

Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: Cheshire

Date of Inspection: 23–24 March 2005



A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

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Context and Force performance

Context

Population served by the Force	986,079	
Number of police officers	2,189	
Number of police staff	1,147	
Number of special constables	168	
Budget for training for the financial year:	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget
2003-04	Not asked	2.79%
2004/05	£5.8 million	1.3%

Performance

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

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

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/chesbaseline1004.pdf

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

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

Findings

Area Examined	Findings
TRAINING STRATEGY	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to note that the Force has produced a comprehensive training strategy, which takes into account guidance contained within relevant Home Office circulars.</p>
QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>The Force has produced a good wide-ranging CTP, which has been produced with the assistance of B Plan consultants, utilising the NCM.</p>
MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR	<p>The Force monitors aspects of training delivery as part of its planning process, when a reconciliation of demand versus capacity takes place with key stakeholders. This is an internal event for the Professional Development and Training Department (PDTD). There is no contemporaneous use of costing data from the CTP to inform management or planning decisions, nor is there any effective regular monitoring of this plan by the Steering Group (senior client driven body). Despite an aspiration for the New Business team to provide quarterly performance management information this has yet to become embedded.</p> <p>HM Inspector is concerned at the lack of rigorous monitoring at both a strategic and operational level and encourages the Force to quickly develop this process.</p>
TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN	<p>The Force captures all pre-planned training within the CTP. However, project led training is omitted from the costing process, for example, NIM training, Safer Homes, as is some training organised and provided locally by individual departments.</p> <p>HM Inspector encourages the Force to develop communication and costing links between such seminar/conference training co-ordinators, departments and PDTD, in order to better inform the CTP.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS</p>	<p>The Force has invested time and effort in developing the processes and management structures to effectively establish a client/contractor relationship within training and development. PDTD is divided between a New Business team who act as a customer focused unit and a training Delivery Team who act as a contractor. The New Business team interacts with Training Planning Managers within departments and Area Training Managers within BCU's to develop training plans and identify demand.</p> <p>At a strategic level the Steering Group, chaired by the DCC, is the mechanism designed to act as a senior client led group. HM Inspector was concerned to find that this senior group has only met on an annual basis, and work is still ongoing with regard to refining its' terms of reference. Due to the infrequency of its meetings, little executive management activity regarding prioritisation, costs, and new business has been undertaken.</p>
<p>MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>Whilst the Superintendent within PDTD is the head of training for the Force, for a number of reasons, the clarity of purpose behind this statement has more recently become blurred. Some of the factors causing this include the impending merger of PDTD with HR, the abstraction of, or non filled management posts within PDTD, the movement of some training to the Operations Department from the PDTD, and the under utilisation of the Steering Group. These factors need to be placed into the context of a major Force restructuring process, "Taking Control", which has caused some short term internal difficulties for the department.</p> <p>Nonetheless HM Inspector encourages the Force to explicitly highlight and re-inforce the role of the Head of PDTD as the Force professional lead on training and development to assist in that postholder's effective management responsibility for all training regardless of where, or by whom it is provided. HM Inspector welcomes the inclusion of members of the PA onto the Steering Group, and the added business benefits this will bring.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Learning • Training Matters • Diversity Matters • Foundations for Change 	<p>It is clear that the Force have adopted guiding principles from <i>Managing Learning</i> within PDTD. This is particularly evident from the development of client/contractor processes.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to find action plans in place in the Force in respect to recommendations contained within <i>Diversity Matters</i>. However, the response to <i>Training Matters</i> was limited to the implementation of IPLDP, and further work to expand the coverage here is required. All of these responses need to be communicated better to staff. The Force response to FfC has identified lead members for each individual area, and has resulted in a joint piece of work with North Wales Police, a 'Collaborative Training Review'. The Force are the regional leads for several individual areas.</p>
<p>CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>The Force and PA conducted a BVR of training in 2002. As a result of this review an IP was produced that contained 10 recommendations. Presently, three of these still require continuing action.</p> <p>The PDTD have produced, and work to, a service improvement plan (SIP). This plan incorporates these recommendations, and makes reference to HMIC recommendations generally, and specifically to those contained within <i>Diversity Matters</i> and <i>Training Matters</i>.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see the development of this IP, and is optimistic that it provides the basis for further training and development improvements in the Force. HM Inspector encourages the Force to ensure that this IP is reviewed to satisfy itself that it can become a single, overarching and composite IP used as the single mechanism to address all recommendations impacting upon training and development regardless of where or by whom they originate.</p> <p>HM Inspector is concerned that this IP is owned by PDTD, is not reviewed or scrutinised by a higher internal strategic body, and also that there remains the potential for duplication of effort around some actions, for example, <i>Diversity Matters</i> and <i>Training Matters</i>.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to see regular monitoring of the BV IP on a quarterly basis by the Personnel Committee of the PA.</p> <p>With regard to the SIP, HM Inspector encourages the Force to ensure that the monitoring arrangements are sufficiently strategically orientated to guarantee executive support for the recommendations contained within it, and for the PA to have a continuing key role in this process. The Steering Group, alongside the PA Personnel Committee, is a suitable body for this monitoring role. HM Inspector is encouraged to see the Force is planning to embark upon quarterly reviews.</p>
