

Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: Avon & Somerset Constabulary

Date of Inspection: 23–24 June 2004



A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

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Context and Force performance

Context

Population served by the Force	1,496,000	
Number of police officers	3,464	
Number of police staff	2,353	
Number of special constables	338	
Budget for training for the financial year:	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget
2003/04	not asked	1.6%
2004/05	£2.2 million	1%

Performance

A baseline assessment of the Force was undertaken between September and December 2003.

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

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/asombaseline0604.pdf

Further details of the Force performance can be found at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

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

Findings

Area Examined	Findings
TRAINING STRATEGY	<p>There is a learning policy in the training plan replacing a formal training strategy. The policy is generally compliant with HOC 53/2003 although the components of it are fragmented. The links with the HR plan and the wider Force objectives are clearly defined.</p>
QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>The plan supports the NCM costing methodology and requirements but it does not currently include all training.</p>
MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR	<p>Monitoring of the plan is via regular updates to the newly formed PA HR Committee and to the quarterly Strategic Training Programme Executive (STPE).</p> <p>The NCM costs are not directly monitored but the training budget is via a locally produced spreadsheet.</p> <p>Variations to the plan are submitted to the STPE in the first instance. This year it is intended to undertake an 'actual' costing of activity in addition to the initial predictive costings.</p>
TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>The training plan does not contain details of training undertaken by the mounted and dog sections, which lies outside the scope of the training school. This is being reviewed for next year's plan. There has also been an attempt to cost some selected aspects of the district training officer role. Custody and Road Policing Units are reviewing training needs and their work plan for 2004/05 before being included in next years CTP.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS</p>	<p>There is a clearly defined client/contractor structure in place within the Force that is managed by the STPE. An ACPO lead gives independence to the decision making process. A lower level Training Users Group (TUG) identifies the training needs and priorities of districts and departments based upon local issues and information emanating from the PDR process.</p> <p>80 per cent of the training requirement is centrally driven but HM Inspector was concerned to hear that there is a lack of confidence within the Force, and at the strategic management level, in the effectiveness of the STPE prioritisation process.</p> <p>No training is delivered without a specific mandate from the STPE in relation to new training, or the appropriate department head in relation to existing/ ongoing training. However, there is little transparency in the decision making process, and thus no obvious and formal decision making protocols.</p>
<p>MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>The Head of Personnel and Training has overall responsibility for training. He is reported to by the Head of Training, who in turn manages the Training Centre.</p> <p>With the recent introduction of a dedicated HR Director there now appears to be unnecessary duplication of training management at Head of Personnel and Training level. There is doubt as to the value of the 20 per cent of time currently given to the training function through this role. This is not seen as criticism of the individual but of the current structure.</p> <p>HM Inspector was concerned that some key specialist training areas remain outside the professional management of the Head of Training and are not included in the CTP.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Learning • Training Matters • Diversity Matters • Foundations for Change 	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to see clear and evidenced progress of the recommendations from Managing Learning, Training Matters, Diversity Matters and the FfC within the Training Department, each supported by an audit trail of achievement to date.</p> <p>The Force takes the lead on some of the FfC elements. However, middle managers were not confident about articulating or identifying the strategic direction in which the Training Department is heading and had no apparent knowledge of the FfC or the IP for training.</p>
<p>CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>The IP is clear and comprehensively pulls the priority areas for improvement together with milestones, ownership and target dates.</p>
<p>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>Overall, the IP would benefit from more rigorous and regular monitoring. It is currently monitored by the Head of Training on an informal basis.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see the newly formed HR Committee will be monitoring specific areas of the IP identified within the BVR, and it is suggested that this would be better on a four or six monthly basis.</p>
<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</p>	<p>The Force is aiming to introduce a rigorous QA system in relation to all training but currently there are very limited QA processes in place for divisional training.</p> <p>All QA activity is underpinned by a 'Quality in Training' manual which is out of date but being reviewed and updated. The emerging QA framework will reflect the Adult Learning Inspectorate 'Common Inspection Framework' and the Centrex approval process.</p> <p>All training is being reviewed to ensure that content supports the NOS. All trainers are supported in achieving the NVQ Level 3 in training and development and there are targets in place in relation to the number of TDOs and NVQ assessors within each team.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
EVALUATION OF TRAINING	<p>The evaluation function rests within the QA and training support area. Higher level evaluation is prioritised by the STPE. HM Inspector recommends that, in the longer term, the evaluation function should be placed outside of the Head of Training's remit to improve independence.</p> <p>Evaluation generally is not systematic or routinely applied at any level.</p>
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see firm evidence of good interaction between the Training Department and the local community. There are formalised links within subject areas, especially within uniform probationer, crime and diversity training, and there are plans to involve local groups, as well as IAGs from around the Force. The Head of Training is committed to further community consultation and involvement and is actively seeking, in partnership with their team leaders, for further opportunities to expand this area.</p>
COLLABORATION – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see there is sound evidence that collaborative arrangements are in place to engage with the public and private sector at executive level.</p> <p>At the local level, a number of districts including Bath and South Gloucestershire have developed a partnership approach to training with a range of partner agencies to which the training school has also contributed, for example customer contact skills for refuse collection staff.</p>
COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS	<p>There is a good exchange of information at regional level around TNA, design and evaluation. In addition, there has been good stewardship of the FfC, several of which are being managed by Avon and Somerset for the region. There are also clear collaborative links with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Devon and Cornwall in terms of firearms and driver training; ● the Prison Service for escorting and VIP issues; ● Dorset and Wiltshire for management training; and ● Hampshire within the tutor constable courses

