.23 HMIC observed that **where there is clear connectivity between organisational priorities and frontline activity, the effect on service delivery is tangible**. In essence, frontline staff are more likely to feel valued and supported where clear direction is being provided concerning expectations, where there is clarity as to how this activity fits into the overall organisational structure and where there is investment in frontline activity.
- 6.24 One of the forces visited, where the field team felt there was a strong positive ethos among frontline staff, was **Surrey Police**. Here, the overall positive response to Question 70 was 39%, **almost double the national average**. Conversely, in another of the forces visited, where the clarity of expectations and levels of support HMIC observed were less evident, the questionnaire responses to Question 70 revealed overall positive response of just 12%.

#### ***Senior management team***

- 6.25 SMTs have a critical role to play in regard to supporting front-line deliverers. Strategic intent needs to be translated into clear individual and team priorities. In turn, staff need the opportunity to tell the organisation what is working, what is not, and why. **SMTs should act as the conduit for information exchange between the strategic and tactical levels of service**. The perceptions of connectivity between these levels in the forces visited were varied.
- 6.26 Respondents were asked about their SMT which was defined for the purposes of the questionnaire as **“local senior managers, chief inspectors and above and equivalent grades of police staff”**. The fieldwork sought to research this area further to see whether evidence existed to support the questionnaire findings.
- 6.27 **Of the respondents, 40% said they have confidence in their SMT** while 30% actively disagreed with this statement. It is also of concern that there are more respondents who are dissatisfied with their force at present than are satisfied (38% compared with 32%).

### Focus group quotes

Sergeant:

*“I would have to pick my member of the SMT to go to. I know of an officer who was stabbed in the back after being open and honest and genuine with the SMT.”*

Sergeant:

*“Today you can’t get the second floor [senior managers] to come down. I’m sure some of the staff here don’t know their faces or names.”*

### Questionnaire quotes

(Regarding bureaucracy and amount of time spent on the computer)

*“To stop this bad habit, SMT wants officers to hand-write files when out on patrol!!! This sort of idea provides a focus for ridicule among 24/7 PCs and sergeants, and highlights how the desire to be promoted has overridden the objectives of policing. SMT and force hierarchies do not look at how to realistically relieve the workload of 24/7 because they do not understand, or have knowledge of, the practices they have introduced. Their role should be to improve efficiency and performance; however, the only way that is considered for this is to create more bureaucracy and attempt to micro-manage performance. This has contributed to much of the poor morale experienced by frontline officers.”*

*“I feel that the SMTs and above in my force are out of touch with what actually happens at response level. They very rarely, if ever, patrol with response officers ... Response officers carry on average around ten to fifteen crime reports each yet CID will have one or two each, response officers will also have RTCs [road traffic collisions] to investigate. Officers are regularly encouraged to come in and work rest days for pay in order to carry out their own crime enquiries to finalise their own crimes; this to me shows there are not sufficient [officers] on response to allow officers to do this during duty time. When brought to the attention of senior management, the response is ‘Well, we’ve made this money available to them to do this’, not yes we know and are trying to get more staff on response so they can do so.”*

- 6.28 SMT members have a responsibility and a very important contribution to make. They need to convey the aims of the force to frontline staff, to hold them to account, and ensure that the mission is being delivered in reality. Given the pressures and challenges faced by staff, being highly visible is important in terms of leading, supporting and quality-assuring the work of frontline sergeants and their staff.
- 6.29 Yet, during this inspection HMIC found that the visibility of senior staff was quite varied: unsurprisingly, lower visibility inevitably led to more negative perceptions.

### Focus group quotes

Frontline sergeant:

*“SMT are good, very supportive, visit training days, come downstairs and talk to staff; they are visible.”*

Detective sergeant:

*“...happy with a strong SMT working at [BCU] and [confident] of support from the SMT if they were required to provide it.”*

### Questionnaire quotes

*“I am only an acting sergeant and although I have total confidence and support in my SMT it seems that training for sergeants is lacking somewhere. I do not believe that this is down to SMT ... but more a symptom of today’s policing where we are all so busy that we just try and ‘get on with it.’”*

*“We are not simply thanked for work done. If something is wrong then you soon see SMT. They are apparently chasing statistics without concern for how this affects teams. Single manning police vehicles in the busiest [BCU]. Mandatory [wearing of protective equipment] by all staff on streets ... unless you are SMT. Apparent disregard for regulations i.e. number of days required to work before day off ... SMT ask for ideas but NO feedback as to what is happening or why not proceeded with; consequently no ideas get passed forward.”*

Frontline sergeant:

*“Our SMT provide support – some of them are strong enough to stand up for common sense.”*

- 6.30 HMIC observed and is aware of a variety of processes at force level to improve communication with senior levels of the Police Service. For example, video briefings by chief officers through force intranet systems are widespread and can raise understanding and awareness of strategic intent and its intended promulgation across force business groups.
- 6.31 HMIC observed this process being applied at BCU level in one force. However, this needs careful consideration as it can create the impression that a BCU commander is unable or unwilling to create the opportunity to speak to his or her staff directly.
- 6.32 HMIC also observed an impact on **risk management**. Where HMIC observed SMTs that were visible, supportive and engaged with frontline officers, there was tangible evidence that officers were generally more confident in their decision making in the operational environment.

#### Case study: providing support

In an interview with a BCU chief superintendent, a recent case was cited where a frontline sergeant made an operational decision with, in the chief superintendent's view, the best of intentions in difficult circumstances. The decision was later the subject of adverse comment by the COG concerned. The BCU commander agreed that, with hindsight, the decision was wrong, but publicly supported the individual concerned for having made a decision in those circumstances. In debriefing the issue with their chief officers, agreement was reached that decision making in challenging circumstances should be encouraged, but that the force reserves the right to review them and learn lessons. The fact that the BCU commander had provided visible and practical support to the individual concerned was repeatedly mentioned in focus groups and interviews as a positive and supportive action by the commander.

### Focus group quotes

Frontline sergeant:

***“There is a requirement for four sergeants to cover two areas within the division. They regularly have to cover custody, leaving only one sergeant per area.”***

Frontline sergeant:

***“Operational frontline shifts are now so short of staff that even one relatively minor incident can wipe out a shift. Often we work with one car to cover the district (immediate response) while the remainder deal with a single incident as all the ‘support’ staff are off at the weekend or after 4pm. New shifts are being arranged based on the average number of calls received and this takes no account of critical incidents. The situation will only get worse. There is no slack in the system and we are being managed by people who have rarely, if ever, been operational officers.”***

Frontline sergeant:

***“[The blockages to frontline supervision are] bureaucratic admin tasks and geographical constraints. There are nine stations and only two patrol sergeants. It is therefore physically impossible to actively supervise all officers in all stations.”***

Frontline sergeant:

***“We are supported by the inspectors but feel isolated after 0200 – when there is only one inspector on duty in the force. On occasions we are the most senior officers on duty with no one readily available to run difficult decisions past.”***

- 6.33 Where the inspection team found a lack of visibility, support and engagement, there was a general feeling of isolation and in turn a risk-averse culture. This crossed over into the non-operational environment where sergeants had embarked on action planning, unsatisfactory performance procedures (UPP) and fairness at work processes in an attempt to improve performance or standards and had not been supported at SMT level. The impact was dramatic in these scenarios, with sergeants feeling devalued, frustrated and isolated. (See Chapter 5 for further details.)

### Infrastructure

- 6.34 The previous paragraphs have discussed the levels of direct support being afforded to frontline sergeants in the sites visited. This section seeks to explore other, perhaps less explicit, forms of support that can have an impact on frontline sergeants. This is based on the premise that, for sustainability in the longer term, staff will be motivated and deliver a professional service if they have strong supportive leadership, and also have the ‘right tools for the job’.

- 6.35 For example, during the fieldwork, other support mechanisms were observed that had a positive impact on the ability of frontline sergeants to lead and manage more effectively.

### Good practice

In the London Borough of **Lewisham in the Metropolitan Police Service**, a dedicated patrol sergeant role has been implemented. There is clarity of role and purpose (see Annex E) and this clarity is reinforced by local policy. Other boroughs in the Metropolitan Police Service are also adopting a similar approach. Essentially, the dedicated patrol sergeant function, which is recognised across the borough by its call-sign (PL33), is free from almost any administrative responsibility, save for incident-related documentation. Their role is to provide visible leadership and supervision to their officers, provide the initial supervision at critical incidents and work closely with the duty inspector and the integrated borough operations room (IBO) supervisor to manage resources and deployments across the borough.

- 6.36 The role of PL33 was seen as a role to aspire to by the sergeants encountered in the borough, and was viewed as a highly developmental role, particularly for those seeking promotion to inspector in the longer term. Generally speaking, HMIC found that the borough's most experienced sergeants were fulfilling the role of PL33.
- 6.37 HMIC viewed this as good practice, although noted that there had been some teething problems regarding resilience and the level of responsibility the sergeants were charged with. The energy and enthusiasm of such motivated staff had led to deployment to incidents that were outside their remit – e.g. taking 'silver' command role at a firearms incident – and over-commitment to a complex situation without arranging cover, thereby denuding their staff of the appropriate levels of supervision. However, overall this function performed very well.
- 6.38 A less successful example was seen in another force visited where a dedicated critical incident sergeant role existed, but had fallen victim to regular abstraction. HMIC found an example of one sergeant in this role who had only performed that role on 20 occasions in a six-month period. HMIC felt that these incidents were largely due to either the process not yet being fully embedded, or failure to ensure that local and/or force policy was being complied with. These views were embraced by the SMTs concerned.
- 6.39 HMIC also notes that other forces and BCUs have, or are adopting, a similar dedicated supervisor approach, and this is welcomed and encouraged.

6.40 The issue of the proliferation of largely unread ‘**policy**’ statements was the subject of significant comment. For example, one sergeant had discovered that, in the force, 1,400 policies were in existence at the time of HMIC’s visit. HMIC questions the effectiveness and validity of such a large number and can only speculate on the level of knowledge of their content and, therefore, the level of compliance that staff are able to achieve.

6.41 Recommendation 19 in Sir Ronnie Flanagan’s *The Review of Policing* calls for:

**“the consolidation of existing doctrine which includes regulations, codes of practice, operational policing manuals and practical advice on best practice in the Police Service.”**

6.42 In HMIC’s view, the proliferation of policy is, in part, **the result of previous, individual or organisational failures** that have been forensically scrutinised, leading to a ‘policy’ to ensure ‘this never happens again’ not from the desire to learn and move forward or, through the use of best practice advice, to prevent the occurrence of high profile failures.

6.43 The result has been **the erosion of discretion**. Policy, by its very nature, is prescriptive, and an increase in adversity to risk leads to officers fearing the criticism that would result from falling foul of ‘the policy’.

6.44 A balance has to be drawn between frontline officers’ ability to maintain a flexible approach to the discharge of their duties, while remaining accountable to the communities they serve. HMIC is greatly encouraged by the introduction of mandated processes such as Harms Way by Surrey Police, and the Chief Constable of Norfolk’s “If it’s legal, ethical and you want to be associated with it – do it” ethos. These principles are serving to liberate discretion and encourage risk management in those forces. As one Deputy Chief Constable put it:

***“What is the driving factor? To do the right thing, or follow a process? If we create frameworks, we disable discretion, tying them in knots.”***

6.45 HMIC found further examples of processes being introduced to support frontline activity.

### Good practice

One of the BCUs visited in **Greater Manchester Police** had created a public service team (PST). This is a team of officers led by a sergeant whose role is to work closely with the frontline staff and remove some of the burden from them. In particular, where an incident calls for witness statements etc. to be taken immediately, this falls to the PST, releasing the frontline staff to patrol much sooner. Where witnesses are unavailable, appointments are made for PST officers to make those enquiries, and these are strictly adhered to.

- 6.46 HMIC felt that the PST approach had clear benefits for frontline capacity, investigative opportunities and, equally importantly, a citizen-focused approach. HMIC was surprised that this model, which appeared effective, has not been promulgated across the rest of the force. However, the concept is being implemented in other forces.

### *Asset and resource management*

- 6.47 HMIC felt that a significant contributory factor to perceptions of value placed on individuals and the role of frontline sergeant arose from asset and resource provision. For example, the Metropolitan Police Service has reduced the number of deployment sites for frontline staff to an absolute minimum, and many boroughs now have single deployment sites. As one sergeant stated:

***“In [force] the large geographical area linked with the current system does not allow close supervision. Some PCs will not see the sergeant from one week to the next.”***

- 6.48 HMIC observed that this increased the visibility of, and access to, the frontline sergeant for his or her staff, at the very least at the start of a shift. HMIC accepts that these issues may be dictated by the geographical composition of different forces, particularly rural forces; however, HMIC feels that **opportunities may exist for brigading of deployment sites**, thereby increasing visibility.
- 6.49 In one force, concerns were raised about the impact of a decision regarding fleet maintenance. An example was given of a change in contract provision which resulted in the loss of the ability to carry out routine maintenance locally – in this case, changing a lightbulb in a marked police vehicle. Whereas previously the bulb would have been purchased locally from BCU funds and replaced by an officer, this type of maintenance now has to be carried out at a central location which entails a round trip, for some, of three hours. The car has to be

collected the next day, which takes a further three hours. The perception of the interviewees was that the force only considered the unit cost of replacing the lightbulb, with no consideration of the impact on frontline capacity, resilience and service delivery.

