



**REPORT ON THE DESKTOP REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
OF THE APPLICATION OF
E-LEARNING MATERIALS AND PROCESSES
TO SUPPORT
POLICE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
2006**

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1. Introduction

This report is the conclusion of a desktop review and analysis by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Personnel Training and Diversity (P, T & D), of the application of e-learning materials and processes to support police learning and development.

This work is not currently linked to any specific inspection activity but may be used to inform any future inspection work.

The methodology used was a questionnaire to all 43 Home Office Forces (copied for information to the Home Office, Centrex and the National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT), and wider research into e-learning and its application across all sectors. Responses to the questionnaire were received from 37 Forces.

2. Executive Summary

All the indications are that use of e-learning is on the increase. However, there are still many issues and frustrations to be overcome if it is to realise its full potential of benefits for the service.

Research from outside of the police service indicates that e-learning is most effective when it forms part of a blended learning solution, when it links to business objectives, when protected learning time policies are effective, when appropriate support processes are in place, and when internal marketing and communications activities have taken place to promote its use.

“There has been a dramatic shift over the past decade in the design and focus of learning and development and in understanding the enabling power of e-learning and e-assessment, when performed well. The dominance of old style training departments has gone or is shifting. The tensions in learning and development activities often arise today because the business line managers have not properly taken on the responsibility for their staff’s individual performance and learning needs, identified in the context of the job to be done and the objectives to be met.” *

*Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace Independent Advisor, ACPO Executive Steering Group.

The police service itself must recognise that e-learning comes at a cost. It needs to be owned by the business lines and supported by the Learning and Development (L&D) function if there are to be significant investments in online learning. The IT function must be brought on board to ensure application software to underpin the process is robust, scalable and does not create conflict with the existing infrastructure.

There needs to be national guidance on issues such as protected learning time, quality assurance of content and packages and the use of NCALT and the Managed Learning Environment (MLE) if the service as a whole is to fully take advantage of what e-learning has to offer.

“There is the need for clear ownership by the business lines (with supporting, not primary, roles for learning and development and IT), the need for national policy and guidance on learning protocols, quality assurance, the sharing of best practices, the need for interoperability of platforms, and targeted efficiencies for procurement of e-learning materials, and the importance of blended solutions, fit-for-purpose and linked to business objectives, with agreed outcomes (not just inputs) as proper measures for both the police as learners and the Police Forces as employers.” *

3. The Wider Picture

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) conduct an annual survey report on Training and Development. The survey provides annual data on current and emerging trends in training and development and covers e-learning as a topic. The 2005 survey attempted to gain a balanced view of how organisations use e-learning, as well as seeking respondents' views on how it assists in shaping organisational learning as a whole.

Findings from the report show that use of e-learning continues to rise steadily with, for the first time, over half of respondents (54%) reporting that they use e-learning. Furthermore, 39% of those not using e-learning say they have plans to introduce it in their organisation in the coming year. At the moment, e-learning accounts for less than 10% of total training time in the vast majority of respondents' organisations. However, use of e-learning is expected to dramatically increase.

The results indicate that e-learning is mostly aimed at training activities with a technical or knowledge component and much less for training in 'people skills'. The most common form of e-learning being used in organisations is CD-ROMs, used by two-thirds of respondents (66%). Organisations seem to be increasingly prepared to commission e-learning modules designed specifically for their needs as they believe they are more effective because the learning is put in context. Collaborative e-learning activities such as discussion sites or web seminars/virtual classrooms, remain the preserve of a small minority of organisations.

A comparison of responses between the 2002 and 2005 report show the most striking change to be in the increase in the number of people who believe that e-learning is more effective when combined with other forms of learning (94% in 2005, compared to 63% in 2002). This reflects the popularity of 'blended learning' which has become increasingly popular in the last few years as training practitioners have realised that making e-learning available to unprepared and unsupported learners will not work.

The main benefits of e-learning are seen as its 'just in time' availability, its ability to simultaneously reach an unlimited number of employees and its flexibility. However, trainers are still experiencing a number of practical implementation problems. Inadequate current technology infrastructure is considered to be the main barrier to making e-learning effective, along with ensuring people have the time and space to participate in learning.

4. CIPD CASE STUDIES

4.1 B & Q

B & Q is a major retailer of home improvement products and is owned by the Kingfisher retailer group. Recent strong growth has led to expansion and an increase in the number of jobs. B & Q currently employs some 30,000 staff, 40% of whom are part-time. Given the nature of both the business and the workforce, effective introduction of e-learning represented a considerable challenge. Employees are dispersed over a large number of sites; there was pressure on their time away from the workplace and in many cases their IT skills were minimal.

B & Q began their e-learning project in August 2000. The first decision to be made concerned the choice of learning management system (LMS), as this was the heart of the e-learning infrastructure. Firm criteria were established. Above all it should be straight forward and easy to use ('user-centric'). It also needed to have the ability to interface easily onto the other B & Q IT systems. Generally it was recognised that most learning management systems had more functionality than the organisation required. B & Q chose the learning management system developed by Docent.

From the outset it was determined that designated pcs, for e-learning alone, would be needed as most e-learners have limited exposure to using a PC during the course of their day-to-day work.

As elsewhere, time for learning is a problem, particularly for part-time workers who must spend a higher proportion of their total time at work on training and learning. However time for training is identified in decentralised training budgets for which managers are held accountable. In one warehouse, all staff are expected to have at least one hour a week training. Customer assistants are paid for time spent learning and the HR view is that it should take place at the start of the shift. "Don't put your apron on. Do your learning first thing and in the training room".

B&Q have sought to embed e-learning in a number of ways. Marketing of new e-learning is carried out. Reporting is used to encourage take up

"Our managers are very competitive and are used to comparative reporting. If they see the use of e-learning as an important target they will seek to achieve it. They do not want to be seen to be at the bottom of the pile."

In addition B & Q have made an explicit link with e-learning and their learning and development framework (LDF), allowing staff to progress through levels of learning in return for enhanced remuneration if they were able to demonstrate knowledge. Progress on the implementation of the LDF has and will continue to be monitored using surveys.