<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find that the PDTD has invested resources into the staffing of the QA function, to include a QA manager, supported by a QA officer. The Force has retained Centrex QA approval.</p> <p>However it was clear that at the time of inspection, that the activities which underpin the QA policy, which has been in place for a year, are not being consistently or effectively utilised either within PDTD, or across the wider Force training function. The processes which require attention include trainer observation and assessment (including audit trails of activity), linking lesson plans to NOS, version controlling of documents, and the development of a performance management regime across the business area. The Force also needs to explicitly state that the head of PDTD has forcewide responsibility for all QA activity regardless of which department or BCU undertakes training activity.</p> <p>HM Inspector is concerned that the Force finds them at a crossroads in relation to selecting what kind of, if any, external QA verification or recognition award it will seek. Consideration is being given to ISO 9002, Matrix, IIP, or continuing with Centrex. Regardless of what decision is taken the Force needs to have a sound and effective policy which, if implemented, will lead to demonstrable service improvement. Action taken in respect of this needs to be set as a priority.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</p>	<p>The Force has an evaluation officer located within the QA function of PDTD, and has an evaluation strategy, which outlines their planned activity in this area.</p> <p>Whilst this strategy covers activity in relation to Level 1,2,3 and 4 evaluations, it does not yet extend Force-wide, nor is this policy intention supported by investment in an appropriate software system which would greatly facilitate and improve the inputting, use and interpretation of data. This has resulted in a large amount of information having been collected only to find itself stored by line managers and therefore under utilised. There is no communication of PDTD performance figures to key stakeholders Project driven events are subjected to a prioritisation matrix in order to determine a programme of evaluation activity.</p> <p>While the principle of this function is sound, in reality the matrix schedule has lapsed recently. The Steering Group was to have been the executive decision making body underpinning this schedule, but as a result of its irregular pattern of meeting, a climate of “whoever shouted loudest” was allowed to develop.</p> <p>HM Inspector is concerned that without an effective Steering Group intervention, higher level evaluation work will not progress in a corporate and well co-ordinated manner. The responsibility of the Steering Group to be the tasking and reporting body for evaluation work needs to be explicitly highlighted. Without a review of current practice, lower level evaluation will continue in a piecemeal and uncoordinated way. This will result in the Force continuing to undertake training and development activity without providing management information capable of linking this activity to knowledge transfer and improved operational performance.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING</p>	<p>The Force has been able to demonstrate its ambition to involve members of the community in a number of areas within training delivery. HM Inspector is encouraged to find that the New Business team considers community consultation at an early stage of its business planning, when considering learning needs. Work found to have been undertaken within Warrington BCU showed a commitment from the Force to engage with communities at a grass roots level, and provides optimism for future development in this area.</p> <p>PDTD and the Force are also currently scoping the future as a result of the recent APA document for involving communities in training, and further consultation on a developing strategy will be undertaken by the Force, to include the use of its IAG and PA.</p> <p>HM Inspector encourages the Force to move swiftly forward with this work.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</p>	<p>The Force has developed training arrangements with a number of external organisations including Cheshire Fire Authority, Merseyside Regional Ambulance, and with other agencies involved in crime training.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS</p>	<p>Strong collaborative arrangements exist with North Wales Police, which has led to the production of a joint paper examining the potential for significant further collaboration. Examples of this already exist in relation to crime training and driver training.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to note that a piece of evaluation work has been commissioned by the Force to establish what benefits have or will arise from this collaboration.</p>
<p>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</p>	<p>The Force has adopted the principles contained within <i>Models For Learning</i> within its TNA and evaluation activity. Currently there is no central design function or capability within PDTD to further utilise this guidance. HM Inspector was concerned to find that these models have not been widely promulgated within the department, or within the wider Force training environment.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</p>	<p>The Force has identified a number of areas for improvement including :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding training planning within organisational business planning. • Variation and conflict in different timelines for planning, financial, strategic planning, PDR, training. • The impact of the reduction of senior roles within PDTD. • Management of training needs arising from the 'Taking Control' process
<p>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</p>	<p>A regional evaluation of driver training undertaken by the Force and North Wales Police was able to demonstrate how the Force has utilised best value principles beyond the BVR process. There still remains an opportunity to incorporate these principles on a wider basis by considering them specifically through the Continuous Service Improvement methodology, without developing a further tier of bureaucracy.</p>
<p>INTEGRATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>The Force approached the integration of the ICF by means of a project management methodology. This project closed in January 2005, and is now split between PDTD and the HR department. HR is responsible for role profiles and workforce planning leaving PDTD responsible for other PDR matters, including training and some QA issues. HM Inspector is encouraged by the manner in which the Force has approached this task, and is optimistic that the integration of HR and PDTD in April 2005 will add to the effectiveness of this work.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</p>	<p>KIM-DPMS software has been adopted by the Force to run its PDR programme. Each BCU and department will have a QA officer whose responsibility will include a 10 per cent dip sample of PDR to check on quality issues, and PDTD will carry out a 20 per cent qualitative dip sample of PDR's in addition to this. The portfolio holder for PDR is the DCC.</p> <p>During the inspection process HM Inspector found a good level of knowledge regarding the new PDR system but still encountered a significant level of cynicism regarding the process at a number of different ranks and grades.</p>
<p>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</p>	<p>HM Inspector found business planning arrangements in place, which linked into wider Force planning cycles. The process is budget led, and it has not yet been considered basing a budget upon the specification of training need required by the Force. This process will remain an aspiration until such time that the Steering Group is able to perform its executive planning role at its optimum level. PDR needs are not yet efficiently fed into the training specification, and consideration needs to be given to the timing of PDR reviews to rectify this.</p>
<p>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>HM Inspector found that the Force does have a mechanism in place, which allows for a risk assessed training requirement to be formulated. This again is dependent upon the executive business group taking ownership of decision making on a regular basis. Up until now the most difficult decisions about priority and need have been allowed to fall at the feet of training management practitioners. These managers have performed well, but in adverse circumstances, and have had to shoulder responsibilities for Force management decisions beyond their terms of reference.</p>