- 6.50 Organisational structure had an impact on frontline capability in some sites. Multiple deployment sites require associated logistics in the movement of vehicles and people needed before actual resource deployment can take place.
- 6.51 In a number of field visits, frontline sergeants and staff raised issues such as fleet and equipment availability and serviceability as factors influencing their ability to manage demand. For example, one force had recently procured small hatchback vehicles for use by frontline staff on a 24/7 basis. HMIC observed that two officers, wearing standard patrol personal protective equipment and having items with them such as paperwork, hats, coats and other ancillary equipment, found these vehicles inadequate as response vehicles.
- 6.52 In another force, the apparent lack of investment in the response fleet meant that some vehicles were up to ten years old and the resultant increase in the maintenance schedule and the natural degradation in appearance were having an impact on capacity, resilience and morale.
- 6.53 HMIC also encountered significant strength of feeling in relation to the perception of **staffing levels for frontline activity**. Previously, HMIC raised the perception of the effect specialisation has had on frontline resourcing. *Leading from the frontline* provides an indication of the strength of feeling expressed during the fieldwork and in the questionnaire.

### Questionnaire quotes

*“Available resources is the overwhelming problem with dealing with critical incidents. Staffing levels invariably preclude a ‘textbook’ response to incidents.”*

*“Frontline response is not deemed as important as tasking units/ area policing. Staff are often taken from response to supplement different units leaving initial frontline response officers short on the ground, often dangerously/critically low where there are health and safety issues.”*

*“Murder in a local market town. The initial scene management went well securing the scene preserved and offender arrested. We ran out of resources but in true British policing style coped and adapted.”*

### Focus group quotes

Sergeant:

*“A lack of resources and required administrative procedures prevent proactive work from being done.”*

Sergeant:

*“Officers develop a different level of ‘tolerance’ in rural areas borne out of the fact that, if they arrest someone who knows how far away back-up is, and if they have to transport them to a custody area, they could be tied up for hours.”*

Constable:

*“There are not enough constables on the shifts and when there are immediate outstanding the sergeants are sometimes responding to these as well, thus doing the constable’s job as well as their own.”*

- 6.54 Less than a quarter (24%) believe the organisation provides them with sufficient support to balance their work and personal life, while almost a half (47%) actively disagree with the statement. This area was not examined specifically during the fieldwork for this inspection and requires further research in conjunction with developments related to workforce modernisation.

## Summary

- 6.55 HMIC found that the levels of **organisational and managerial support for frontline sergeants varied** between the sites visited. The issues raised in this chapter can be seen in other areas of *Leading from the frontline*. The only consistency transcending all elements of this inspection is the level of inconsistency.
- 6.56 **Forces need to review their investment choices** and consider whether the support mechanisms – both explicit, in terms of support through the command chain, and implicit, through the provision of infrastructure and procurement processes – are currently adequate. There appears to be a correlation between how valued sergeants feel and the standard of equipment, vehicles and station environment they operate within.
- 6.57 In the preceding chapters we have raised the importance of **the role of frontline sergeants in ensuring excellence** in service delivery. This view, shared by HMIC, has been articulated at the most senior levels in the Police Service and by key stakeholders and partners. In examining levels of support for frontline activity, there appears to be a significant gap between what should be in place and what, in reality, actually is.
- 6.58 HMIC holds the view that none of the issues raised here is insurmountable. Their resolution, however, depends on **high-level support for the need for change**, supported through the command chain with the appropriate infrastructure being in place.
- 6.59 Regarding time spent on administration, the comparison made between this questionnaire and *The Review of Policing* appears to indicate that the **burden of bureaucracy is falling upon the frontline sergeant**.
- 6.60 HMIC concurs with elements of the report entitled *24/7 response policing in the modern police organisation* in so far as that study placed emphasis on the bureaucratic burden affecting frontline capacity per se. *Leading from the frontline* does not seek to revisit the findings of that report, but does acknowledge the apparent imbalance of administrative burden currently placed on frontline sergeants.

## *Recommendations*

12. The National Policing Improvement Agency, together with the Association of Chief Police Officers should introduce a process for the formal accreditation of the rank of sergeant and the role of frontline sergeant.
13. In the operating context of citizen-focused policing, forces should ensure frontline sergeants understand the delivery agenda and are provided with regular feedback as to their effectiveness in meeting it.
14. Senior management teams need to demonstrate visible support for frontline sergeants, in both the operational and organisational context, in terms of adherence to standards and policy compliance.
15. Forces should review their infrastructure, support mechanisms (both organisational and individual), operating procedures and resources to ensure they are allocated according to demand, in all departments, and that frontline capacity is not disproportionately disadvantaged.
16. Forces need to develop a culture that enables frontline sergeants to exercise discretion, professional judgement, risk management and intrusive supervision in support of service delivery and adherence to standards of professionalism.
17. Forces should clearly articulate to all staff the importance attached to effective frontline supervision and the priority they place on sergeants as leaders, coaches, mentors and custodians of excellence in service delivery. High visibility and a proactive style should be pivotal.

# Chapter 7

# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS**



## Introduction

- 7.1 As stated in the introduction to this report, none of the issues contained herein should be considered in isolation. Instead, a holistic view needs to be taken of their cumulative effect on the quality of frontline supervision and wider service delivery. In order to distil this cumulative effect and the potential risk presented by a failure to address these issues, HMIC conducted a detailed examination of knowledge and skills levels regarding the early identification and management of critical incidents. The current Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of a critical incident is:

**“Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community.”**

- 7.2 This was a key objective of *Leading from the frontline*; indeed, critical incident awareness, capability and confidence levels was a key driver for this thematic inspection.
- 7.3 *The Review of Policing* highlighted increased demands on the Police Service contributing to deeper complexity in policing. Frontline leaders may be called upon at any time 24/7 to respond authoritatively to a diverse range of incidents. The identification and management of risk is increasingly essential, and the frontline leader is the individual required to identify risk and lead and guide others to respond in the early stages of an incident.
- 7.4 An increasingly widespread and commonplace operational practice is for the frontline sergeant to be the first tier of police management and leadership at or during a critical incident.
- 7.5 A critical issue identified by this thematic inspection is the lack of consistency in the standards of preparedness, capability and confidence required for an officer to fulfil the role of frontline sergeant and to initially supervise a critical incident. The context for this inspection, as outlined in Chapter 1, makes reference to the changing demand for the provision of policing services and places the frontline sergeant at the centre of maintaining and ensuring effective service delivery and managing the associated risks.
- 7.6 The frontline sergeant is charged by the Police Service (explicitly or implicitly, depending on the role profile) with managing risk to individuals and the organisation on a 24/7 basis. Risks can be physical as well as reputational, each of which can be damaging to public confidence if not managed effectively.

- 7.7 If the Police Service is to expect frontline sergeants to fulfil this crucial task, is it not reasonable for frontline sergeants to expect the Service to train, equip, empower and support them to do so? This inspection found inconsistencies of message between strategic organisational goals and frontline activity, as well as significant variation in how risk is managed. And the basis for this variation lies in many of the cultural aspects of an organisation, such as empowerment, discretion and support.
- 7.8 In the spirit of “**what does ‘good’ look like?**” in this context, HMIC asserts that, if a force has the expectation or reality dictates, that frontline sergeants are being routinely deployed in a leadership or supervisory role at critical incidents, then **appropriate investment should be made in their training, preparation, capability and confidence to do so.**
- 7.9 HMIC would expect to find:
- a clear sense of priority given to an issue identified by ACPO – and key stakeholders – as central to the policing response;
  - a national strategy supported by policy and guidance;
  - an implementation plan supported by appropriate resources; and
  - roll-out of the identified actions, followed by evaluation and testing to establish that the policies and procedures are understood and there is confidence to respond.

## *Findings*

### *Understanding the term*

- 7.10 From the evidence, HMIC found that critical incident training and guidance exists but is not reaching frontline sergeants – those who currently are and increasingly will be expected to be responsible for the initial management of such incidents. Below are some typical comments from the questionnaire and a focus group on this issue:

### Questionnaire quotes

*“I apologise if I have been vague with some of my ‘replies’ but I have not had any input – theoretical or practical – in the management of critical incidents. In fact I had not previously heard the term used within my force.”*

*“I as a supervisor have had little if any formal input/training about critical incidents. I have canvassed staff on many occasions and most did not even know what a critical incident was. Similarly I have recently gone through the promotion process, during this I attended a preparation session organised by one of my previous inspectors from when I was acting. There were around 15 other officers present, this was only a week before our promotion boards – bearing in mind many had been in the police for some time, [and] many had performed in acting roles, I was amazed when asked the question only one other person knew what a critical incident was along with myself!”*

*“I feel it is not clear as to what a critical incident is. I therefore haven’t answered questions re: this issue. I have sought clarification from my supervisors who also are not clear on what a critical incident is. Is this a national term? Does it mean a major incident, such as a large scale public order incident/terrorist incident etc?”*

*“I have never knowingly dealt with a critical incident. We have no training in this area and I am unclear when an incident becomes a critical incident, I thought that the senior management team had to designate it a critical incident.”*

### Focus group quote

*“I get sent to firearms incidents as the ‘bronze’ [commander], no idea what I’m supposed to do, I suppose it’s to manage the non-firearms bit.”*

- 7.11 HMIC recognises that forces have formulated responses to certain types of incident, some of which could fall between the definitions of a critical incident and a ‘major’ incident purely on the basis of the level of resourcing necessary to provide an effective response.
- 7.12 The inspection questionnaire (see Annex B) revealed numerous positive responses to Question 56 (see below). These appeared to fall into categories of incident which have a well rehearsed and documented response policy, such as firearms incidents and fatal road traffic collisions (RTCs).

7.13 The ACPO definition of a major incident<sup>14</sup> is:

*“Any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, the NHS or the local authority for:*

- a) the initial treatment, rescue and transport of a large number of casualties;*
- b) the involvement either directly or indirectly of large numbers of people;*
- c) the handling of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public and the news media, usually to the police;*
- d) the need for the large scale combined resources of two or more of the emergency services;*
- e) the mobilisation and organisation of the emergency services and supporting organisations, e.g. local authority, to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to a large number of people.”*

Asked to describe a critical incident, respondents offered a range of scenarios, some of which are ‘major incidents’:

“A four-vehicle **double fatal RTC** on a major arterial trunk road with a driver suspected of causing death by dangerous driving. The driver was detained and managed through his hospital attendance so as not to allow any lost evidence. Resources were managed to reduce the road closure time. Scene management was disrupted by too many senior officers attending the scene. A clearly defined investigation and management structure is essential to maintain the scene effectively.”

“A **fatal crash** [where] we had six fatalities. Early attendance of myself declaring it a critical incident and asking for the relevant resources to deal. Early adoption of ‘silver’ control at the scene was crucial. In general, incident went well. Lessons learnt were the support issues for witnesses, victims and police staff and interference from media.”

“A **murder** where officers attended. Came in as a stabbing. Offender arrested on scene. Scene taped up and secured within minutes of arrival of officers. Witnesses obtained, evidence obtained. Overall a really well managed and contained job.”

<sup>14</sup> As stated in the Association of Chief Police Officers Emergency Procedures Manual.

“**Firearms incident** – male seen in a public house dropping believed firearm on the floor. Seen to pick it up and place in clothing. Male subsequently detained by firearms officers and weapon recovered. Initial containment, visual containment and use of resources – ARV [armed response vehicle], plain-clothes uniformed officers, use of CCTV all good things. Incident ran well and would not change any decision made. Instant decisions and effective communication is vital in such incidents, and knowing the capabilities of the resources available and deployed.”

- 7.14 HMIC retains the view that the **lack of understanding, nationally, of the difference between a major incident and a critical incident** goes to the heart of the issue. This could be resolved by forces making the same level of investment in awareness and training of the management of critical incidents as they have with regard to major incidents.



### *Capability and confidence*

- 7.15 The definition of a critical incident, which is given in paragraph 7.1 and was included in the questionnaire for respondents' information, is intentionally broad to ensure that potential critical incidents are not missed. In researching opportunities for improvement, HMIC established that the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has produced practice advice on critical incident management.<sup>15</sup> The document was published by ACPO in July 2007 without a mandated implementation framework.
- 7.16 During the field visits, HMIC found **no evidence that this best practice manual was being supplied or implemented** at frontline sergeant level. Some forces have embarked or are embarking on multi-agency critical incident training courses; examples include Surrey, the Metropolitan Police Service, Humberside and Greater Manchester Police.
- 7.17 Given the need for effective supervision in such incidents, HMIC is surprised that forces are **not exploiting the learning opportunity** the guide presents, particularly in light of the benefits such knowledge would have in protecting and managing organisational risk from the outset of an incident.
- 7.18 With regard to equipping frontline sergeants with the confidence and capability to handle such incidents, HMIC examined forces' approaches to critical incident training for frontline sergeants. Again, the picture was inconsistent.
- 7.19 In the questionnaire there was considerable variation in the response to Question 11, **"Does your force provide mandatory critical incident training for supervisors of frontline uniformed staff?"** The number of respondents answering yes to this question exceeded 70% in only three forces (the Metropolitan Police Service, City of London and Dorset); **the numbers ranged from 76% down to 3%** in one force. This variation should be examined in the forthcoming HMIC inspection into critical incidents. HMIC is aware that these figures do not reflect any forthcoming training planned by forces.