The reports and surveys show e-learning has produced demonstrable business benefits. The top ten e-learning stores produce consistently higher than average customer satisfaction scores and top-level economic benefits - the Halifax store in Yorkshire achieved 426% over budget with 300% more e-learning completed than the average store.

Overall, B & Q's approach to e-learning has been successful by the criteria that they themselves have set. This is due to two main factors: a willingness to collect feedback information and seek continued improvement and most importantly, the decision to deploy and promote content that is prepared specifically for B & Q's needs to highlight it as a business priority.

4.2 Reuters

Reuters is a knowledge-intensive organisation, which provides up-to-date news and financial information to clients across the world. They believe that e-learning is not the preserve of the learning and development function and must be owned by the business.

"Ownership for individual performance and learning must rest with the line management. The training function, through their supply of material and use of channels, must not set out to disintermediate that process."

4.3 BBC

The BBC encountered minimal opposition to its e-learning rollout claiming it could be argued that relevance drove out resistance. However the design of the project has required, and been given, strong senior management support. This has also been reflected in the marketing and promotion which is necessary even for a compulsory course.

"If you need 16,000 people to go through specific training in a tight timetable at less than £20 per head there is no other way of doing it. The BBC has saved up to £2 million of licence fee money by using this approach".

The BBC "started designing e-learning with both the organisation and the learners preferences in mind". They believe that flashy and seductive graphics are not essential and indeed these may be a barrier if the user is accessing these in the module at home or at an office without adequate bandwidth. What is important is to produce illustrations or scenarios which will make sense to the user in their context.

4.4 CPS

Given the need for instantaneous and accurate updating of technical legal knowledge and new legislation, e-learning has attractions as a means of delivery. To emphasise the central importance of knowledge and skills in the modern CPS, the organisation is establishing a Prosecution College. The intention is to present e-learning material in a virtual Prosecution College that will be available to all employees through their PC.

There are three principles that underpin the CPS approach to developing e-learning:

- The need for customised or bespoke rather than generic e-learning products
- Ensuring that any e-learning material is adequately supported
- Ensuring e-learning becomes an integral part of the wider organisational objectives

The CPS Learning and Development Team is firmly of the view that unsupported, generic material made available on a user-choice basis is unlikely to make a significant contribution to the wider training effort.

"Don't put anything online if you don't want to support it."

The CPS has aimed for what they describe as medium technology. This means that although they incorporate audio commentary, questions and scenarios they do not involve high-level graphics or interactive facilities. This choice reflects a view on both what the CPS technology infrastructure will support and what is acceptable for the learner in that framework.

Much of the current effort in embedding e-learning is centred on lawyer induction. Completion of five modules, which will take approximately four hours, is compulsory for all newly-recruited lawyers before they attend classroom sessions. Support and monitoring is provided by line managers and internal Lawyer Induction tutors. Most importantly, induction appears in the performance targets that are set for CPS Areas and are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

One other interesting approach to embedding the use with the organisation is a feature of the design of the modules themselves. At some stages learners are presented with a scenario: an example would be an outline of an exchange that has taken place between a suspected shoplifter, a store detective and a police officer. The learner is invited to submit a short free-form text commentary on the exchange, highlighting its conformance to the CPS guidelines. This commentary is sent immediately to the learning and development team who forward the individual's assembled commentaries to one of 80 internal tutors or mentors who are employed by the CPS. These tutors have committed to respond to the learner within a certain time period (five days). The CPS learning and development team will be reviewing this innovative application to test its appropriateness and if necessary redesign the process.

A number of other modules are under production and some of these will be of particular value to partner organisations in the criminal justice system. One example is a module on the proceeds of crime that will be of value to those involved in asset recovery. Another concerns the care of witnesses that are of particular value to the police.

The CPS intends to give all appropriate parties access to the Prosecution College via the Internet. However, the monitoring and support - considered essential to effective learning - must be conducted by the user organisations.

5. HMIC 'Value Matters'

In its 'Value Matters' report published in November 2005, HMIC cited e-learning as offering enormous benefits in terms of management of learning, consistency, flexibility, savings in terms of costs and the ability to undertake learning as close to the workplace as possible.

This view was endorsed by the PTDB (now the Police Learning and Development Executive [PLDE]) via the 'ACPO e-learning strategy' and by NCALT.

HMIC supports the work of NCALT, in its current development of an e learning program database which will be searchable by subject matter. It is intended to be used by those embarking on the development of e learning programs in the first instance to reduce duplication and cost.

In 'Value Matters' HMIC acknowledged the potentially high costs involved in the development of alternative learning strategies, particularly those with a technology based approach, but called on forces to ensure their local IT infrastructure is able to support access to the NCALT portal.

6. Blended Learning

More than 80% of respondents in the CIPD Training Survey 2005 believe e-learning is more effective when combined with traditional forms of learning.

Blended learning can be defined as "an approach to the design of learning interventions which mixes learning media and methods appropriately, to achieve solutions which are both effective and efficient...Blended learning also takes account of differences in learning objectives, the preferences of learners and the practicalities of the particular situation." 'Blended Learning Cookbook', Clive Shepherd

In blended learning, a Learning Management System (LMS) has an important role to play, providing the tools to design and deploy blended learning. It enables the multimedia component of an e-learning course to be combined with offline and collaborative experiences, and the whole package sequenced and scheduled to the needs of individual learners.

The CIPD now offer a Certificate in Blended Learning.

7. NCALT

7.1 NCALT and the MLE

The MLE was created by Centrex and the Metropolitan Police Service through their partnership - NCALT. The MLE is a computer system for managing learners, content, resources and individual training plans. In addition e-learning programmes are made available to forces through the MLE.

The MLE provides each UK police force with its own individual domain. A Domain is a defined area of the MLE that provides an exclusive environment for each force and is hosted by NCALT on the NCALT Servers. Each domain can be managed locally by its force.

Each domain has the functionality to upload and share content, manage learners and report on training statistics. In addition, it facilitates the management of blended learning programmes such as the Leadership Academy's Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) and the National Surveillance Course.