Area Examined	Findings
<p>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</p>	<p><i>Models for Learning and Development</i> are being implemented as part of the developing QA framework. HM Inspector acknowledges that this is work in progress. There is clear evidence that national guidance has been implemented within firearms training and the crime courses but no such evidence is present of the rest of cycle being driven by the <i>Models for Learning and Development</i> procedures across the training function.</p>
<p>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</p>	<p>To ensure that all training is captured in the CTP</p> <p>To develop better two way communication within the Training Department, particularly across the training teams.</p> <p>Develop a more effective use of the NCM as a contemporaneous monitoring tool.</p> <p>To improve clarity, transparency and to effectively communicate the prioritisation and decision making process taking place at the strategic level.</p> <p>To develop an effective environmental scanning process better to predict and effectively to plan in advance the known new legislation and other issues impacting on the police service.</p>
<p>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</p>	<p>Whilst there is clear evidence of some elements of ‘challenge’ taking place, especially in the adoption of new training, there is no evidence of a proactive approach to the integration of the principles of ‘comparison’, ‘consultation’ or ‘competition’ within the training management function.</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>There is good and consistent evidence of effective and efficient PDR completion. This current system is not ICF compliant but uses the ‘Kent’ Model. However, the Force is planning to migrate to the ICF system in August 2005.</p>
<p>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</p>	<p>Completion of PDRs is now part of the Force inspection process where divisions are held to account on both numbers completed and quality.</p> <p>Support managers are required to sample divisional and departmental PDRs to check quality.</p> <p>All PDRs are forwarded to the Force’s Staff Development Unit. 10 per cent are audited to assess quality of completion, with issues raised referred to the appropriate line manager for action.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</p>	<p>This business planning cycle is out of synchronisation and does not assist in the effective training planning process. In particular, because of the cycle timing the final NCM/CTP result is too late to inform the budget setting process. Thus one element does not appropriately inform the next.</p>
<p>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>There is a strategic prioritisation model for training that engages both the client and contractor sides with a weighting attached to the key Force objectives enabling decisions to be made in support of Force priorities.</p> <p>HM Inspector was concerned to hear there is a lack of clarity, transparency and communication downwards from the STPE as to how priorities are decided upon.</p>

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a training strategy that is aligned to the guidance given in relevant Home Office Circulars

Recommendation 2

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a costed training plan that is aligned to the guidance given in relevant Home Office Circulars

Recommendation 3

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

Recommendation 4

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

Recommendation 5

HM Inspector recommends that the Police Authority reviews how the training planning cycle can better support and inform the corporate planning cycle to achieve synchronisation, particularly around budget setting

Recommendation 6

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a more distinct client/contractor arrangement which ensures that the client has a clear role in the commissioning and evaluation of training and the contractor is held accountable for delivery