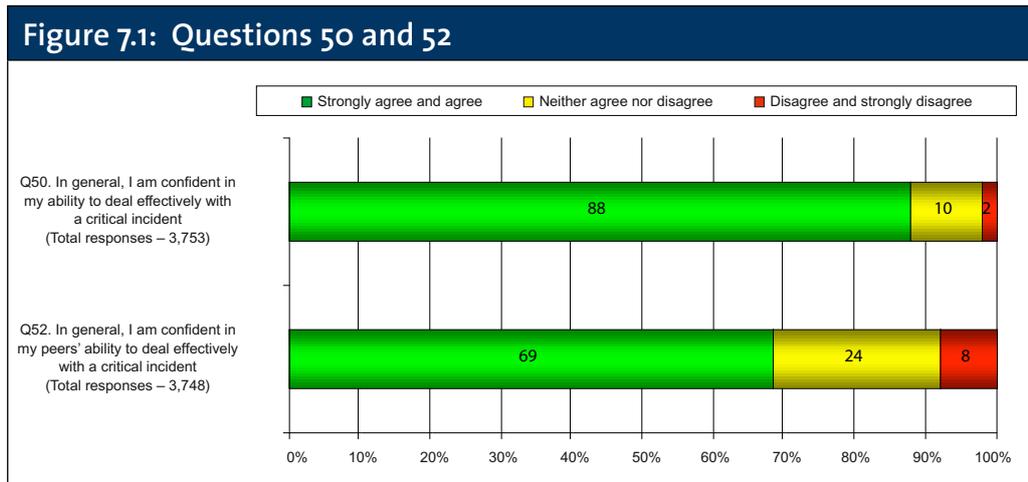
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<sup>15</sup> NPIA Professional Practice, *Practice advice on critical incident management*, ACPO/NPIA, 2007.

The field team found that the **Metropolitan Police Service** does have a ‘critical incident manual’ which HMIC regards as good practice, but this was not routinely circulated to frontline sergeants. The Metropolitan Police Service also has three separate booklets on how to manage critical incidents; these were observed by HMIC to be used by some but not all officers, meaning that the practice was not standardised. HMIC also found evidence that some sergeants had collated their own prompt sheets from these booklets as a substitute when they had not received training. It would be beneficial if the Metropolitan Police Service were to distribute the manual more widely.

The Metropolitan Police Service has also produced a duty officer’s binder that contains a wealth of information regarding operational and management issues directly relating to a wide variety of critical incidents. This information is well written and presented and indicates essential actions that must be taken and other advice. However, the binder is given to all duty inspectors but not sergeants during their critical incident training.

- 7.20 However, while the ‘expectation’ and guidance in respect of critical incident identification and response does not appear to have penetrated the Police Service to a sufficient degree, this does not appear to have had a very negative impact – at least superficially – on individual confidence.
- 7.21 Interestingly, responses to Question 50, **“In general, I am confident in my ability to deal effectively with a critical incident”**, produced very high positive responses. Overall **88% of respondents answered “Strongly agree” or “Agree”**. This contrasts vividly with the observations, the focus group responses and the responses to Question 56 (**“Briefly describe a critical incident that you have dealt with; what went well, what could have gone better, and what you learnt from the experience”**), which highlighted huge variations in knowledge and application. It is difficult to understand how confidence can be this high on a topic that appears from the evidence to be as misunderstood as it is.
- 7.22 However, respondents’ confidence in their peers’ ability to deal effectively with a critical incident (Question 52: **‘In general I am confident in my peers’ ability to deal effectively with a critical incident’**) was significantly lower at 69% (male respondents – 69%, female – 70%). Female officers showed lower levels of confidence in response to question 50, with 81% compared to 89% of males answering either **“Strongly agree”** or **“Agree”**.



7.23 The questionnaire data revealed differences in levels of confidence across gender, ethnic and minority groups. This was further evidenced in a focus group with officers from minority groups.

### Focus group quote

Black female sergeant:

***“I think I’m more afraid of making mistakes than my colleagues because they’ll ask, ‘Who attended that critical incident, which skipper was that?’ ‘The black one’, and everybody knows the black woman because I’m the only one. That sort of thing. But again that’s the first thing they notice ... is the difference”***

- 7.24 This was not a unique view within the diversity focus group, and HMIC feels that the apparent difference in confidence levels between minority officers and the predominantly white male workforce is worthy of further consideration.
- 7.25 Against this backdrop, the questionnaire (Question 34) asked respondents how many critical incidents they had supervised in the last 12 months. The average number per respondent in the 12 months to October 2007 was 14 (the highest average across a single force being 43, the lowest, 3). Extrapolating this average across all questionnaire respondents (not just those who answered Question 34) 50,000+ actual or potential critical incidents were attended and supervised by the questionnaire respondents, who have received inconsistent levels of training and have varied levels of understanding of what constitutes a critical incident, in one 12-month period. The number of actual critical incidents is likely to be much lower, because of this misunderstanding.

- 7.26 79% of respondents said that they had attended the incidents on all or most occasions. Focus groups and observations identified that Metropolitan Police Service officers tended to have a good working knowledge of the definition of a critical incident, compared to the other forces visited. This may be due to the availability of guidance documentation (see above) and the introduction of critical incident training to all newly promoted sergeants.
- 7.27 The fundamental points emerging from the research are that, although staff ostensibly express confidence in their own ability to respond, many do not understand the term critical incident and have received little guidance or training. **Confusion exists between what constitutes a critical incident as opposed to the more traditional and long-established definition of 'major incident'.**
- 7.28 Does this matter? The answer clearly is in the affirmative. Critical incident terminology and guidance was introduced as a response to help the Police Service – and individuals in it – identify and respond more effectively to events that were more subtle, less obvious than major incidents, but which had the potential to be catastrophic for individuals, communities and indeed the reputation of the Service where the response was not 'gripped'.
- 7.29 The definition of a critical incident exists because the Police Service has had to learn difficult lessons in terms of providing an effective policing response to victims and communities. The recognition of critical incidents, both actual and potential, dwells in the less definable characteristics of an incident. It is therefore essential that frontline sergeants are aware of the 'ingredients' that can change an 'ordinary' incident into a critical incident. The policing response to a major incident is somewhat more formulaic.

### ***Critical incident training***

- 7.30 With due consideration to the importance that the NPIA, with ACPO support, has obviously placed on critical incident management as discussed above, it appears that training in this area has not been delivered systematically across forces. Barely a third (36%) of respondents to the questionnaire said that their force provide mandatory critical incident training for supervisors of frontline staff – and in 10% of cases this training is on a pass/fail basis. Of that 36%, 84% had completed the training. Below are some typical examples experienced in interviews during the fieldwork:

### Focus group responses

- A sergeant in a hybrid role (response policing and roads policing) had supervisory responsibility for 14 fatal road traffic collisions in six months without receiving any relevant training.
- A basic command unit superintendent said: “Training has been given to inspectors but not to the sergeants in any formal or structured way.”
- A sergeant reported having received no training in critical incidents, although something was sent via email.
- An inspector had not been trained in critical incidents but felt that, together with the sergeant, they would “muddle through”.

7.31 Not only does this pose a question around the handling of potential critical incidents, it also highlights the wider organisational risk to which forces may be exposed.

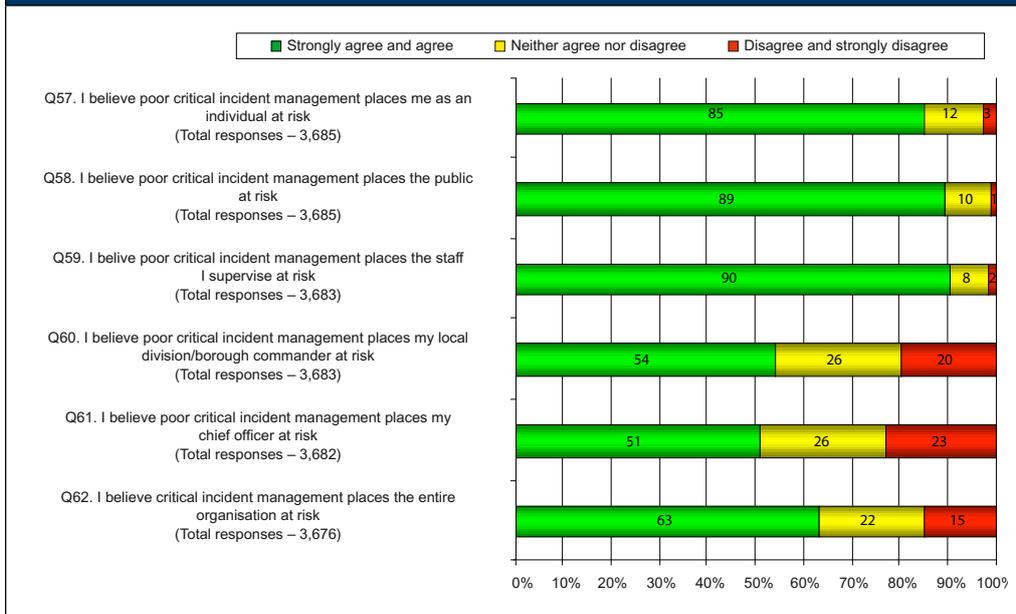


7.32 During the fieldwork, critical incident training was raised as a topic during focus groups and interviews. The Metropolitan Police Service has introduced critical incident training as a mandatory element of newly promoted sergeants' training. **While this is welcomed, HMIC believes consideration should be given to delivering this training to all frontline sergeants.** HMIC is aware that other forces have also sought to enhance capability in this area.

**Perception of risk associated with critical incidents**

- 7.33 In an effort to identify the understanding of the level of risk posed to different groups from poor critical incident management, a number of questions were posed in the questionnaire.
- 7.34 The questionnaire responses indicate that there appears to be recognition of the risks, both individual and organisational, associated with poor critical incident management. Therefore, the fact that levels of training and skill sets do not support effective handling of such incidents is of **significant concern**.
- 7.35 **The questions were phrased so as not to identify individual force effectiveness** in this area, but purely to assess levels of understanding about the risks that can arise from a failure to manage critical incidents effectively.

**Figure 7.2: Potential risk arising from critical incidents – Questions 57–62**



- 7.36 While these questionnaire responses focused specifically on the risks associated with poor critical incident management, the fieldwork witnessed the wider application of risk management in both the operational and organisational contexts.
- 7.37 It was evident that, where clear risk management direction was being provided by senior management and carried through middle management, the effect on confidence and empowerment at frontline sergeant/junior management level (in respect of risk management) was tangible.

### Good practice

In an effort to encourage risk management and discourage risk aversion, a decision-making tool called 'Harm's Way' has been devised in **Surrey** to assist frontline sergeants in decision making and risk management. In essence, Surrey Police, from the chief officer group (COG) and through senior management, ask frontline sergeants to consider the following: and if an incident is ongoing is placing innocent members of the public at risk of harm, the public has a right to expect a police officer to intervene in some practical way. The force provides personal protective equipment and mandatory officer safety training to equip them in making that intervention, having assessed the risk to themselves etc. HMIC observed that this process was understood by the vast majority of the officers they encountered. HMIC notes that Surrey Police is in the process of devising and circulating a force policy based on this decision-making tool. It is a simple test which, it could be argued, reminds officers of the duties and expectations the public has of the holder of the office of constable. It is embedded culturally and provides a mandate for supervisors to manage risk.

In **Norfolk**, the Chief Constable has issued a mandate for risk management in the following terms: **"if its legal and ethical and you want to be associated with it, do it"**. The field team noted that, although this was a relatively new mandate, it was repeated in several focus groups and interviews and was clearly welcomed.

Example of 'empowered' risk management:

In one focus group in **Surrey**, the field team raised the topic of Harm's Way and found unanimous support for it. A frontline sergeant said: "I was on duty the other day when a report came in of a bloke with a samurai sword in the high street. I was short of people as usual, but because of Harm's Way I was able to despatch people at the very least to get a visual on him and make an assessment of what was needed by one officer if necessary. I also knew that, once I had got a couple of people there, I would have sent them in together. Two years ago in Surrey that job would have meant stand back, wait for firearms, dogs and the helicopter; in the meantime the public would have been at risk the whole time. People don't want to take silly risks, but they don't want to stand back either. Harm's Way has given us the ability to make those decisions."

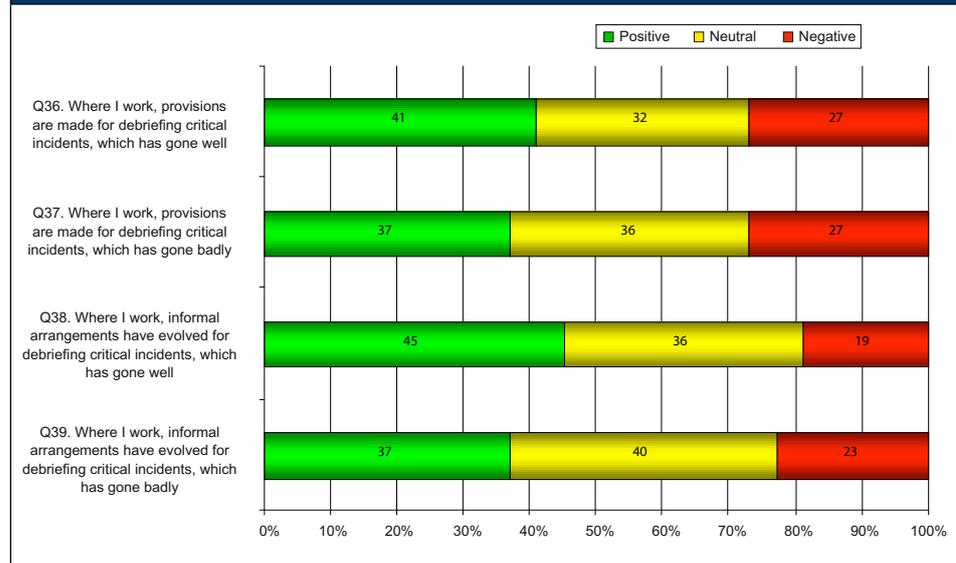
### *The 'experience factor'*

- 7.38 The results from Question 14 of the questionnaire (**"My previous experience helped to prepare me for dealing with critical incidents as a sergeant"**), show that 73% of sergeants felt their previous experience helped them to deal with critical incidents. This experience may be drawn from life experience, prior police service and/or from other previous careers.
- 7.39 When comparing the responses to Questions 11 (**"Does your force provide mandatory critical incident training for supervisors of frontline uniform response staff?"**) 14 and 15 (**"The mandatory training I received helped prepare me for dealing with critical incidents as a sergeant"**), most respondents stated that their previous experience rather than critical incident training per se, helped prepare them for handling critical incidents.
- 7.40 It should be borne in mind here that this is in the context of a very sketchy picture of training consistency and delivery. HMIC concludes that the responses indicate that previous experience helped in the absence of formalised training opportunities, but was not an alternative to training.
- 7.41 Of sergeants who responded to the questionnaire, **93%** said that they **had some experience of critical incidents before promotion**: 13% described themselves as 'very experienced'; 51% as 'quite experienced'; 29% as 'not very experienced'; and 7% said they had no experience at all.