Access to the MLE is provided free of charge to all Home Office Police Forces. Non Home Office Police Forces and the wider policing community are invited to collaborate with NCALT through formal arrangements. The local force domain can be accessed via the Criminal Justice Extranet (CJX) and the Internet.

The main benefits of an MLE are seen as the ability to:

- Manage training administration
- Manage and deploy e-learning
- Track and report

- Reduce administration costs

7.2 NCALT e-learning provision

Development of e-learning programmes for the police service are identified and prioritised through the ACPO National Learning Requirement, the Home Office and the ACPO National e-Learning Group.

E-Learning is designed to:

- Support learning
- Provide a blended learning option
- Deliver learning online for the convenience of students.

Current e-learning and/or blended learning programmes include

- Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (1 module - Public Order, incl. PIP Level 1)
- Police Race and Diversity Learning and Development Programme (7 modules - Diversity, Race, Disability, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation, Gender, Age modules)
- Core Leadership Development Programme (17 modules)
- High Tech Crime - First Responders Programme
- Stop and Account (Recommendation 61 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry)
- Police Activity-Based Costing
- National Surveillance Course for Specialist Training
- Pursuit Management
- Crime Prevention
- Fraud Act 2006 (MPS)
- Neighbourhood Policing (CLDP)
- Child Protection

Future e-learning and/or blended learning programmes will include:

- Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (15 modules incl. PIP Level 1 and Counter Terrorism Level 1)
- National Incident Recording Standards and National Crime Recording Standards
- Fire Scene Investigation
- Fraud Act (National)
- Airwaves (MTM800)
- Management of Policing Information
- CCTV
- Safer Handling of Detained Persons
- Counter Terrorism (Operation Rainbow)

In addition NCALT provides guidance to forces on developing their own e-learning content and outsourcing content development to third parties. Forces are able to upload content to their own domain and share content with other forces. Forces are legally responsible for their content, security (such as protective marking) and quality assurance. There is no national, defined process for this.

“As service restructuring has been suspended (which would have resulted in a reduced number of forces) it is vital to avoid unnecessary “centrifugal forces” leading to duplication, poor quality, lack of shared best practices and costly interventions for remedial action.” *

7.3 NCALT Quality Assurance Process

All national NCALT e-learning products are Centrex Quality Assured and “Models for Learning” compliant. Community consultation has taken place at the design and development stage of materials but it is not clear whether the level and quality of consultation meets APA Guidance. **HM Inspector suggests that NCALT and CENTREX ensure all content has undergone community consultation in accordance with APA guidance.**

7.4 Terms & Conditions for use of NCALT

The authorised representative within each force is required to nominate individuals within their force to fulfil the following generic System roles:

- Domain Line Manager(s) - allows user to see information about training and performance management for the users that the manager is allowed to view. Details are available for individuals and workgroups.
- Domain Training Manager(s) - allows user to see information about training and performance management for the users that the manager is allowed to view. Details are available for individuals and workgroups. This mode also provides management features for administering the creation of online courses and other training elements.
- Domain Administrator(s) - allows user to create, manage, and configure all components that are tracked by SumTotal MLE. This includes the ability to administer the training, skills, people, domains, organizations, jobs, and resources that make up the force domain system.

NCALT have provided, and will be providing further training on the MLE to support forces in managing their local domain to deliver e-learning and blended learning programmes. Training is aimed at individuals within each force who are, or will be, assigned the role of Domain Administrator, Training Manager and Line Manager. In addition there are user guides available for all domain roles.

The use of the MLE is subject to Terms and Conditions which apply to all Users including but not limited to Line Managers, Training Managers and Domain Administrators. When logging on, all users are required to accept the terms and conditions of use.

- The Force will at its own expense, ensure their local IT infrastructure is able to support access to and use of the Force Domain.
- The Force will at its own expense, provide their users with an appropriate learning environment, facilities and services including first-line support, protected learning time and training in order that learners can access and utilise the available products.
- Where the Force is providing content, software, equipment or other items to enable NCALT to provide the Services, the Force will obtain all necessary consents, licences and approvals in relation to NCALT’s use of such items and/or Intellectual Property Rights, and will indemnify NCALT, CENTREX and the Metropolitan Police Service for any liability incurred as a result of the Force’s failure to obtain such consents, licences and approvals.
- The Force agrees not to use the MLE to provide services to organisations outside of the Home Office Police Forces without prior written permission from NCALT.
- The Force agrees not use the MLE to facilitate income generation without prior written consent from NCALT.

The Centrex/NCALT Service desk is available to support users during normal office hours (Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm). Given the concept of support to operational staff working a 24 hour shift and the application of "protected learning time" the restrictive hours of availability of the service desk may need to be extended. The business case for this will become clear as more staff access the NCALT MLE.

7.5 NCALT & the CLDP

The CLDP is designed to help develop the leadership and role skills of post-probationary constables, sergeants, inspectors and corresponding police staff across the Service. CLDP offers blended learning through self-managed work books or new e-learning opportunities using multimedia learning tools, supported by workshops to help consolidate the learning where necessary. It is linked to a qualifications framework through the Chartered Management Institute. CLDP is licensed to individual forces for local in-force delivery and the related e-learning is available via NCALT.

7.6 NCALT & the Initial Police Learning & Development Programme (IPLDP)

Centrex IPLDP Executive Services work-streams include registration, tracking and reporting on candidates and development of blended learning materials through the use of the Managed Learning Environment (MLE).

The IPLDP participant registration system commenced on 31st March 2006 with a rolling process for force take-up. Phase 1 of the system includes registration of student officers and other roles via self or bulk registration, tracking completion of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and Police Action Checklists (PAC) and national and local reporting. Reports can be at the detail or summary level and are exportable into other packages such as Excel or PowerPoint. There are issues still to be resolved around HR integration, maintenance, etc. Phase 2 will expand functionality and scope to include the national minimum qualification as well as quality assurance, evaluation and trainer roles.