Recommendation 7

HM Inspector recommends that the Police Authority reviews the position of the Head of Personnel and Training within the training management structure to ensure that the post does not add duplication to training management

Recommendation 8

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

Recommendation 9

HM Inspector recommends that access to Force databases are reviewed to enable the sharing of lesson plans across training teams, and that Trainer Development Officer observations are made available to the Quality Assurance Team

Recommendation 10

HM Inspector recommends that a process of environmental scanning is developed and implemented, to predict forthcoming training issues efficiently and early enough to inform the training planning cycle

Recommendation 11

HM Inspector recommends that the Police Authority review the process of the payment of allowances to trainers, to consider settling on the highest, rather than lowest common denominator rates. HM Inspector further recommends that the Force communicates the decision in an effective way to all staff involved

Judgements

Judgement 1:

There is a great deal of change underway within the training function and HM Inspector acknowledges that, at the time of the inspection, many of these changes had yet to be embedded. However, it is also evident that there are some difficulties for the Force in terms of the strategic level prioritisation of training, the costed training plan and the training planning cycle and the prediction of emerging issues that will require training. It is very clear that there is a commitment at all levels within the Force to drive performance through training, and clear regional activity, led by the Force, is ensuring that best practice is being identified. There is also good training provision from the training staff at all levels, as evidenced by the ALI inspection, and this enhanced performance deserves to be recognised and acknowledged.

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

Judgement 2:

HM Inspector considers that the Best Value Review process was undertaken in line with national guidance and there is clear evidence that the improvement plan will have improved monitoring and implementation and seeks to impact on performance in the workplace. The Police Authority has been, and continues to be, actively engaged in the process. There are clear and observed plans in place for future activity, developing Quality Assurance and evaluation aided by the enthusiasm and commitment of staff,

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

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

BEST VALUE AND PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR POLICE AUTHORITIES AND FORCES

Adult Learning Inspectorate

Summary of Findings

The Adult Learning Inspectorate undertook an assessment of several training sessions during the course of the HMIC (P&T) inspection. A summary of their findings is shown below:

Achievement of Standards

- There is good attainment of skills and knowledge. In all observed sessions attainment was good. Learners showed a clear understanding of their subjects and all participated fully in recap sessions. There is use of active learning, where learners research topics and present to the other members of this class. However, this activity was not observed.

Quality of Education and Training

- There is very good training with a variety of types of training used. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and 75 per cent were good or better. There is a good variety of teaching styles use to maintain learners' interest.
- There is very good use of questions to develop, and check, learners' understanding. There is very good use of a wide range of teaching aids, for example, in one session the teacher made excellent use of a PowerPoint presentation to reinforce key points and guide the learners through the lesson.
- There are very good working relationships with teachers and learners. In the best lessons teachers work very well with learners to establish a highly effective learning experience. Lesson plans are clear and detailed. Teacher to learner ratios are high. In many lessons there is use of team teaching where two teachers work well together.
- Resources used for teaching are satisfactory. Classrooms are equipped with a good range of teaching aids. Many of the computers used are new and, in these rooms, learners have adequate space for documentation etc.
- There are limitations in some of the accommodation used. Some teaching is in Portakabins with high levels of noise. Some rooms are cramped.
- Staff are well qualified. They have suitable vocational qualifications and experience. Many of them hold high level teaching qualifications. Others are working towards qualifications such as certificate in education.
- In lessons, learners' progress is effectively monitored with good use of questions and answers to check understanding. There is one good example where, in some courses, learners are required to research and produce such questions. These are used the following morning, as a very effective recap session.

- For some learners there is insufficient use of the personal development portfolio. Many of them have insufficient time to complete the portfolios during their duty shift. Some supervisors do not either complete the documentation in sufficient detail or work effectively with the learner to identify training needs.
- Most of the training is to meet corporate need. However, teaching staff make adequate reference to individual learner's situations to ensure that, where possible, the lessons cover the particular needs of the learner. The support provided during lessons is good. In workshop sessions tutors are attentive to all learners. The use of team teaching provides a good level of support. Many of the courses are residential and learners have access to a range of facilities in the evening.



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