### *Individual and organisational learning*

- 7.42 The Police Service strives to be a 'learning' organisation. Key aspects of learning lessons include rigorous review and debriefing. This is true of individual and corporate learning that can be gained through the structured debriefing of critical incidents. Debriefing should be conducted at various stages through the life of the incident and at its conclusion. Such milestones could include the conclusion of the 'Golden Hour' or following the completion of a particular task such as house-to-house enquiries or POLSA (Police Search Adviser) search, guidance for which is contained in NPIA's *Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management*.
- 7.43 In the context of this inspection, HMIC sought to establish what arrangements currently exist across forces for frontline sergeants and their staff for debriefing their role during or following a critical incident. The responses are shown in Figure 7.3 and, in keeping with other areas of critical incident management, vary considerably.

**Figure 7.3: Debriefing of critical incidents – Questions 36 to 39**



- 7.44 It is clear from the questionnaire responses that there is significant variation in commitment and investment in formal debriefing processes. Interestingly, the highest positive responses overall were where informal arrangements have evolved – but only for incidents that went well (45%) as opposed to incidents that went badly (37%).
- 7.45 HMIC believes this **indicates insufficient levels of knowledge and understanding of the value of debriefing as a learning opportunity**. Also of note is the fact that, again, firearms incidents and serious/fatal RTCs are debriefed routinely in accordance with local/national policy, yet there still remains confusion on the process for critical incident debriefing at frontline sergeant level. Debriefing is a recognised way of improving processes for critical incidents to improve individual and corporate knowledge, and it should be built into routine activity.

#### Focus group quote

*“We know ideally that there should be debriefs, but the volume of incidents means that there is only a limited time and we must move on.”*

*“We regularly hold debriefing after critical incidents but without the response sergeants or inspectors.”*

*“Debriefing of critical incidents does usually occur although there is a perceived reluctance from frontline staff towards debriefs as it was believed that they often see a debrief as officers being critical of their actions rather than a learning process.”*

*“Debriefs often don’t take place because the force is not willing to pay overtime which would have been incurred.”*

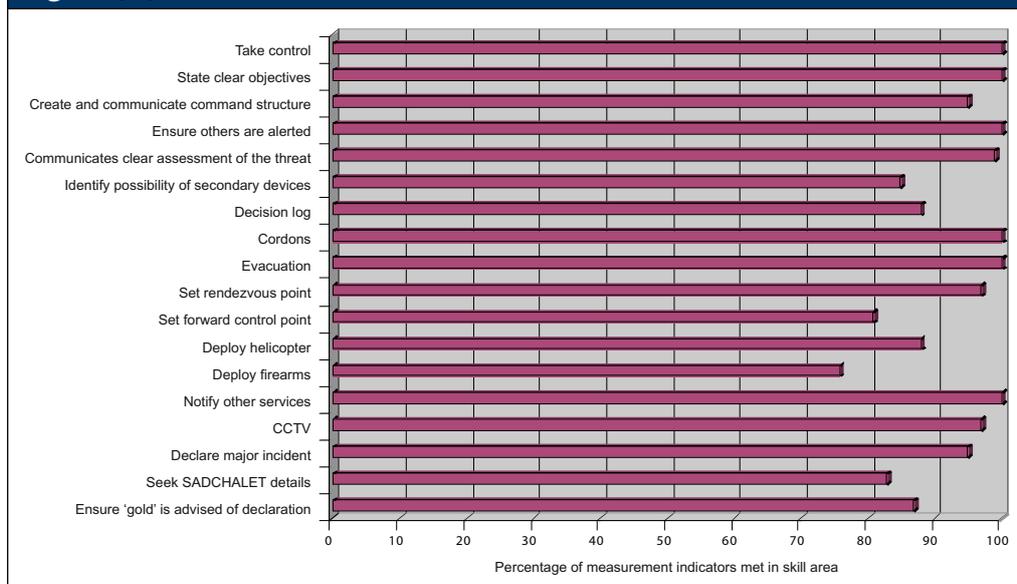
### Good practice

**Surrey Police** has embarked upon a multi-agency critical incident training programme that incorporates frontline sergeants. The HMIC inspection team attended one such programme, which is run over a weekend, and found it to be well organised and at the appropriate level.

In addition, the force has implemented the COMSIM (command simulation) process. Currently voluntary, and aimed at sergeants and above, participants are contacted by telephone and put through a critical incident scenario. The exercise is designed to test the operational preparedness of ground commanders quickly and with minimal interruption to their normal working day. Confidential feedback is provided after each exercise and the aggregate performance is recorded in order to identify organisational knowledge gaps.

7.46 Figure 7.4 shows how COMSIM performance is recorded.

Figure 7.4: COMSIM



7.47 HMIC believes that an opportunity exists for the two processes as described to be integrated, thereby increasing individual and corporate learning opportunities.

### Summary

7.48 HMIC is concerned that existing preparatory processes, including training, within the Police Service are **not equipping frontline sergeants to recognise and effectively manage critical incidents**, and the risks associated with them.

- 7.49 The fieldwork and the questionnaire responses **revealed a wide variety in the understanding of critical incident management** processes, and indeed of its definition. Despite the existence of national best practice guidance on critical incident management, it is not mandated as a training requirement for frontline sergeants. HMIC holds the view that the opportunity for individuals to increase their knowledge base in this crucial area and its implicit link to organisational risk management has not been exploited. **HMIC does not view it as tenable that national guidance of such importance has not been fully implemented.**
- 7.50 HMIC also believes that **documentation and aide-mémoires should conform to a national standard** and be made available to frontline sergeants.
- 7.51 The **opportunity for individual and organisational learning** through routine debriefing of critical incidents is not being exploited to the extent HMIC believes it should be. The resultant ability to manage and avert future risks must therefore be reduced.
- 7.52 HMIC would urge all forces to **review the confidence and capability of frontline sergeants, and their knowledge levels**, which enable them to identify and manage critical incidents, and thereafter to address any identified development needs without delay.

### ***Recommendations***

18. The Association of Chief Police Officers should develop a framework to implement the National Policing Improvement Agency's *Practice Advice on Critical Incident Management (2007)* in all forces. This should be completed by October 2008 and will be reviewed in subsequent inspections.
19. Forces should clarify their expectations of frontline sergeants at or during critical incidents, and ensure that training and support mechanisms enable delivery of those expectations. This will be reviewed in subsequent inspections.
20. Forces should develop processes to test the knowledge and understanding of critical incident management principles by frontline sergeants, maintain a corporate record of knowledge levels, and take remedial action to address individual as well as organisational knowledge gaps. This will be reviewed in subsequent inspections.

21. Forces should develop processes to ensure that the routine debriefing of critical incidents occurs and that frontline sergeants and staff are part of that process. This will be reviewed in subsequent inspections.
22. The National Policing Improvement Agency should develop processes by which individual and force learning from critical incidents, through debriefing, can be promulgated across the Police Service.

# Chapter 8

# **CONCLUSIONS**



- 8.1 Of all the evidence contained in the preceding chapters of this thematic inspection, HMIC is clear that there are fundamental issues regarding the role of the frontline sergeant in 21st century service delivery. The Police Service needs to clarify the role requirements, set clear direction, implement measures to deliver the appropriate skill set and support mechanisms in order to enable frontline sergeants to **succeed**.
- 8.2 In doing so the Police Service needs to resolve the debate regarding **leadership, management and supervision**. The academic research surrounding this debate is extensive and indicates that these three elements are not mutually exclusive. HMIC is quite clear that there strong elements of leadership required for effective frontline supervision; part of that leadership will inevitably entail the management of processes and the supervision of individuals, teams and incidents.
- 8.3 Leadership skills are not specifically tested or identified in current promotion processes, and this should be reviewed. Attempting to define what it is that sets a 'good' frontline sergeant apart from their peers caused much debate among the inspection team. The consensus was that some people simply possess inherent personal character traits that enable them, regardless of their experience and technical knowledge, to inspire, motivate, coach, set and maintain standards and '*lead from the frontline*'.
- 8.4 HMIC is of the view that there is a need to identify and harness those characteristics, and to build them into the identification and selection of potential promotion candidates. Implementing this departure from current processes on a national basis will have long-term benefits for the Police Service, as it will provide a Service-wide foundation on which to build its future senior leadership.
- 8.5 While the comparison with military leadership selection may not be regarded as directly transferable to the policing environment, HMIC has observed that the British Army's approach is based on the characteristics of an individual's ability to lead in crisis, maintain discipline and secure the delivery of organisational objectives. This, HMIC believes, is transferable. The Army believes that, provided the fundamental leadership skills are present, the technical skills for a particular role can be taught.
- 8.6 The Army is not alone in having this ethos. In place of its purely skills-based approach to promotion processes, for example, EDF Energy is moving towards a procedure for 'talent-spotting' its potential future leaders. It is currently identifying potential board level members for five years hence; candidates will move between

business groups (where technical knowledge can be trained and experience acquired), but the overriding principle is that they will lead their staff and, in turn, take the organisation forward.

- 8.7 Leadership academies are starting to appear throughout the Police Service in England and Wales. HMIC was impressed with the Metropolitan Police Service's leadership academy, and witnessed similar approaches being adopted in all the sites visited. Other forces such as Hertfordshire, Dorset and Kent are also clearly pursuing individual initiatives in support of developing leaders. A collaborative approach would, at least, lead to a common model and understanding, and could potentially provide opportunities for economies of scale.
- 8.8 It would also provide the opportunity for officers from different forces to come together in a safe environment to discuss and share their experiences. This may be particularly beneficial given the mobility of the modern workforce and the increase in inter-force transfer opportunities, particularly on promotion.
- 8.9 The recognition by forces of the importance of 'leadership' as a critical success factor is welcomed. However, HMIC has previously commented on a wide variety of role profiles for essentially the same role of frontline sergeant, and consequently can foresee the creation of 43 different leadership models. HMIC feels that this is an opportune moment for the current senior leadership of the Police Service to consider the development of a national standard of leadership, in the same way that we assert the need for national standards in role definition.
- 8.10 The Scottish Police Service has embarked on such an approach, with national standards for sergeants creating a 'level playing field' in terms of skills. The diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management in Scotland dedicates one of its four modules to leadership and people management. Further details of the Scottish model are contained at Annex D.
- 8.11 But what of the here and now? This inspection has identified areas for improving investment in our existing frontline leaders. The forthcoming Green Paper, and the Government's commitment to citizen-focused policing and local accountability, will potentially place frontline sergeants under increased scrutiny as the custodians of the successful delivery of these strategic intentions. Forces will need to urgently review their support for existing role holders as the changes start to embed (see 'Menu of options: "snapshot opportunities', page 17).

- 8.12 In this inspection, HMIC has observed rapid successful culture change in large organisations, driven by business need. The recurring theme, as seen at Invista and elsewhere, appears to be high-level support transmitted through the command chain, with heavy investment at the service delivery level. The result is that those at the ‘front end’ feel valued, supported and listened to. Invista’s personal development review process, for example, is a living document providing demonstrable evidence of a commitment to the individual by the organisation and vice versa.
- 8.13 Cultural change in the Police Service is not easily won, but – as cases such as the Macpherson Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence demonstrate – it can be achieved with the appropriate amount of impetus and support. As with that case, healing starts with the recognition and acceptance that a problem exists. HMIC believes that *Leading from the frontline* has identified that a problem exists in the Police Service’s current approach to frontline supervision. This needs to be recognised, accepted and acted upon.
- 8.14 The difference in the case of frontline supervision is that the Police Service has the opportunity to be proactive in implementing change for improvement.
- 8.15 Cultural change in the private sector is often driven by ‘the bottom line’ and the necessity to change in response to a fundamental business need. HMIC asserts that the need to respond to a business need in terms of improved quality of outcomes and quality of service is entirely transferable.

### **Recommendations**

23. The Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Policing Improvement Agency should develop a national standard of police leadership, which can be tailored at the local level, but with nationally agreed principles, to ensure consistency of expectation and application across all forces.
24. Forces should ensure that resourcing and staffing levels are regularly reviewed against a model or staffing projection. Forces need to review and, where appropriate, adapt management information systems to enable effective resource and asset management in support of effective frontline service delivery.
25. Forces should develop ways of monitoring, scrutinising and supporting frontline supervisory activity.

26. Frontline sergeants should have a voice and contribute to improving structures, systems and operating processes. Forces should ensure that such a feedback and discussion mechanism exists. Police authorities and chief officers should consider the impact of their investment choices on frontline supervision in terms of working environment, fleet and equipment, resilience, capacity and morale.
27. Forces should complete a 'snapshot' review of the issues raised in this report and determine the need for any immediate remedial activity by October 2008. (See 'Menu of options: "snapshot" opportunities', page 17.)