The IPLDP Central Authority view is that the participant registration scheme should be mandatory as it is only really useful if all 43 Forces sign up. However, there is no means of enforcing this. HMIC agrees with the view of the Central Authority and believes that, if necessary, regulations should be made to mandate the process. **HM Inspector suggests that, because of the benefits to be gained, all forces should be required to sign up to the use of the IPLDP Central Authority participant registration scheme to allow national recording, monitoring and reporting to take place.** This will also have the additional benefit over time of developing the MLE

A blended learning curriculum is currently being developed for IPLDP via NCALT.

Materials currently available include:

- Common induction modules – Phase 1
- Learning descriptors
- Student notes – 1 set for every module in the programme - can be used as self-study, pre-read, consolidation and include suggestions for how they could/should be used. Also include knowledge checks and assessments.
- Suggested lesson plan sequencing sheet

There is an open invitation to forces to pilot induction materials with pilots to be complete by June 2006.

7.7 NCALT and other force systems

NCALT are working on interfaces to other force systems such as the MLE interface with NSPIS.

7.8 NCALT Future Developments

NCALT are now developing new technology such as virtual classrooms and new technologies for assessment including first person simulation in a 3D virtual environment with in-built knowledge checking.

7.9 NCALT content and links to other sites

The Centre of Excellence in Diversity Programme Board is working on the development of a diversity website which will link to other sites such as NCALT. Users will then be able to access learning on the MLE.

The Programme Board intend to put in place processes to quality assure content on link sites. Care must be taken not to create duplication. NCALT content should be quality assured prior to uploading and should not require a further quality assurance process other than through programmed maintenance.

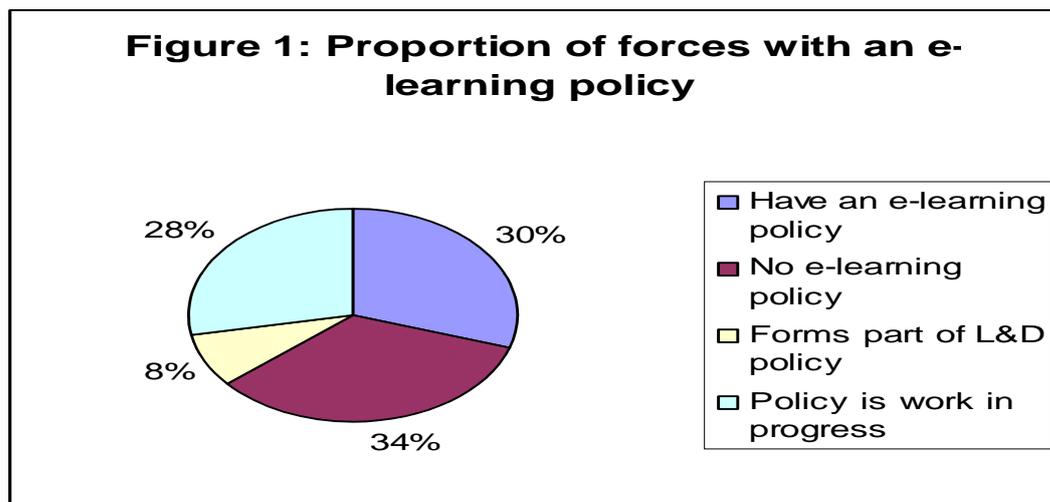
“There are urgent issues raised in this section regarding the accountability for content, security and quality assurance. There must be a nationally defined process for this as soon as possible.” *

HM Inspector suggests that this should be a function of the recently amalgamated NCALT and ACPO E-Learning Programme Board, representing the customer requirement and the service provider, currently CENTREX but to become the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) from 1 April 2007.

8. Feedback from Forces

8.1 *E-learning policy and protected learning time*

Questionnaires were sent to all 43 Home Office forces and 37 responses were received. Feedback from the questionnaires indicated that 30% of forces have an e-learning policy, with a further 3 forces saying it forms part of their wider Learning & Development strategy or policy and a further 10 forces (28%) saying they are working on an alternative learning strategy or policy currently.



With regards to protected learning time 43% of forces stated they have a policy with a further 19% saying they were working on one. **HM Inspector suggests that the ACPO e-learning**

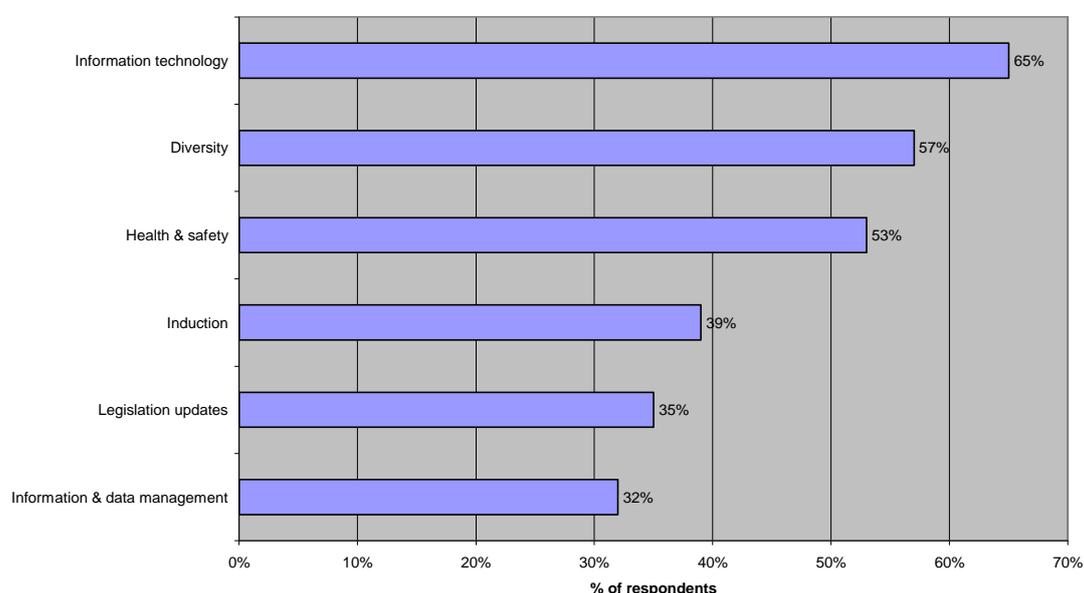
group with the PLDE provides guidance to Forces on e-learning policy and protected learning time.