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

HM Inspector recommends that the Force and the Police Authority establish a formal mechanism to monitor the costed training plan on an ongoing basis. This will include the development of performance measures in relation to the delivery of the plan

Recommendation 2

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops the Steering Group so that it is able to regularly and frequently meet, and that its' business processes enable it to act as the senior client body for training planning, prioritisation, performance monitoring and executive decision making

Recommendation 3

HM Inspector recommends that the Force further develops the Professional Development and Training Department Service improvement plan, so that it becomes the single Improvement Plan which captures all locally identified improvement actions as well as those which result from this or previous HMIC Training reports. It must also capture any improvement actions, which have resulted from other relevant sources having an impact on training

Recommendation 4

HM Inspector recommends that the Force and Police Authority develop robust executive level monitoring mechanisms for this comprehensive improvement plan

Recommendation 5

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

Recommendation 6

HM Inspector recommends that the Force further develops a comprehensive Quality Assurance framework and process for all training, irrespective of where or by whom it is provided. This process must be regularly monitored and reviewed

Recommendation 7

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develop a robust evaluation function for all training, with a tasking and reporting mechanism showing independence from the Professional Development and Training Department. This will include a clear mechanism for commissioning and actioning evaluation projects and their recommendations

Recommendation 8

HM Inspector recommends that the Force develop a robust strategy for effectively engaging communities in all aspects of the training cycle

Recommendation 9

HM Inspector recommends that the Force and Police Authority ensure that the business planning process is enhanced, so that it is better able to react to Basic Command Unit and departmental plans, and to emerging PDR needs

Judgements

Judgement 1:

Cheshire Constabulary has a well founded Professional Development and Training Department. The Department has produced a good strategy and a good costed training plan for the Force, which will act as a pathway for future improvements in performance. However, it is disappointing that the data gathered by this costed training plan is not currently used in a meaningful manner. The implementation of HMIC documentation also needs more emphasis, direction, and application, as well as a demonstrable audit trail of achievement. A number of other key processes are in place in principle, including a quality assurance and evaluation policy. However, as highlighted in this report, for a number of reasons the activity expected to occur in support of these functions has been inconsistent, and therefore the performance improvements anticipated have not been, as yet, quantifiable. The department has well motivated and well qualified staff, and are able to operate in modern and well-equipped facilities. At the time of inspection the Force was undergoing a significant business change programme, which had clearly had an impact upon some management processes and staffing requirements leading to some gaps appearing within the training and development function. The Force is well supported by the Police Authority, who are enthusiastic and supportive of training and development.