Annex A

**INSPECTION  
REFERENCE GROUP  
MEMBERS**



Cmdr Steve Allen – Borough Commander, City of Westminster  
Metropolitan Police Service

C/Supt Derek Barnett – Vice President, Police Superintendents' Association  
of England and Wales

Michael Chatterton – police consultant

Peter Edmundson – Policing Powers and Protection Unit

Dr Janet Foster – Police Foundation

Everett Henry – Assistant HMI

Graham Hooper – NPIA

Adele Kirkwood – Police Federation

Ian Laidlaw-Dickson – Association of Police Authorities

Althea Loderick – NPIA

Rebecca Marsh – IPCC

Caryl Nobbs – Unison

CC Robert Quick QPM – Workforce Modernisation Programme

Ian Rennie – General Secretary, Police Federation Sergeants' Central  
Committee

Julia Roper-Smith – Police Federation

CC Paul Scott-Lee nominee: Supt Steve Glover – ACPO, General Policing

Annex B

# QUESTIONNAIRE



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European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ICC/ESOMAR) International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice

Official Secrets Act

Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS)

BS 7911– Specifications for Organisations Conducting Market Research

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***Contact us***

For further information regarding this policy, e-mail us at  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

### Completion Instructions

- Please work through this questionnaire by reading each question and ticking the most appropriate response option from those listed.
- Please try and answer every question. However, if you come across a question that is not relevant to you, please leave it blank rather than selecting a response that doesn't meet your needs.

### Is this survey applicable to you?

This survey is aimed predominantly at uniform sergeants, working in response policing roles. Just to check that this survey is applicable to you please answer the following question:

- 1 Does your role, either wholly, or in part, entail the front-line supervision of uniform police officers and/or police staff who are engaged in a) responding to emergency and non-emergency calls from the public, or b) supervision of uniform police officers and/or police staff as part of a graded response model or system?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

If “No” respondents are thanked for their time and survey finishes

If you have answered “Yes” please continue –

- 2 Different forces organise their uniform response policing function in different ways. Which of the following options most accurately applies to you?

Please tick all that apply

Dedicated BCU/Borough/Division response sergeant supervising uniform officers and staff responding to <b>emergency</b> and <b>non-emergency</b> calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dedicated BCU/Borough/Division response sergeant supervising uniformed officers and staff responding to <b>emergency calls only</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sergeant within a BCU/Borough/Division with responsibility for an area or neighbourhood, supervising uniform staff responding to <b>emergency</b> and <b>non-emergency calls</b> within that area, and elsewhere when demand arises	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sergeant within a BCU/Borough/Division with responsibility for an area or neighbourhood supervising staff responding to <b>emergency</b> calls only within that area, and elsewhere when demand arises	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sergeant in a specialist role, either within a BCU/Borough/Division or a central post, with partial responsibility for emergency calls when required – e.g. Traffic, Firearms, Dog Section, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Control Room Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>

The remainder of the survey refers to the roles outlined above as “Uniform Frontline Response”. Regardless of the role title used in your force, the following questions apply to your current role.

### *About you*

This information is used to analyse and understand how different divisions/ departments and forces feel about various subjects and will enable us to compare responses across forces and identify good practice. **We are not interested in identifying individuals, and no data will be available for groups of fewer than 10 respondents.**

1. In which force do you currently serve?

Drop down box indicating all Forces

2. Which best describes your working arrangements?

Full time  Part time  Compressed hours  Flexible working  Other

If selected “Other” please specify in the open comments box below

3. Which of the following best describes your current shift pattern?

Predominantly 8 hour shift pattern  Predominantly a mixture of 9 or 10 hour shift patterns  Predominantly 12 hour shift patterns  Other

If selected “Other” please specify in the open comments box below

4. Which of the following best describes your role as Sergeant?

Substantive Sergeant  Temporary Sergeant  Acting Sergeant

5. Which roles have you performed within the police service prior to promotion to Sergeant?

Please tick all that apply

<p><b>Administrative Support</b></p> <p>HR, Finance, Secretariat/ Staff Office/ Resource/Estate Management <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>CID</b></p> <p>Borough/ Division <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Community Safety</b></p> <p>including Domestic Violence and Hate Crime <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Criminal Justice</b></p> <p>Case Preparation, Prisoner Processing Team, CPS/ Court Liaison <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Intelligence</b></p> <p>Borough Intelligence unit, Source Handler, Other NIM related role <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Neighbourhood Policing</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Operational Support</b></p> <p>Control Room, Duties/Events/ Contingency Planning, Performance/ Inspection Unit <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Response Policing</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Specialist Roles</b></p> <p>Child Protection, Sexual Offences Investigation, High-Tech Crime, Murder Investigation, Robbery, Burglary, Serious and Organised Crime, Drugs, Pro-Active work etc. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Specialist Support</b></p> <p>Public Order, Surveillance, Search Team, (POLSA) Mounted, Dog Handler, Marine/ Air Support/ Firearms <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Traffic</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Crime Management</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>			

If selected "Other" please specify in the open comments box below

6. How old are you?

21–25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26–30 <input type="checkbox"/>	31–35 <input type="checkbox"/>	36–40 <input type="checkbox"/>	41–45 <input type="checkbox"/>
46–50 <input type="checkbox"/>	51 or over <input type="checkbox"/>			

7. What was your age when you were promoted to Sergeant?

21–25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26–30 <input type="checkbox"/>	31–35 <input type="checkbox"/>	36–40 <input type="checkbox"/>	41–45 <input type="checkbox"/>
46–50 <input type="checkbox"/>	51 or over <input type="checkbox"/>			

8. What is your total length of service as a Police Officer?

Between 2 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 11 – 15 years <input type="checkbox"/>
Between 16 – 20 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 21 – 25 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 26 – 30 years <input type="checkbox"/>
31 or more years <input type="checkbox"/>		

9. If you were a member of police staff before becoming a police officer, what was your total length of service in your police staff role/s?

Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Between 1 – 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> _2	Between 2 – 4 years <input type="checkbox"/> _3
Between 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> _4	Between 6 – 8 years <input type="checkbox"/> _5	Between 8 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _6
More than 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _7	Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> _8	

10. What is your total length of service in the rank of Sergeant?

Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Between 1 – 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> _2	Between 2 – 4 years <input type="checkbox"/> _3
Between 4 – 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> _4	Between 6 – 8 years <input type="checkbox"/> _5	Between 8 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _6
More than 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _7		

11. What is your length of service in your current Force?

Less than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Between 2 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> _2	Between 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _3
Between 11 – 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> _4	Between 16 – 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> _5	Between 21 – 25 years <input type="checkbox"/> _6
Between 26 – 30 years <input type="checkbox"/> _7	31 or more years <input type="checkbox"/> _8	

12. Have you worked in other Forces?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> _1	No <input type="checkbox"/> _2
---------------------------------	--------------------------------

**If “No” please go to Section A**

13. Please identify which other forces you have worked in

Drop down box indicating all Forces <input type="checkbox"/>
--

14. What is your total length of service in other Forces?

Less than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> _1	Between 2 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> _2	Between 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> _3
Between 11 – 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> _4	Between 16 – 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> _5	Between 21 – 25 years <input type="checkbox"/> _6
Between 26 – 30 years <input type="checkbox"/> _7	31 or more years <input type="checkbox"/> _8	

## Section A: Preparation and training for the rank of Sergeant and for the supervision of frontline uniform response staff

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Yes	No	
1	I was provided with specific training for the <b>rank of Sergeant</b> by my Force at point of promotion or in preparation for promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Prior to promotion	At point of promotion	After promotion
2	At what stage would you have preferred to receive rank specific training:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Yes	No	
3	I was provided with specific training for my <b>role as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff</b> by my Force at the point of posting or in preparation for posting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Prior to posting	At point of posting	After posting
4	At what stage would you have preferred to receive role specific training:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your views on preparation for the sergeant role

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	I believe my previous experience helped to prepare me for the rank of Sergeant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I am satisfied with the way my Force prepared me for the rank of Sergeant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I believe I was prepared for the rank of Sergeant when I was first promoted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I believe my previous experience helped to prepare me for the role of supervising frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I am satisfied with the way my Force prepared me for the role of supervising frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I believe I was prepared for the role of supervising frontline uniform response staff when I was promoted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Section B: Preparation and training for dealing with Critical Incidents**

A **Critical Incident** is defined as “Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community”

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Yes	No	
11	Does your Force provide mandatory Critical Incident training for supervisors of frontline uniform response staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “No” go to Question 14</b>
<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Yes	No	
12	Have you completed the training yet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “No” go to Question 14</b>
<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>		Yes	No	
13	Was the Critical Incident training pass/fail?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Force level training**

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14 My previous experience helped to prepare me for dealing with Critical Incidents as a Sergeant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 The mandatory training I received helped prepare me for dealing with Critical Incidents as a Sergeant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Local level training**

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Yes	No	Don't know	If answered "No" or "Don't know" please go to section C
16 Has your Borough/ Division/Unit made any local arrangements for Critical Incident training for supervisors of frontline uniform response staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17 The locally delivered training I received helped prepare me for dealing with Critical Incidents as a Sergeant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section C: Uniform Response Policing**

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Yes	No	Don't know	If answered "No" or "Don't know" please go to Question 20
18 My Force has a clearly defined role profile for a Sergeant responsible for supervising frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19 The role profile accurately reflects what I do as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 The frontline uniform response sergeant's role carries the status and regard I believe it deserves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your team**

21 Please complete the grid below by placing the appropriate numbers alongside each question in the boxes provided.

a) In terms of staffing numbers, what should the composition of your team be?

**Please indicate your answers in Column A**

b) How many people have performed these roles in the last 12 months? For example, if your team has not had a full time Inspector in the past 12 months, and a number of Acting or Temporary Inspectors have fulfilled the role, Column A) should read 1, and Column B) should show the number of Acting or Temporary Inspectors that have fulfilled this role in that twelve month period.

**Please indicate your answers in Column B**

<b>Question</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
i. Inspector		
ii. Sergeant		
iii. Constable		
iv. PCSO		
v. Police Staff		
vi. Other (e.g. Special Constables and Volunteers)		

22 In this section we need to identify what the **actual** composition of your team is currently, as opposed to the earlier section, where you told us what it should be. Please complete the grid below by placing the appropriate numbers alongside each question in the boxes provided.

In terms of staffing numbers, what is the composition of your team at present?

**Please indicate your answers in Column A**

Approximately how many members of your team are you currently unable to operationally deploy (i.e. due to long term sickness, restricted or recuperative duties, under investigation, etc)

**Please indicate your answers in Column B**

<b>Question</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
i. Inspector – Substantive		
ii. Inspector – Temporary		
iii. Inspector – Acting		
iv. Sergeant – Substantive		
v. Sergeant – Temporary		
vi. Sergeant – Acting		
vii. Constable		
viii. Student Constable		
ix. PCSO		
x. Police Staff		
xi. Other (e.g. Special Constables and Volunteers)		

**Workload**

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23 The number of Constables I have to supervise on my team is manageable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 The number of PCSO's I have to supervise on my team is manageable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 The number of Police staff I have to supervise on my team is manageable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 I am able to manage the overall workload I have as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27 I am comfortable with the level of pressure placed upon me in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Support**

28 I feel supported by my line manager in my role as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
29 I believe my role is valued by my Force	<input type="checkbox"/>				
30 My organisation provides me with the support I need to balance my work and personal life	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Satisfaction and effectiveness**

31 I am satisfied with my current role	<input type="checkbox"/>				
32 I believe I am performing effectively in my role	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Section D: Your experience of Critical Incidents

A **Critical Incident** is defined as “Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community”

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Very experienced	Quite experienced	Not very experienced	Not at all experienced
33 What experience of Critical Incidents did you have before being promoted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

34 Approximately how many Critical Incidents would you say you have supervised in the last 12 months?

Enter approximate Critical Incidents supervised here

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	On all occasions	On most occasions	On some occasions	On no occasion	Not applicable
35 Of the Critical Incidents you have supervised over the last 12 months, how often did you go to the scene?	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### De-briefing

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
36 Where I work provisions are made for de-briefing Critical Incidents which has gone well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37 Where I work provisions are made for de-briefing Critical Incidents which has gone badly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38 Where I work informal arrangements have evolved for de-briefing Critical Incidents which has gone well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39 Where I work informal arrangements have evolved for de-briefing Critical Incidents which has gone badly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

40 Approximately how many de-briefs have you personally attended in the last 12 months?

Enter approximate number of de-briefs attended here

**Inspector cover**

<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Dedicated Duty Inspector with my team at all times	Dedicated Duty Inspector with my team until midnight	Dedicated Duty Inspector with my team until 3am	Other
41 Forces/BCUs/Boroughs/ Divisions have varying arrangements for Inspector cover after a certain time during the night shift. Which of the following most accurately applies to your working environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If selected "Other" please specify in the open comments box below

**If you have selected "with my team at all times" please go to Question 44**

<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Yes	No	Don't Know
42 If not available at all times, does your Force have arrangements to make a Duty Inspector available to you at a scene of an incident?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43 Does your Force have arrangements for you to seek advice from a Duty Inspector either via radio, telephone or other means, e.g. Force Control Room Inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Handovers**

<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Yes	No	<b>If answered "No" please go to Question 46</b>
44 Do you have formal/ mandatory arrangements for handovers between shifts and supervisors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
45 In my view these handovers work effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

46 In the last 12 months how many Critical Incidents have you dealt with that in your view occurred either directly or indirectly from a poor handover from a previous shift?

Enter approximate number of Critical Incidents here

47 In your view, what are the **three** most important skills/attributes Sergeants need to deal with Critical Incidents effectively?