HMIC is aware that the ACPO chair of the e-learning strategy group and NCALT Program Board are currently vacant. These should be filled as soon as possible to give leadership and direction to the groups, including the work to link both groups together.

8.2 *What is e-learning used for?*

The results indicate that e-learning is mostly used for particular types of training such as IT Training (65%), diversity (including Race Relations Act, disability, discrimination, Race Equality Scheme) (57%), health & safety (53%), induction training (39%) legislation updates (35%), and information and data management (including Freedom Of Information, computer security, data protection, protective marking) (32%). Other e-learning included Licensing, 'NCALT packages', Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP), driver training, operational, people skills, promotion (OSPPE), policy changes, crime related training and the Initial Police Learning and Development programme (IPLDP).

Figure 2: What e-learning is used for



The results are comparable with the CIPD survey results with IT, technical, health and safety and induction scoring highest. The greatest difference is that of diversity with only 9% of respondents in the CIPD survey training diversity through e-learning (probably a reflection of the emphasis on diversity training in the police service).

8.3 *Do forces have their own teams of package writers?*

Just less than half (46%) of forces have their own package writers. Teams range from 1-6 people. The Met have 23 posts. A further two forces have people trained to design and deliver but have produced nothing yet.

A wide range of packages have been produced with four forces in particular having produced a significant number.

One force raised the issue of whether e-learning package writing skills should form part of the trainers' role suggesting this should begin within the Training Development Programme.

It is important to recognise that whilst the terminology used by forces to describe various roles for the development of e-learning is relatively generic, the functionality of some of the posts may well be limited to the development of text based material or Power Point material which is posted onto the force intranet site. This is different to the roles within NCALT where the workforce is composed of Scriptwriters, Interactive designers, Illustrators and Developers.

8.4 *What is your QA Process for e-learning packages?*

Of the forces which develop their own e-learning packages there were a range of responses to the question regarding how packages are quality assured. Some forces stated that their process was the same as for other learning materials. Others said they followed "Models for Learning". Some forces sign packages off at various stages of development, some pass packages via subject matter experts, others pilot courses prior to their full release and one force QA process includes scrutiny by an Independent Advisory Group, Equal Opportunities Section and Diversity Unit among others.

One force commented:

"From a QA perspective it would be beneficial if NCALT/Centrex gave some input/support/training to the e-learning developers in Forces to maintain consistency in authoring."

The development of e-learning, including QA should comply with the directions and templates in the PLDE "Models for learning". Centrex should provide national guidance on the development of e-learning programmes, including quality assurance, which should be incorporated into the PLDE "Models for learning".

8.5 *Do you provide on-line support?*

On-line support is provided by 24% of forces ranging from on-line help and notes, through email and telephone support through to chat room functionality.

8.6 *Do you include e-learning in your costed training plan?*

E-learning is included in costed training plans by 38% of forces with a further 5 forces (13%) planning to include it in future. Two forces state they have not included it because it is not currently supported by B-Plan software.

NCALT have proposed an approach to costing e-learning projects which is to be presented to the ACPO e-learning group for consideration. This work will need to be taken into consideration by the PLDE in the development of costing for other training and development. A robust national framework for costing all types of learning is required to equip forces with accurate information to enable decision making on delivery methods. The ACPO e-learning group and the PLDE should develop a robust national framework for costing e-learning through the National Training Costing Model Implementation Group (NTCMIG).

8.7 *How is e-learning evaluated?*

E-learning is evaluated by 70% of the forces who use it. Evaluation takes place to varying degrees using the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model. Some packages have built in knowledge checks and some forces are involving line managers in the evaluation at level 3 through PDR.

8.8 *How important is e-learning?*

Forces were asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 6 the importance of e-learning in their organisation today, the value now and the future value.

On average, importance scored 3 out of 6, value now scored 3 out of 6 and future value scored 5 out of 6.

8.9 *Do you have dedicated hardware and/or facilities for e-learning?*

Dedicated hardware and/or facilities for e-learning are provided by 54% of forces. Provision for e-learning falls into three main areas – all personal computers across the force being e-learning enabled, provision of e-learning through IT classrooms or dedicated ITC Centres, and e-learning 'zones' spread around the force and across divisions. In addition, some forces have their own Hydra/Minerva suites and some forces have dedicated servers to host e-learning and NCALT.

A number of forces are looking to provide dedicated facilities to support IPLDP.

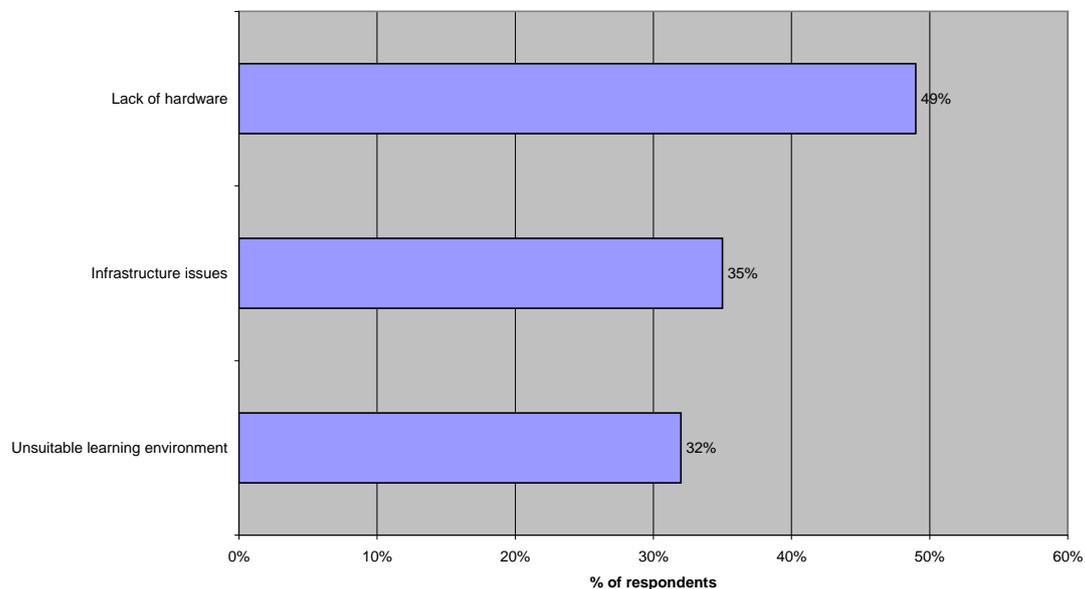
One force indicated that they had 11 Learning Resource Centres but statistics had revealed that they were rarely used. Personnel have easy access via personal computers to e-learning and it was felt that the valuable office space that the Learning Resource Centres were occupying could be put to better use.