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

Judgement 2:

The forthcoming integration of the Professional Development and Training Department back into the wider human resources function of the Force will add resilience and streamline some activity. Efforts need to be made to ensure that the Head of PDTD retains the appropriate access to Chief Officers, and that this is not diluted by a further tier of management. However, this combined with enhancements to the content and monitoring arrangements for a comprehensive Service improvement plan, and the reinvigoration of the strategic Steering Group including Police Authority membership are all positive developments for the business area. Combined with the enthusiasm of managers within the department to move forward with key activity areas such as quality assurance and evaluation.

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

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

BEST VALUE AND PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR POLICE AUTHORITIES AND FORCES

Adult Learning Inspectorate

Summary of Findings

Achievement and standards

- There is satisfactory attainment of skills and knowledge. Some learners display a good grasp of the skills required by the courses. For some learners the courses provide a refresher of previous skills while for others the skills are relatively new. Teachers respond well to the need to differentiate learning in the classroom. Most courses are a requirement of scheduled staff training. Some courses are not formally accredited and success is measured by attendance and by the trainer's opinion of achievement of competence. In some cases there are no published standards of competence against which learners' progress and achievement can be measured. Trainers do not always check understanding during the sessions and often this is left until the end. Trainers respond well to questions and give appropriate answers to queries. Learners' success rates are not routinely monitored for target setting for improvement. In terms of the IOSH courses 24 learners have taken and passed the course since June 2004.

Quality of Education and Training

- There is good training. The majority of training sessions observed were satisfactory or better. In the better lessons usually those managed by Centrex trained staff there are clear lesson plans and well structured tasks. Team teaching in all sessions was well developed with good interaction between trainers. Sessions were often well paced with a mix of theory and practical activities. Trainers move around the groups to support practical simulations using IT software. In some sessions learners were challenged about views and beliefs in a controlled and constructive way. The outcomes of discussions were used by the trainer to support teaching. In one course good use is made of teaching and learning styles analysis to help develop team working in sessions. There were missed opportunities to look at stereotyping and promoting equality of opportunity in some sessions.
- In the poorer sessions there was much verbal exposition with little input from the learners. Some sessions observed were interrupted by telephone calls, cleaning staff and the breakdown of IT teaching resources. Trainers generally used ILT to good effect and handouts when used were of high quality.
- On some courses operational staff are used as trainers and they have no formal training qualifications. They make good use of personal experiences from their many years as officers and use humour to good effect. Learners benefit from being able to exchange their experiences with the officers.

- There are good training facilities. Classrooms are well lit, bright and airy. Computers are excellent with appropriate software to support simulation exercises. Some classrooms are cramped and provide limited space for the number of learners being trained. In some cases there are two learners to a work station. There are good facilities for ILT and these are used well by trainers to support learning. Centrex trained staff have appropriate teaching and or training qualifications. Some other trainers, while serving officers, have insufficient training experience.
- There is little use of initial assessment. Learners are required to attend most courses and trainers are unaware of learners' previous experience prior to the start of courses. Prior learning and experience is often unchecked in learning sessions. There is often a mix of learners' experience in groups although on some occasions a class will comprise those with no previous experience. Learner's progress is monitored during the courses but there is little routine checking of understanding during the sessions. On some courses there are no published standards against which learners are measured.
- The training delivered is to meet the corporate needs of the Force. Generally learners' needs are identified by trainers and where possible specific examples are used to meet individual needs. There is some confusion about software currently being used to supplement call management and learners are unclear about what will happen when they return to their Divisional area.
- Within training sessions trainers provide good support for learners. There is however no structured support or checking of performance in Divisional offices when learners complete their course. There is no routine monitoring of the effectiveness of the outcome of training as part of target setting or business planning purposes.
- The management of individual training sessions is satisfactory. There was insufficient time to collect much evidence to make specific judgements about leadership and management. There is evidence that action plans are agreed with learners on the stage two probationers' course and that these are copied to Divisional Training Officers. There is little quality assurance of training except where it is externally accredited eg IOSH. There are no systematic arrangements for the observation of training and evaluation is left to individual trainers with no routine monitoring by the central quality assurance department. Call Management Bureau and the Centrex related Training Department work independently of each other and there is no overarching quality assurance framework to ensure good practice is identified and shared. There are no quality performance targets. Evaluation activities have been carried out in the past but due to staff shortages these are no longer used.



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