*Please rank your answers in priority order (i.e. 1 = most important), putting one tick only in each of the columns below. Please only tick three boxes.*

	1	2	3
• Ability to take control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Common sense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Effective decision making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Effective communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Broad policing experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Knowledge of procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Effective leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Experience of handling critical incidents**

<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
48 The ability to recognise a situation which could potentially become a Critical Incident is essential to my role as a supervisor of uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49 The ability to deal with a Critical Incident effectively is essential to my role as a supervisor of uniform response staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50 In general, I am confident in my ability to deal effectively with a Critical Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51 In general, I believe I have dealt effectively with the Critical Incidents I have been involved with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
52 In general I am confident in my peers' ability to deal effectively with a Critical Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53 I believe my Local Senior Managers are committed to dealing with Critical Incidents effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54 I believe that effective Critical Incident management is a priority for my Local Senior Managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please tick one box only for each question</b>	Yes	No	Don't Know		
55 My Force is committed to learning from Critical Incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

56 In the open comments box below briefly describe a Critical Incident that you have dealt with; what went well; what could have gone better, and what you learnt from the experience

***The potential risk arising from Critical Incidents***

<b><i>Please tick one box only for each question</i></b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
57 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places me as an individual at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
58 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places the public at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
59 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places the staff I supervise at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
60 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places my local Divisional/Borough Commander at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
61 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places my Chief Officer at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62 I believe poor Critical Incident Management places the entire organisation at risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section E: Supervision

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
63 When I was a Constable the supervision I received from my Sergeants was good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
64 I believe the quality of supervision provided by the Sergeants I work with is good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
65 The supervision I currently receive from my line manager is good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
66 I regularly acknowledge good work within my team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
67 I am confident in dealing with poor performance from my officers and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section F: The Organisation

*The Senior Management Team refers to Local Senior Managers, Chief Inspector and above and equivalent grade of Police staff*

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
68 I have confidence in my Senior Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69 I feel supported by my Force Chief Officer Team in my role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70 I feel valued by my Force	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
71 I am satisfied with my Force at the present time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section G: Equal Opportunities and Diversity

<i>Please tick one box only for each question</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
72 I believe I am treated with fairness and respect by the staff I supervise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
73 I believe I am treated with fairness and respect by my line management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
74 I believe I am treated with fairness and respect by my Local Senior Management team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75 I believe I am treated with fairness and respect by my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
76 I believe my Force respects individuals' differences (e.g. cultures, backgrounds, sexuality, race, religion and other differences)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
77 In general, staff are treated fairly and with respect regardless of their rank or grade within my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**And finally, please think carefully about your role as a supervisor of frontline uniform response staff and answer the following question –**

78 Approximately what percentage of your time at work is spent on the following tasks:	<i>Please select your approximate percentages below from the drop down boxes</i>	
a) <b>General Admin</b> – Completing duty sheets, compiling reports, etc		
b) <b>Liaising</b> with other Teams/Units/Individuals relevant to your role		
c) <b>Managing/Developing</b> staff – PDRs, Standards Compliance (crime reports, etc), probationer reports, application forms, attendance management, availability, conflict management, welfare		
d) <b>Managing Performance</b> of your team, including investigations/complaints procedure/performance management		
e) <b>Training</b>		
f) <b>Custody Duties</b>		
g) <b>Supervising/Managing</b> incidents at scene		
h) <b>Supervising/Managing</b> incidents remotely – Control Room, via radio or telephone		
i) <b>Other</b> – please specify		

If selected “Other” please specify in the open comments box below

79 If there are any further issues you would like to comment on, or issues which have not been covered within the survey, please outline them in the open text box below

### About you

This information is used to analyse and understand how different demographic groupings feel about various subjects and to ensure that the sample is representative. This information will enable us to compare responses across forces and identify good practice. The survey does not **identify individual responses (nor disclose any individual data to forces)**. No data will be available for groups of fewer than 10 respondents.

1 Please select your gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
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2 How would you describe your ethnic origin?

White	Mixed	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Chinese/Other
British <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	African <input type="checkbox"/>	Other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/>
Other White background <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Black background <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other Mixed background <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/>		
Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>				

We need to carry out diversity monitoring in order to meet our statutory obligations and to ensure our HR processes are fair for all staff. Therefore it is important to address diversity in the broadest sense. One way to achieve this is to better understand those aspects of diversity that are not immediately obvious. Please help us to do this by completing the following question. Your answers are strictly confidential and will be used ONLY to understand and address issues that may exist in our organisation.

3 What is your sexual orientation?

Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay man <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay woman/lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>
Heterosexual/straight <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

If selected "Other" please specify in the open comments box below

**The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)** defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

“Normal day to day activities” covers manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, ability to lift to move everyday objects, speech, hearing, eyesight, memory or ability to learn, concentrate or understand perception of risk.

**4** Do you have a disability covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<sub>1</sub>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<sub>2</sub>
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Annex C  
**GENERIC ROLE  
PROFILE**



To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and to respond to calls from the public.	
<b>Core Responsibilities</b>	<b>Activities</b> The role holder should effectively deliver these key requirements:
<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>Adopt a problem solving approach to community issues – 131</b> Identify with the community partners and other agencies to solve community problems in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy, procedures and partnership agreements.
	<b>Monitor and evaluate police driving – 124</b> Ensure standards are maintained in accordance with driving and health and safety legislation, policies and procedures.
	<b>Prepare for, monitor and maintain the patrol service – 113</b> Supervise patrol officers, ensuring that they are equipped and provide an effective patrol service to the whole community in accordance with relevant legislation and organisational policies.
<b>Managing and Developing People</b>	<b>Carry out performance reviews – 226</b> Complete a fair and objective review of individual performance, recognising personal achievements and identifying areas for future development.
	<b>Delegate work to others – 223</b> Give responsibility and authority to others for discrete pieces of work, agreeing with them the targets they need to achieve, advising and supporting them in what they do.
	<b>Develop individuals and teams to enhance performance – 219</b> Develop the knowledge and skills of both team members and individuals to ensure the best possible results at work by identifying needs, planning their development and using a variety of activities to improve performance.
	<b>Supervise the work of teams and individuals – 221</b> Supervise short and medium term objectives, develop plans, monitor work activities and regularly assess the performance of teams and individuals to ensure that team objectives and performance indicators are achieved.

To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and to respond to calls from the public. <i>(continued)</i>	
<b>Core Responsibilities</b>	<b>Activities</b> The role holder should effectively deliver these key requirements:
<b>Health, Safety and Welfare</b>	<b>Manage the welfare needs of individuals – 116o</b> Recognise any welfare needs that a member of staff may be experiencing, assist them in identifying the cause and agree a suitable way forward, acting at all times in accordance with organisational policy.
	<b>Provide first aid – 207</b> Identify the nature of illness or injury and provide the necessary first aid treatment in accordance with approved procedures.
	<b>Supervise Health and Safety – 205</b> Ensure that all team members are aware of health and safety requirements, continually seek ways to improve the work environment and take effective action in response to breaches in health and safety requirements.
<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Conduct intelligence driven briefing, tasking and debriefing – 14o</b> Conduct intelligence driven briefing, tasking and debriefing appropriate to the duties being performed and in accordance with organisational policy.
	<b>Use information/intelligence to support policing objectives – 57</b> Use information/intelligence to support the achievement of community safety and crime reduction objectives. Ensure that intelligence is used ethically and in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy, protocols and codes of practice.
<b>Police Operations</b>	<b>Identify and manage operational threats and risks – 204</b> Complete a thorough risk assessment for operational events, ensuring adequate control measures are in place and that an appropriate contingency plan is developed.
	<b>Plan policing operations – 68</b> Plan operations gathering information, intelligence or evidence about specific policing problem aimed at contributing to achievement of the organisational Policing Plan and/or identified local need, ensuring that it is both ethical and conforms to best practice.
	<b>Supervise the response to incidents – 104</b> Ensure that incidents are correctly dealt with taking charge where appropriate, providing accurate advice and appropriate support for staff and ensuring that the correct incident management procedures are followed.

To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and to respond to calls from the public. <i>(continued)</i>	
<b>Core Responsibilities</b>	<b>Activities</b> The role holder should effectively deliver these key requirements:
<b>Investigation</b>	<b>Monitor and evaluate the interview process – 49</b> Ensure that interviews are carried out ethically and best practice techniques are applied. Recognise good performance and performance which is below standard. Take appropriate action to improve future performance.
	<b>Monitor and evaluate the quality of investigations – 10</b> Ensure that all stages of an investigation are conducted thoroughly and expeditiously in accordance with relevant legal requirements and investigation, diversity and partnership policies.
	<b>Plan and manage searches – 55</b> Ensure that search activities are undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation, policy and procedures. Where performance is below standard, take appropriate action to improve it.
<b>Custody and Prosecution</b>	<b>Monitor and evaluate the quality of case files – 43</b> Carry out quality control on all case papers to ensure compliance with CPS guidelines, legislation and policy.
<b>Personal Responsibility</b>	<b>Complete administration procedures – 216</b> Ensure that all matters relating to the process of information are carried out in a prompt, efficient manner and in accordance with legislation, policy and procedure.
	<b>Maintain standards for security of information – 66o</b> Maintain personal responsibility for gathering, recording, storing, accessing and sharing of information in compliance with information security policy, procedures and codes of practice and legislation.
	<b>Maintain standards of professional practice – 217</b> Ensure your behaviour complies with organisational values and organise your own work effectively to meet the demands of your role. Identify, implement and monitor development activities to enhance your own performance.
	<b>Make best use of technology – 242</b> Make best use of technology in support of your role, ensuring correct operation and compliance with organisational and legal requirements.

To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and to respond to calls from the public. <i>(continued)</i>	
<b>Core Responsibilities</b>	<b>Activities</b> The role holder should effectively deliver these key requirements:
<b>Personal Responsibility (continued)</b>	<b>Promote equality, diversity and Human Rights in working practices – 141</b> Promote equality, diversity and Human Rights in working practices by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and contributing to developing equality of opportunity in working practices.
	<b>Provide an effective response recognising the needs of all communities – 127</b> Build and maintain community relations by providing a service that is responsive to the needs of all communities and by ensuring that those affected by crime receive a fair and non-discriminatory service.
	<b>Work as part of a team – 224</b> Work co-operatively with team members and colleagues, contributing positively and constructively to the achievement of team and organisational objectives.
<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Address disciplinary and unsatisfactory performance procedures – 253</b> Take prompt action to address performance that is below standard, carrying out organisational procedures fairly and in line with own level of authority.
	<b>Deal with grievances – 251</b> Investigate grievances with sensitivity and in accordance with organisational grievance procedure.
	<b>Enable the organisation to retain personnel from all communities – 142</b> Enable the organisation to retain personnel from all communities by contributing to the fair treatment of staff and supporting staff in promoting equality, diversity and rights in the working practices.

To ensure and enable their staff to patrol the area for which responsible, in order to prevent crime and disorder and to respond to calls from the public. <i>(continued)</i>	
<b>Core Responsibilities</b>	<b>Activities</b> The role holder should effectively deliver these key requirements:
<b>Behaviour Area</b>	<b>Behaviour</b>
<b>Leading People</b>	<b>Effective Communication – B</b> Communicates all needs, instructions and decisions clearly. Adapts the style of communication to meet the needs of the audience. Checks for understanding.
	<b>Maximising Potential – B</b> Encourages others to learn and develop, giving them clear and direct guidance and feedback on their performance. Encourages and supports staff, making sure they are motivated to achieve results.
<b>Leading the Organisation</b>	<b>Problem Solving – B</b> Gathers information from a range of sources to understand situations, making sure it is reliable and accurate. Analyses information to identify important issues and problems. Identifies risks and considers alternative courses of action to make good decisions.
	<b>Planning and Organising – C</b> Plans and carries out activities in an orderly and well-structured way. Prioritises tasks, uses time in the best possible way, and works within appropriate policy and procedures.
	<b>Community and Customer Focus – B</b> Sees things from the customer's point of view and encourages others to do the same. Builds a good understanding and relationship with the community that is served.
<b>Leading the Way</b>	<b>Respect for Race and Diversity – A</b> Understands other people's views and takes them into account. Is tactful and diplomatic when dealing with people, treating them with dignity and respect at all times. Understands and is sensitive to social, cultural and racial differences.
<b>Personal Qualities and Values</b>	<b>Resilience – A</b> Shows reliability and resilience in difficult circumstances. Remains calm and confident, and responds logically and decisively in difficult situations.

Annex D

**DIPLOMA IN POLICE  
SERVICE LEADERSHIP  
AND MANAGEMENT  
IN SCOTLAND**



Scotland has already gone one step further in removing their OSPRE system completely from the promotion process. In 2007 Scottish police forces introduced the Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management. This will replace the existing promotion qualification for constable to sergeant by 2010.

The background to this implementation is that in 2002 the Scottish Executive launched its Lifelong Learning Strategy, which recognised the role the SCQF (Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework) plays in supporting lifelong learning. The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) then launched its People Strategy which recognised lifelong learning and qualifications as a means to develop and prepare the Scottish Police Service for the 21st century. The Scottish Police Service then saw the opportunity to develop a comprehensive qualifications framework for the Police Service. Devised in 2001 the Diploma in Higher Education, Training and Development, which is undertaken by all new members of Scottish Police College staff, highlighted what could be achieved.

During 2003 the probationer training programme in Scotland was accredited by the University of Stirling and provides successful recruits with a Certificate in Higher Education, Policing. 2006 saw the validation by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) of a new diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management which in three years will have replaced the current promotion qualification. The success rate for the current promotion process is 20% and it was not delivering what the Police Service required. The exam process was made easier but pass rates were lower. There was a growing realisation that officers were not ready for the rank of sergeant. It was all a natural process: ACPOS wanted to get rid of the exams, and learning frameworks were already in place but needed to be suitable and robust to deliver the standard that was required. The thinking behind the content of the diploma was that there needed to be a cognitive input. This required changing the concept of training being competency based (force imposed) to capability based (individuality). The diploma is broken into four modules as follows and is spread over 18 months of learning:

### ***Module 1: Policing in Scotland***

- Contemporary policing
- Professional knowledge in policing
- Criminal Justice System in Scotland

### ***Module 2: Managing dilemmas***

- Professional ethics in policing
- Decision making

***Module 3: Achieving success through management***

- Organisational management

***Module 4: Leading people***

- People management
- Leadership

There are still two years remaining for the current exams to be taken but it was noted at the last exam that the numbers sitting it were not high and the latest diploma cohort intake was high. The college has only just started its fourth intake and therefore at this time has no empirical data to support their claim that the diploma will produce officers better prepared for the rank of sergeant. To compare and contrast the current promotion system with this diploma would suggest that the diploma is an investment aimed at producing more knowledgeable and better prepared officers than the OSPRE system which just consisted of three law exam papers.