8.10 Are availability of facilities and equipment a barrier to successful e-learning?

Availability of facilities and equipment were seen as a barrier by 86% of forces. The key issues were:

- Lack of hardware/space on area (18 out of 37 - almost a half of forces)
- Remote access difficulties/infrastructure/bandwidth (13 out of 37 - over a third of forces)
- Location of computers, the workplace is not always the ideal place to undertake CBT packages (12 out of 37 – almost a third of forces).

Figure 3: Are availability of facilities and equipment a barrier to successful e-learning?



8.11 What are the barriers to effectiveness of e-learning?

A number of barriers were identified with the key ones being

- Prevailing culture – learners favour the traditional training approach (24 out of 37 – 65% of forces)
- No defined protected learning time, or adherence to it if it exists (18 out of 37 – 49% of forces)
- Infrastructure does not support e-learning (16 out of 37 – 43% of forces)
- Lack of hardware and/or a suitable learning environment (12 out of 37 – 32% of forces)
- Lack of IT skills in learners (7 out of 37 – 19% of forces)
- Lack of consistent quality of packages/robust national products and common platforms (6 out 37 – 16% of forces)

Figure 4: Most frequently cited barriers to the effectiveness of e-learning	
Barriers	% of respondents
Prevailing culture	65%
No protected learning time, or adherence to it if it exists	49%
Infrastructure	43%
Lack of hardware/suitable learning environment	32%
Lack of IT skills in learners	19%
Lack of consistent quality of packages & platforms at national level	16%

Comments were added as follows:

“(There is a) prevailing culture that values classroom based training as opposed to self directed, or focussed, learning in non-traditional settings.”

“...even with a protected learning policy people see their day job building up and will tackle that before e-learning.”

“Some people are still techno-phobic and are afraid of e-learning. Culturally, students ‘expect’ or ‘prefer’ class based learning in preference to e-learning.”

“(There is a) perception of e-learning as being ‘learning on the cheap’.”

“(There has been a) lack of organisational progress in implementing a co-ordinated approach, due largely to historical inertia and perceived technology, security and infrastructural barriers.”

“We need a national lead/direction giving clear and unequivocal instructions to forces on the subject of e-learning including the matter of protected learning time.”

“The increase in technology in NCALT is beginning to leave us behind. Before the last upgrade we could access learning from most machines. This has recently become limited.”

“Those responsible for implementing e-learning solutions within any Force will need to find support from IT Managers and the Force’s senior leaders in order to succeed.”

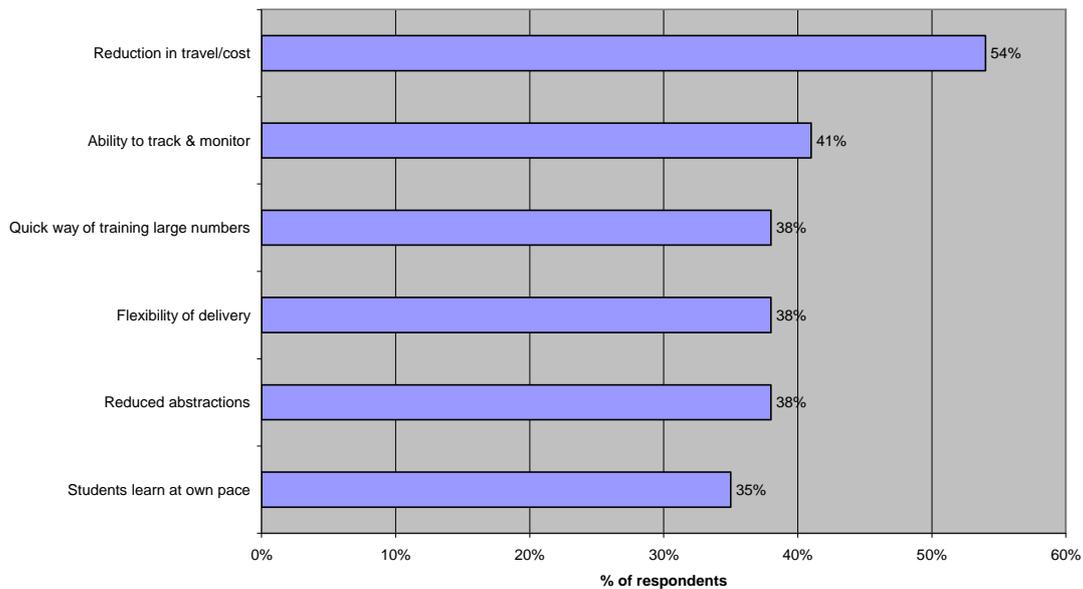
“Restrictive and prescriptive Force IT strategies and a failure to recognise that e-learning can support an overall learning strategy can also prevent successful implementation.”

8.12 *What are the benefits of e-learning?*

Several benefits of e-learning were identified with the most often quoted being

- Reduction in travel and cost (20 out of 37 – 54% of forces)
- Tracking and monitoring/accurate records (15 out of 37 – 41% of forces)
- Quick and easy way of communicating information and awareness to large numbers of people in a short space of time (14 out of 37 – 38% of forces)
- Flexibility of where and when delivered/accessed (14 out of 37 – 38% of forces)
- Reducing Abstractions (14 out of 37 – 38% of forces)
- Students can learn at own pace (13 out of 37 – 35% of forces)

Figure 5: The benefits of e-learning



8.13 Forces and NCALT

NCALT can be accessed by 95% of forces on an individual basis. However, the number of registered users varies wildly between 0 and 50,000 users. Many forces are unsure exactly how many active users they currently have and will not have accurate figures on this until they have the Learning Management System up and running. A number of forces are undertaking, or planning to undertake in the near future, a bulk upload to NCALT MLE.

Currently 57% of forces (20) have their own NCALT MLE domain (with a further 6 forces in progress).

HM Inspector believes that NCALT should engage with Force IT Managers as well as Training Managers to ensure that IT infrastructures are in place to support access to NCALT and the creation of MLE domains. The Home Office, CENTREX and the service will need to work together to ensure that the resourcing issues are overcome to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.

In order to move the identified difficulties forward, **HM Inspector suggests that the Home Office provide additional funding to NCALT to undertake an IT Readiness Assessment with individual Forces to establish the feasibility of adoption.** NCALT will account to the Home Office for the application of these funds and will provide to the Home Office a report on take-up of this facility delineating any reason why a Force may not be in a position to adopt the MLE.

HM Inspector suggests that each Force places responsibility for the adoption of the MLE under HR/Training and nominates a senior responsible owner for managing the change, with feedback through regional representation to the ACPO E Learning group.

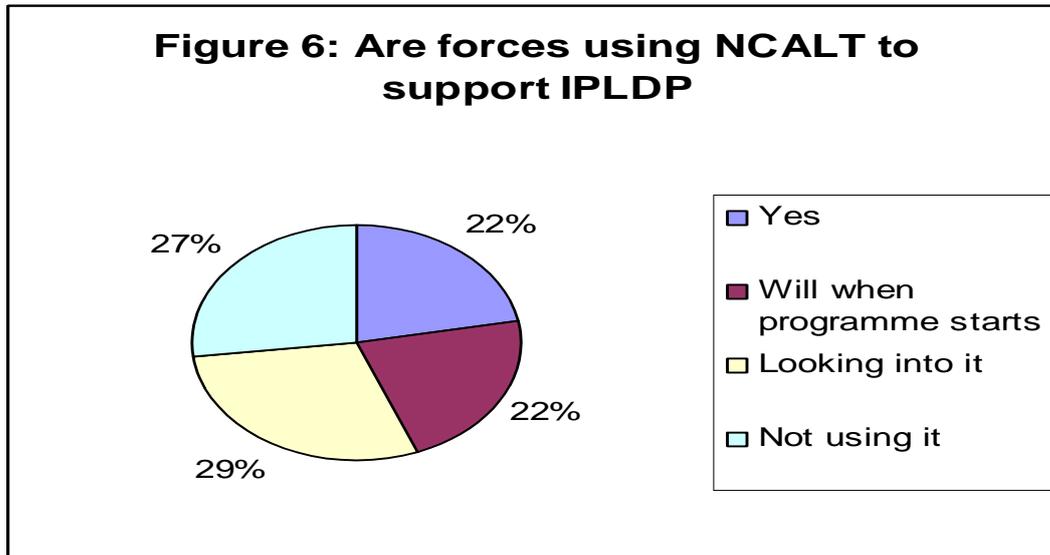
8.14 How well is CLDP supported by NCALT?

Response to this was very mixed. Eleven forces said that NCALT supported CLDP well or very well. However, a number of other forces said they found the site difficult to navigate, and unreliable, this is being addressed by an MLE Usability project.

8.15 Are forces using NCALT to support the IPLDP?

Again the response was mixed. It is still early days for some forces with regard to IPLDP. Of the 37 forces who responded to the questionnaire, 8 forces said they are using NCALT to support IPLDP now, a further 8 said they would be using it when their programme started and

10 more said they were 'looking into it'. Of the 10 that replied they were not using NCALT this was down to NCALT access issues and forces working with a university to deliver their IPLDP programme.



One force commented:

“Ease of access for users must be addressed - many users find it difficult to navigate and find what they are looking for. Trainers get frustrated too and they are computer literate.

Our IPLDP team are very frustrated with the lack of user friendliness; particularly the navigation which is clumsy and not intuitive. Access is too tightly restricted and causes a situation where some have access to a particular area whilst others cannot access it and have to rely on those that do have access to keep them informed.”

At a recent Centrex/NCALT consultative event ‘Making the MLE work for IPLDP’, several forces expressed concerns about the difficulty of finding materials on the system, the length of time required to locate all materials relating to one IPLDP module and communication i.e. information on material updates not reaching IPLDP practitioners.

Usability is a significant issue and HMIC is pleased to note that NCALT is currently engaged on a usability project to resolve end user feedback and concerns. This will ultimately improve the user interface, access to courses, make the system more user friendly and provide data on how people use the system.

HMIC is aware of the ‘single sign on’ project within the Metropolitan Police Service in conjunction with NCALT and PITO. Given the feedback regarding the complexity of various sign in processes this initiative is welcomed and should be considered for further roll out across the service.

HM Inspector suggests that Centrex/NCALT should engage with Forces to address the issues around sign on, site navigation and accessing of learning materials.

8.16 Do you have any packages suitable to put on NCALT?

There are 18 forces which have developed e-learning packages which may be suitable to share via NCALT; in fact some packages have already been made available in this way. However, there are a number of issues to overcome if this practise is to be extended. The key issues are technology, licensing, customisation, duplication and quality assurance.

One Force commented:

“Please make the process for getting stuff shared simple – or we won’t bother – or else we’ll circumvent it and send copies to each other to upload onto our own domains.”

“There would also be a benefit in regional cooperation in the development of packages (e.g. different forces taking responsibility for writing and developing different packages).”

“I see e-learning having a very important part to play in the development of training in the future. We do not have the capability to develop our own materials currently, but see the role of Centrex, for example, as an excellent way of providing quality e-learning material which would cut down on unnecessary duplication of work by forces in replicating training interventions e.g. the recent SOCPA training was an example whereby one centrally produced product could have met the needs of all.”

HM Inspector is aware that there is an ‘upload process’ which is accessible on the MLE which distinguishes between forces loading material locally and nationally. This process includes a QA process for national uploading. This process should be reviewed from two aspects. Firstly experiences from forces that have undergone the national upload process have found it complex and time constraining. Secondly awareness of the process at Force Training Manager level is limited. Both of these factors currently work against an effective upload mechanism to facilitate increased population of the NCALT site by force developed products.