Annex E

**STATEMENT OF  
EXPECTATIONS –  
PATROL SERGEANT  
(PL33), BOROUGH OF  
LEWISHAM**



1. The patrol sergeant role is pivotal in the successful running of this team. It is a role that is usually given to officers who are experienced and/or are sitting or who intend to sit on promotion to the rank of inspector.
2. The patrol sergeant performs a role that would normally be undertaken by an ops inspector on other Boroughs. PL33 is, in effect, the deputy to the Duty Officer.
3. Where a sergeant is posted as PL33 they are to parade at Lewisham Police Station and liaise with the Duty Officer at the start of the tour of duty.
4. Where the patrol sergeant is not appropriately qualified they will not drive the patrol vehicle.
5. At the start of a tour of duty the patrol sergeant will:
  - receive a briefing from the previous patrol sergeant and take possession of the PL33 phone;
  - check the 'Open Incident List' in the IBO in order to prioritise and facilitate the team's response to demands for police assistance;
  - check outstanding results for the team. Ensure results from previous tours of duty have been correctly entered on the CAD system;
  - deal with any imbalances in personnel and resources across the Borough to ensure a balanced response to calls for police assistance;
  - ensure officers are identified and posted to crime scenes, where applicable, in order to guarantee that officers from other teams are relieved promptly.
6. At the start of a tour of duty the patrol sergeant will supervise MERLIN to ensure that:
  - high risk mispers [missing persons] have been dealt with appropriately;
  - minimum standards of investigation have been complied with;
  - opportunities for an effective investigation are not lost.
7. Reassess the need for officers to remain on crime scenes and ensure that investigating officers are dealing with the scenes expeditiously.
8. Ensure officers on crime scenes are given the opportunity for periods of refreshment.

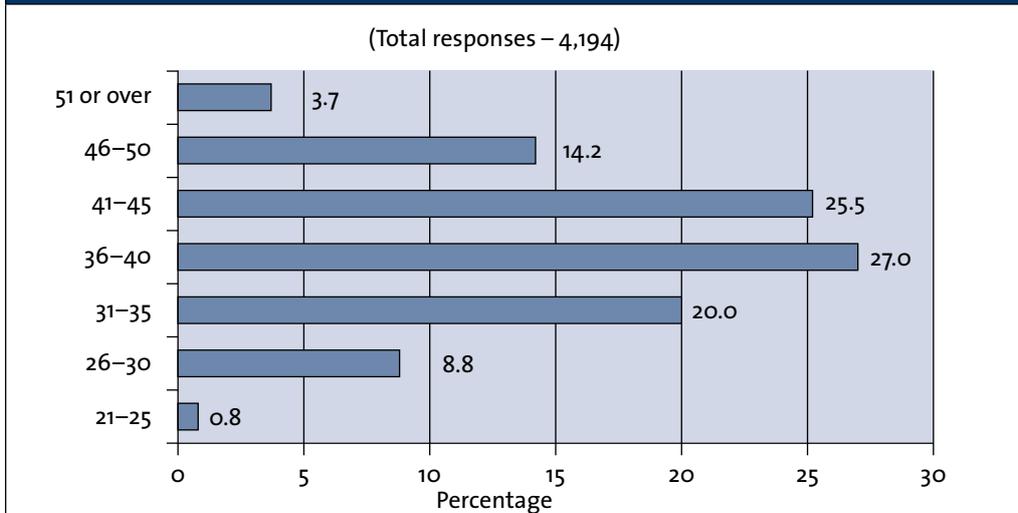
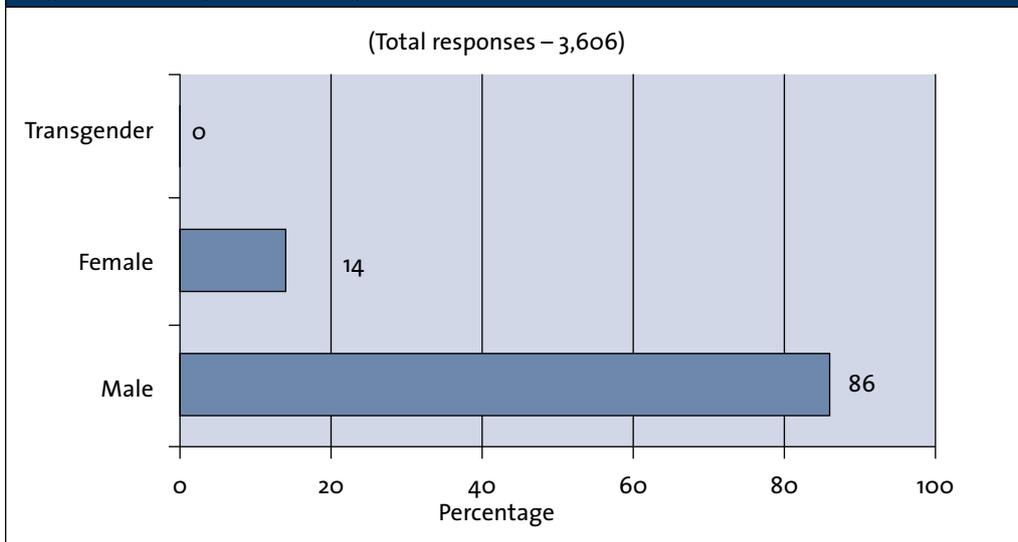
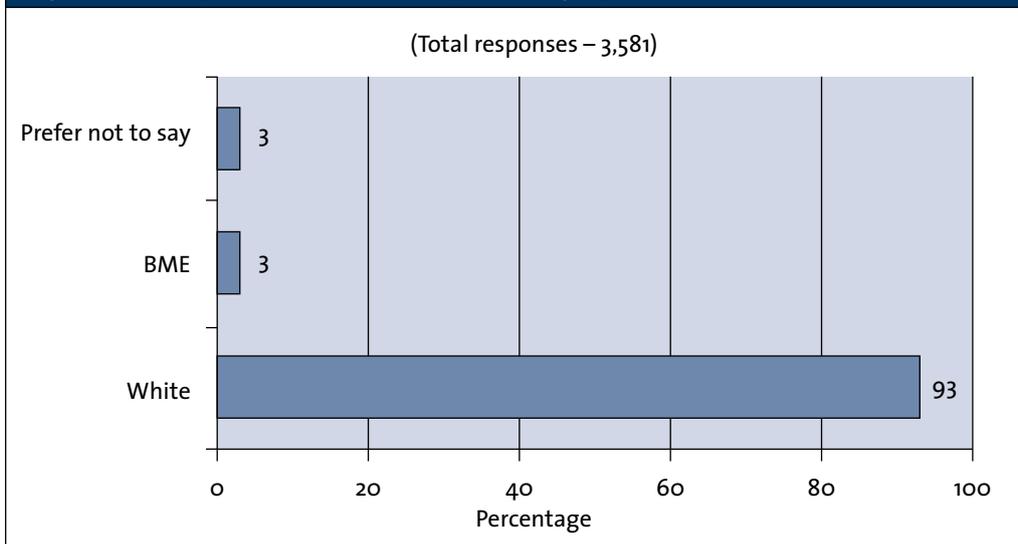
9. To pay particular attention to officers where their supervisor is not working with his/her team. Where time allows, supervise the CRIS entries of officers on that team.
10. To monitor calls and to facilitate effective command and control of resources on the BOCU throughout the tour of duty to ensure an appropriate level of response to all calls for police assistance by employing an intrusive style of supervision.
11. To provide a point of contact for PL IBO and MetCall in order to facilitate effective command and control to ensure an appropriate deployment of resources to all calls for police assistance.
12. To check the open incident list throughout the tour of duty (best done on a terminal in the IBO) to ensure that MetCall are forwarding outstanding calls to patrol officers, thus reducing the number of calls shown as unassigned.
13. To attend and take control at critical and serious incidents.
  - To collate intelligence.
  - To maximise forensic opportunities at critical and serious incidents.
  - To ensure satisfactory completion of IMLs and crime scene logs.
14. To mentor and coach junior officers and less experienced sergeants in a manner that ensures their continuing development.
15. To ensure minimum standards of performance are attained for key team performance indicators and to ensure that standard operating procedures are followed.
16. To keep the Duty Officer informed of incidents requiring their attention throughout the tour of duty.
17. Towards the end of tour of duty:
  - a. Ensure officers send results to MetCall in order to update CAD.
  - b. Supervise MERLIN to ensure:
    - i. High risk mispers have been dealt with appropriately
    - ii. Minimum standards of investigation have been complied with
    - iii. Opportunities for a more effective investigation are not lost.

18. To hand over to the patrol sergeant of the next team.
19. To debrief the Duty Officer in order that a handover sheet can be completed.
20. Where sergeants are performing the role of PL33 on a temporary basis, they will also be responsible for the day-to-day supervision of officers on their own team in addition to performing the role of PL33.

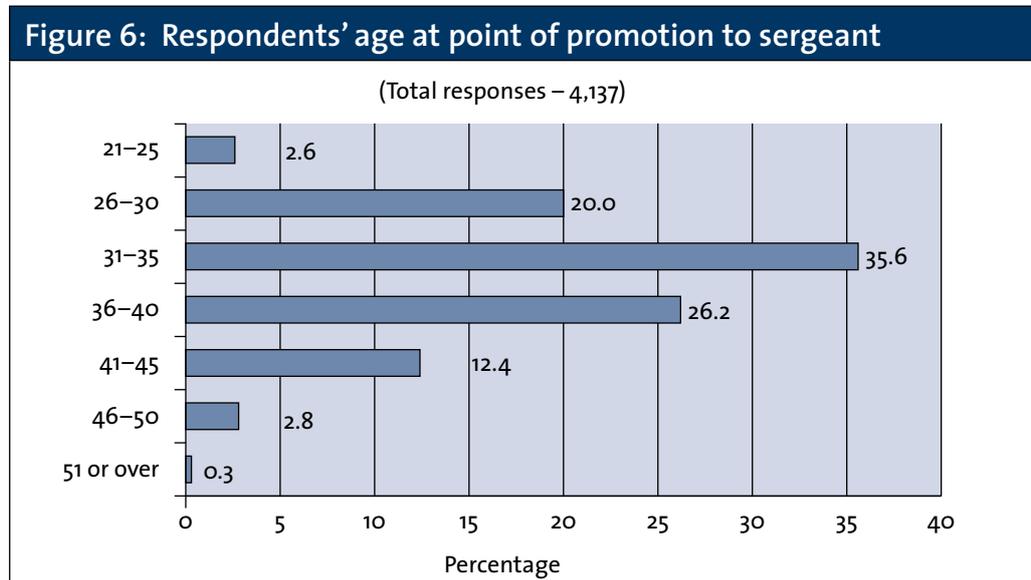
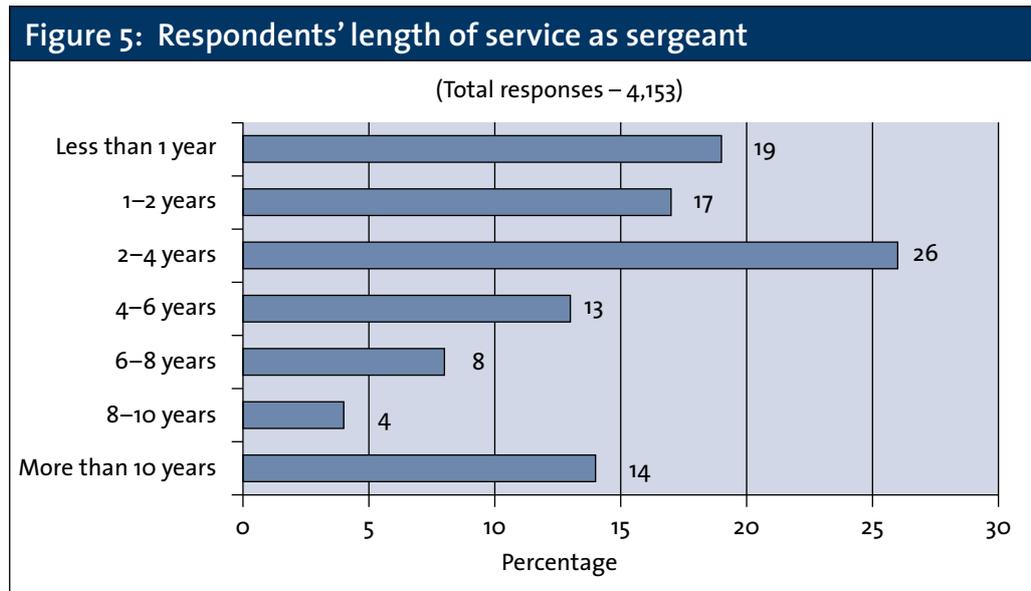
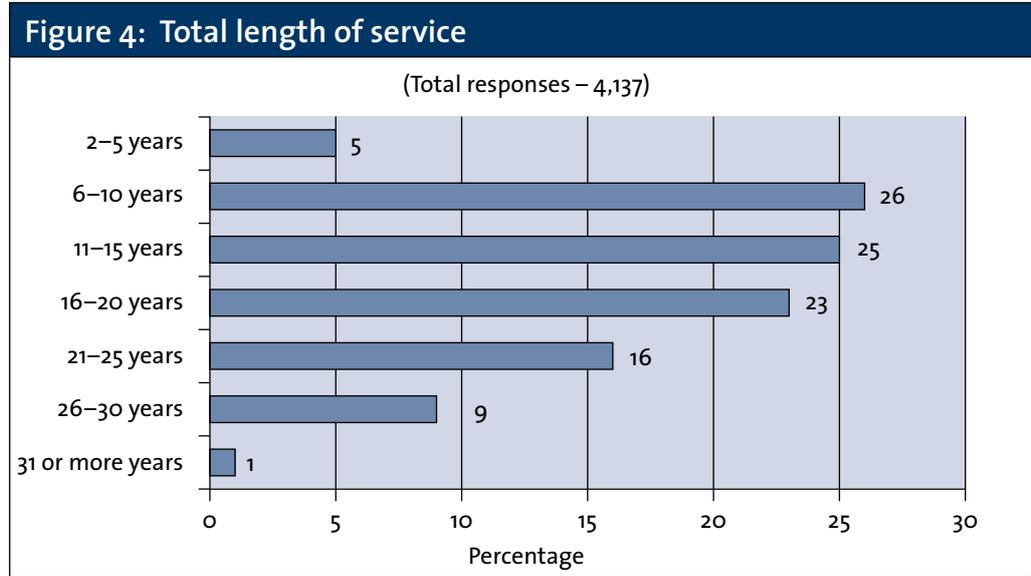
Annex F

**QUESTIONNAIRE  
DEMOGRAPHIC  
DATA**



**Figure 1: Respondents' age****Figure 2: Respondents' gender****Figure 3: Respondents' ethnicity demographic**

Below is a series of tables showing the respondents' service profile.