HM Inspector suggests that Centrex/NCALT should review the process for approving and uploading packages to the NCALT site for national use to ensure it is fit for purpose, and ensure that availability of the process is fully communicated to the service.

8.17 *Forces and blended learning*

The questionnaire did not specifically cover blended learning. However, a number of forces alluded to it in their comments.

“The ability to ask questions to clarify understanding is limited via e-Learning. This is part of the reason why we are increasingly using a blended learning approach where e-Learning is a pre-requisite for classroom training, where questions can then be posed and case studies/group exercises used for applied skill development.”

“(There is) limited appreciation of self study, people want interaction with others and we need to promote the versatility of e-learning.”

“We are fully committed to the integration of blended learning and have staff dedicated to this.”

“E-learning is an excellent solution to use in some circumstances, however it should be used as the best solution to a learning need and not be used to cut costs and prevent class based training. It is a good tool in blended learning and we must beware others don’t see it as a way of no longer using classroom training as this also has many benefits we should not lose.”

“I believe that e-learning could offer great benefits for certain types of learning (e.g. updates on revisions to or new legislation). However, this would need to be supported by training in order to provide clarification and answer questions.”

NCALT has developed a number of programmes which are a combination of e-learning and blended learning through working with the various CENTREX Directorates. Current models include the following: -

Stand alone e-learning modules which are accessible to all and include for example, but not exclusively, Police Race and Diversity, Freedom of Information, Stop and Account.

E-learning modules which are a pre-requisite for taught courses, for example National Surveillance, Crime Prevention, First Responder, and Hi Tech Crime.

Blended, scenario based, learning solutions including a range of learning methodologies developing learning themes, for example IPLDP, NCRS/NIRS and Pursuits Management.

Supplementary to taught material or self managed learning, for example CLDP, Race and Diversity.

“Overall these responses reflect the various states of ‘start-up’ to ‘mature process’ across the country, and the reactions are not atypical of any large and diverse workforce in the private sector or public sector. It is the performance drivers that are different. Hence the reinforcement of the vital need to link business objectives, performance and competency. Through the richness of e-learning and e-assessment it will be possible, with those links firmly in place, to transform the learning experience and to enhance the Forces’ performance within the emerging workforce modernisation framework, which also allows flexibility and freedom towards a mixed economy model.” *

9. Conclusion

It is clear that the use of e-learning is on the increase. Research from outside of the police service indicates that e-learning is most effective when it forms part of a blended learning solution, when it links to business objectives, when protected learning time policies are effective, when appropriate support processes are in place, and when internal marketing and communications activities have taken place to promote its use.

As far as the police service is concerned the picture is mixed with regard to take up of e-learning and the solutions offered by NCALT. Technology and force infrastructure has been a particular problem with some forces not having sufficient bandwidth to cope with the technology. NCALT has provided a technical specification for accessing the MLE and e-learning materials as well as an MLE access paper. However, they have only recently begun to engage with IT Managers as opposed to Training Managers. It is the IT Managers who need to be involved in solving internal technical issues. NCALT are forging ahead with the creation of new technology. If forces are not to be left behind then NCALT should concentrate first of all on the immediate issue of getting forces up and running with the existing technology and their own MLE domains.

There are clearly advantages to be had from the sharing of content and from centrally produced and located quality assured and fit for purpose content which can be achieved service-wide through NCALT and the MLE. Many forces are now investing in e-learning design and development skills and are already engaged with other e-learning and Learning Management System suppliers. The danger is that without a co-ordinated approach, as with so much other police training, duplication will continue. However, before the sharing of content and e-learning materials becomes a reality there are issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, there needs to be national guidance or direction relating to quality assurance and secondly the process of getting content uploaded centrally via NCALT needs to be made easier. The service must also be assured of the long-term future of NCALT and be satisfied that funding will be ongoing before it puts all its eggs in this particular basket.

As far as IPLDP is concerned there are clear benefits to the service as a whole in being able to register and track candidates nationally. No clear steer has been given on this subject and at this stage there is no real requirement for forces to do this other than a strong push from the IPLDP Central Authority. This will only be of value if all forces are required to register their candidates.

If e-learning is to be used to its best advantage within a blended learning approach then national guidance is required on the issue of protected learning time. A traditional advantage

of e-learning is its flexibility and the fact that it can be studied in any 'non working moment'. In reality unless specific time is set aside to undertake learning then it is unlikely to happen. Forces must also give consideration to the environment in which the learning is taking place. Although dedicated learning resource areas take up valuable space it is clear from force feedback that take up of e-learning is hampered by the learner trying to undertake courses from their work-station. E-learning must be given the same level of commitment as other learning methods, through policy, budget, resource and management commitment, if the benefits are to be realised.

It must be recognised that e-learning is not simply a training and development issue. It has the potential to encompass more processes than training delivery alone. Through the linkages with HR systems there is the potential to manage the end-to-end process of people development and talent management, identifying performance gaps, assessing competencies and skills-gaps, scheduling the most appropriate training in whatever form, through to assessing outcomes and delivering business performance. As such it must be owned by the business lines and supported by the HR function if there are to be significant investments in online learning. The IT function must be brought on board to ensure application software to underpin this is robust, scalable and does not create conflict with existing infrastructure.

Overall the benefits of e-learning within a context of blended learning are clear. If the Service is to realise the benefits then the issues relating to the use of e-learning must be raised with ACPO and HR. Forces are investing in infrastructure, hardware, facilities and authoring skills to varying degrees with, in some cases, no costing, QA or evaluation processes in place. There is a lack of national guidance on policy, protected learning time, costing, quality assurance and appropriateness of learning environment. Opportunities for collaboration and sharing of content are likely to be lost due to technology, licensing, customisation and quality assurance issues. E-learning has a definite role to play in Police learning and development and in some areas noteworthy practice is being formed. This must be captured and rolled out across the service if the cultural barriers to e-learning as a method of delivery are to be overcome.

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