From the data provided by the respondents (average age, the average when promoted to sergeant, the average length of total service as a police officer, and the average length of service served in the rank of sergeant) average age length of service can be calculated. The table<sup>1</sup> below shows the extrapolation:

Age range as per questionnaire	Number of respondents per age range (b)	Mid point of each range (c)	Total age (b x c)
21–25 years	32	23	736
26–30 years	369	28	10,332
31–35 years	840	33	27,720
36–40 years	1,132	38	43,016
41–45 years	1,070	43	46,010
46–50 years	597	48	28,656
51+ years	154	53	8,162
TOTAL	4,194		164,632
		Average age (total c / total b)	39.25 years

As a result of these calculations the **average age of respondents is 39 years**, with an **average length of total police service of 15 years**. On average each respondent has **been a sergeant for 4 years**, which means they were **typically promoted at the age of 35 with 11 years' service**.

It should be noted that **less than 10%** of all respondents stated that they were under 30 years and 62% have less than four years' service in the rank of sergeant. This information challenges the perception that sergeants are young in terms of their age and length of service as a police officer.

### Commentary on questionnaire demographic data

The survey data has already been used to calculate the average age of all respondents at the time of completing the survey, their average age when they became a sergeant, the average length of service they have as a police officer and the average length of time they have been serving as a sergeant.

<sup>1</sup> Calculation based on median from each age range

It should be noted that data from individual forces named in the tables below is based on questionnaire respondents from those forces compared with the overall average from all respondents to the demographic questions. Responses varied in forces and individual values cannot be generalised in all cases due to responses by force ranging considerably. The provision of this data is designed to give an indication of each force's position against the national average. The data is drawn from those officers who responded to the survey and it is not known whether these are representative of all sergeants in terms of age and length of service.

### *Average age of respondents*

The average age of all respondents equates to **39.25 years**. From examining the data force by force the average age per force ranges from 43.33 (City of London<sup>2</sup>) to 37.01 (Hertfordshire). As a result there does not appear to be wide variation across the country.

Oldest respondents		Youngest respondents	
43.33	City of London	37.01	Hertfordshire
42.12	Dyfed-Powys	37.03	Hampshire
41.75	Cumbria	37.41	Nottinghamshire
41.23	Humberside	37.59	Greater Manchester
40.93	South Yorkshire	37.89	Kent

### *Average age of respondents when they were promoted to sergeant*

The overall average equates to **34.77 years**. The range varies from 36.53 (Merseyside) to 33.42 (Leicestershire). As above there is not a significant variation across the country.

Oldest respondents		Youngest respondents	
36.53	Merseyside	33.42	Leicestershire
36.49	Bedfordshire	33.48	Hampshire
36.33	City of London	33.54	Surrey
35.83	Humberside	33.61	Cambridgeshire
35.81	North Yorkshire	33.71	Hertfordshire

<sup>2</sup> City of London had the smallest number of respondents (15) so is likely not to be statistically significant.

### ***Average length of service as a police officer***

The overall average equates to **15.33 years**. The range, by force, varies from 20.03 (City of London) to 11.91 (Surrey). Within this data set the variation is more significant, perhaps beginning to indicate that some forces do have younger/less experienced officers fulfilling the role of sergeant. Conclusions are difficult to draw without examining the overall age profiles for the whole force.

Highest lengths of service		Lowest lengths of service	
20.03	City of London	11.91	Surrey
17.84	Humberside	11.96	Hampshire
17.83	Cleveland	12.32	Hertfordshire
17.79	Cumbria	12.93	Cambridgeshire
17.68	Dyfed-Powys	13.43	Greater Manchester

### ***Average length of service as a sergeant***

The overall average equates to **4.30 years**. The range varies from 6.52 (Cumbria) to 3.20 (Greater Manchester). Again there are some considerable differences between the highest and lowest.

Highest lengths of service		Lowest lengths of service	
6.52	Cumbria	3.20	Greater Manchester
6.33	South Yorkshire	3.36	Hertfordshire
6.18	Dyfed-Powys	3.41	Northamptonshire
5.80	North Wales	3.49	Hampshire
5.77	City of London	3.53	West Yorkshire

Further analysis was undertaken by grouping some age and length of service brackets together. The findings of this analysis are detailed below.

### ***Percentage of respondents aged under 36***

29.59% of all respondents were aged under 36. This ranged from 50% (Hampshire) to 5.88% (Dyfed-Powys). This shows that there is a marked difference from force to force in terms of the age profile of officers completing the survey, and therefore serving at the rank of sergeant.

The table below shows all the forces that were either 5 percentage points higher or lower than the overall average. Twenty-nine forces were 5 percentage points higher or lower than the mean.

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Dyfed-Powys	5.88	Hampshire	50.00
City of London	6.67	Hertfordshire	45.28
Cumbria	8.33	Cambridgeshire	43.24
South Yorkshire	15.22	Nottinghamshire	41.18
West Mercia	17.89	Kent	40.91
Lincolnshire	18.00	Greater Manchester	39.46
North Wales	18.03	Gloucestershire	39.13
Humberside	19.47	Cheshire	38.71
Bedfordshire	20.93	Northamptonshire	37.04
Northumbria	21.50	Surrey	35.71
Merseyside	22.09		
Wiltshire	22.58		
Dorset	22.73		
North Yorkshire	22.92		
Gwent	22.95		
Cleveland	23.21		
Derbyshire	23.81		
Warwickshire	24.32		
South Wales	24.49		

### *Percentage of respondents aged over 41*

43.42% of all respondents were aged over 41. Again there was considerable variation by force with the highest being 66.67% (City of London) and the lowest 29.93% (Greater Manchester).

The table below shows all the forces that were more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the overall average. In total 25 forces were more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the mean.

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Greater Manchester	29.93	City of London	66.67
Norfolk	31.58	Cumbria	62.50
Cheshire	32.26	South Yorkshire	60.87
Hertfordshire	33.02	Humberside	59.29
Sussex	33.33	Dyfed-Powys	55.88
Northamptonshire	35.19	Derbyshire	52.38
Nottinghamshire	35.29	Merseyside	52.33
West Yorkshire	37.63	Cleveland	51.79
		Wiltshire	51.61
		Warwickshire	51.35
		Bedfordshire	51.16
		South Wales	51.02
		North Wales	50.82
		Dorset	50.00
		Northumbria	50.00
		Lincolnshire	50.00
		West Mercia	49.59

### ***Percentage aged under 30 when promoted to the rank of sergeant***

9.56% of all respondents were under the age of 30 when they were promoted to the rank of sergeant. There was less variation between forces, with 17 being more than 5 percentage points either higher or lower than the average. The highest was 23.58% (Hertfordshire) and the lowest 0% (Dyfed-Powys).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Dyfed-Powys	0.00	Hertfordshire	23.58
Lincolnshire	2.00	Hampshire	20.97
South Yorkshire	2.17	Kent	18.18
Dorset	2.27	Surrey	17.86
Wiltshire	3.23	Cambridgeshire	16.22
Cheshire	3.23	Nottinghamshire	16.18
North Wales	3.28		
Gwent	3.28		
Staffordshire	4.11		
Cumbria	4.17		
Northumbria	4.21		

The forces shown on the right hand side of this table have a significant number of young sergeants. However, the profile of the majority of forces tends to show that the myth that a large proportion of sergeants are under 30 is not the case.

### ***Percentage aged 41 or over when promoted to the rank of sergeant***

15.52% of all respondents were not promoted to the rank of sergeant until they were 41 or more. There was little variation with 11 forces more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the average. The highest was 23.53% (Merseyside) and the lowest 6.45% (Cheshire).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Cheshire	6.45	Merseyside	23.53
Dyfed-Powys	8.82	Bedfordshire	23.26
Sussex	9.26	Thames Valley	22.00
South Yorkshire	9.30	Derbyshire	21.43
Leicestershire	10.17	Cumbria	20.83
Northumbria	10.48		

***Less than 10 years' total service***

30.12% of all respondents have less than 10 years' total service. There was a significant level of variation between forces in this demographic category with 29 forces more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the average. The highest was 55.56% (Surrey) and the lowest 12.50% (Cumbria).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Cumbria	12.50	Surrey	55.56
Dyfed-Powys	12.90	Hampshire	52.46
City of London	13.33	Cambridgeshire	52.05
West Mercia	13.91	Hertfordshire	49.52
Staffordshire	17.27	Gloucestershire	43.48
South Yorkshire	17.39	Greater Manchester	41.67
West Yorkshire	17.44	Nottinghamshire	38.81
Cleveland	19.64	Cheshire	38.71
North Wales	20.69	Bedfordshire	37.21
Gwent	21.31	Northamptonshire	35.19
Merseyside	21.43		
Humberside	21.62		
North Yorkshire	21.74		
Northumbria	22.17		
South Wales	23.91		
Lincolnshire	24.00		
Essex	24.32		
Suffolk	24.39		
Dorset	25.00		

***Less than 2 years in the rank of sergeant***

35.66% of all respondents have been in the role of sergeant for less than 2 years. Twenty forces were more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the average with the highest being 55.74% (Hampshire) and the lowest 6.67% (City of London).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
City of London	6.67	Hampshire	55.74
Dyfed-Powys	11.76	Greater Manchester	50.00
South Yorkshire	13.95	Thames Valley	45.00
Cumbria	20.83	Gloucestershire	44.44
North Wales	22.95	Avon and Somerset	42.35
Leicestershire	25.00	Devon and Cornwall	42.02
Derbyshire	26.19	Cheshire	41.94
Gwent	26.23	North Yorkshire	41.67
Durham	28.57		
South Wales	28.57		
Essex	29.25		
Northumbria	29.38		

When examining this table with the previous one there are four forces (Hampshire, Greater Manchester, Gloucestershire and Cheshire) that have a significant number of officers performing the role of sergeant with less than 10 years' total service and less than two years in the rank of sergeant.

**16+ years' overall service**

46.07% of all respondents have more than 16 years' service. Twenty-seven forces were more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the average. The highest was 73.33% (City of London) and the lowest 29.17% (Greater Manchester).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Greater Manchester	29.17	City of London	73.33
Hertfordshire	29.52	Cumbria	70.83
Hampshire	31.15	Cleveland	66.07
Cheshire	32.26	Wiltshire	64.52
Kent	33.33	Humberside	63.06
Surrey	33.33	Dyfed-Powys	61.29
Avon and Somerset	33.73	West Mercia	59.13
Leicestershire	33.90	Merseyside	57.14
Cambridgeshire	34.25	Essex	56.76
Norfolk	36.84	Dorset	54.55
Northamptonshire	38.89	South Wales	54.35
Devon and Cornwall	39.59	Northumbria	54.25
		Suffolk	53.66
		North Wales	53.45
		West Yorkshire	52.91

***4+ years as a sergeant***

38.17% of all respondents have been a sergeant for more than 4 years. Thirty-two forces were more than 5 percentage points higher or lower than the average, which was the most variation for any demographic grouping analysed for this paper. The highest was 65.12% (South Yorkshire) and the lowest 20.83% (Greater Manchester).

Forces more than 5 percentage points lower		Forces more than 5 percentage points higher	
Greater Manchester	20.83	South Yorkshire	65.12
Northamptonshire	24.07	Cumbria	62.50
MPS	27.62	City of London	60.00
Nottinghamshire	27.94	Warwickshire	59.46
Cheshire	29.03	Dyfed-Powys	58.82
North Yorkshire	29.17	West Mercia	54.47
Hertfordshire	29.25	North Wales	54.10
Merseyside	30.23	Cleveland	52.73
Bedfordshire	30.23	Gwent	52.46
West Yorkshire	31.18	Lincolnshire	52.08
Surrey	32.14	Leicestershire	51.67
Hampshire	32.79	Wiltshire	51.61
Avon and Somerset	32.94	Durham	50.00
Thames Valley	33.00	Northumbria	48.34
		Essex	48.30
		South Wales	46.94
		Staffordshire	45.45
		Dorset	44.44



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