

# Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: Northamptonshire

Date of Inspection: 19–20 January 2005



A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

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# Context and Force performance

## Context

Population served by the Force	630,398	
Number of police officers	1,302	
Number of police staff	1,099	
Number of special constables	254	
Number of PCSOs	31	
Budget for training for the financial year:	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget
2003–04	Not asked	5.5%
2004/05	£2.1 million	2.2%

## 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/northantsbaseline1004.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/northantsbaseline1004.pdf)

Further details of the Force performance can be found at: [www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.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](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/training.htm)

# Findings

Area Examined	Findings
<b>TRAINING STRATEGY</b>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find there is a training strategy in place that conforms to HOC 53/2003 and that it is fully aligned to organisational objectives. The Force is changing its strategic framework to reflect the Northamptonshire Policing Model, which will be included in next year's training strategy.</p>
<b>QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN</b>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find that the Force has a good quality, detailed costed plan for the training function. The 2004/05 plan is complete and captures most Force training. The arrangements to produce next year's plan are well advanced. The full NCM methodology is being applied and the Force is a member of the national project team to develop the NCM.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see the Force has used the costing model to produce options for new training projects and to influence budgetary decisions.</p> <p>There are plans to fully utilise the management information which is being produced from the costing software.</p>
<b>MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR</b>	<p>The training plan is routinely and regularly monitored at the monthly Force Management Board as part of the HR Business Report. Activity and budget spend against the plan are reported.</p>
<b>TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN</b>	<p>The significant amount of BCU training delivered by the Area Training &amp; Development Unit officers, (which is 80 per cent probationer and 20 per cent other staff) is not included in the costed training plan. There are plans to capture this in the 2005/06 plan.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to see that the Force training strategy clearly outlines how the Training and Development Sub Group (TDSG) leads the client side to determine prioritisation and oversees the monitoring arrangements for the training function. The chair of the TDSG is the ACC with responsibility for training. BCU Commanders and Departmental Heads are represented on this group.</p> <p>In addition there are lower level area user groups, which are part of the Northamptonshire policing model, that include training issues on their agenda.</p>
<p><b>MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING</b></p>	<p>Responsibility for the training and development function rests with the Director of HR (which is not an ACPO appointment) but who reports directly to the ACC. The Director of HR is line manager to the Head of Training.</p> <p>The Head of Training is a training professional and is seen as the 'head of profession' for all centrally provided training. However, the consistency of training standards and accountability across the entire training function has yet to be achieved. HM Inspector acknowledges that this issue is being debated at the strategic level. Some links have already been made with specialist training staff and there are aspirational plans to integrate them further in the short term.</p> <p>There are formal local training arrangements whereby the Area Learning &amp; Development Unit officers [ALDUs] deliver training locally and are located on the BCUs. They are professionally managed by the Head of Training in association with the BCU commanders. There is one sergeant and two constables per two BCUs. HM Inspector encourages the Force to include the ALDUs in the training planning process and improve the support given to them from the Training Department.</p> <p>There are formalised and documented meeting structures across the training function for training managers and trainers, such as Northants Policing Model user groups which feed into the TDSG. The Head of Training is included in strategic meetings outside the Training Department.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see there is consistently good support from the Police Authority.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION OF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing Learning</li> <li>• Training Matters</li> <li>• Diversity Matters</li> <li>• Foundations for Change</li> </ul>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find there has been sound activity which supports the <i>Managing Learning</i>, <i>Diversity Matters</i> and <i>Training Matters</i> recommendations, together with effective Police Authority monitoring.</p> <p>Progress against FfC is monitored regionally. The Force is leading the region on the NCM, communication and marketing and the training planning process.</p>
<p><b>CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b></p>	<p>The BVR IP 2003 is mostly complete with two outstanding recommendations. HM Inspector was pleased to find a revised improvement plan but it is predominantly confined to seeking improvements in centrally provided training and currently lacks detail about timescales, milestones and the monitoring arrangements. The revised improvement plan also needs to be owned by ACPO, although it is subject to routine monitoring by the Head of Training. Exception reports for the higher level objectives are submitted to the TDSG as appropriate. HM Inspector acknowledges that a further revision of the improvement plan is planned by the Head of Training.</p>
<p><b>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b></p>	<p>The BVR improvement plan is monitored monthly at the senior command group. There is less formal monitoring by the Police Authority but they are actively involved in the consultation processes across the Force that includes Training Department issues.</p>
<p><b>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector found a formal Training Quality Management System (TQMS) framework for developing a QA regime across the Force, however, in practice there is very limited QA being applied within centrally provided training. There are no routine trainer assessments or line manager observations. Some validation of lesson plans has begun and HM Inspector acknowledges the Head of Training's plan to apply a generic assessment tool for all Force learning materials. HM Inspector encourages the Force to develop an assessment strategy on training courses that can demonstrate learners are routinely engaged with the training.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to see monthly TQMS meetings that bring together all Force training managers and other key personnel to discuss both strategic and tactical developments in training.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to find an independent evaluation function which sits within HR, reporting to the deputy head of HR. There is a draft evaluation policy that clearly outlines the evaluation intentions.</p> <p>Tasking and reporting is largely through the TDSG, which also approves the evaluation priorities. The evaluator is confident that evaluation recommendations are subsequently implemented although there is no audit trail or longer term monitoring to demonstrate this.</p> <p>All courses are evaluated to Level 1. Level 2 assessments are not routine and left to informal arrangements by individual trainers. The ALI found very little formal assessment of student knowledge taking place in the observed sessions and there is no monitoring process to ensure these evaluations are taking place.</p> <p>Level 3 is the predominant evaluation activity and is applied to some Force-wide programmes.</p> <p>There is no Level 4 activity.</p> <p>The PDR process or NOS have not been linked to evaluation and there is a general absence of external indicators of the impact of the training on performance or return on investment. Furthermore, HM Inspector encourages the Force to outline in their training strategy how they will develop community involvement in their evaluation of major programmes.</p>
<p><b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find good examples of community involvement in the core skills training. This includes stages 5 and 6 probationer training and custody training. The stop and search training was devised in consultation with community leaders and the BPA.</p> <p>Within operational training, senior officers are seeking to make links between firearms training and the black community. In addition the Roads Policing Unit has support from the medical profession for drugs recognition training.</p> <p>The Force needs to consider how to involve the community in the wider training processes of TNA, design and evaluation.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>COLLABORATION – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</b></p>	<p>There is some evidence of collaboration within diversity training and management training, but the Force needs to capture all the work they are doing collaboratively and set out their collaboration priorities in the training strategy.</p>
<p><b>COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS</b></p>	<p>There are good examples of collaborative effort within the East Midlands Region in relation to progressing the FfC. The progress is monitored through the East Midlands Training Managers Forum and the ACPO/APA Regional Strategic Group. In addition, the Regional Development Unit collaborates with TNA, design and evaluation.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to see intra-Force collaboration across the four BCUs to deliver probationer and officer safety training. Two sergeants who head the Area probationer training each have responsibility for two BCUs.</p>
<p><b>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector found the spirit within <i>The Models for Learning and Development</i> has been integrated into the development of new training programmes and for all stages of the training process across the Force. Each process is detailed in the Total Quality Management System.</p> <p>HM Inspector encourages the Force to illustrate in the training strategy how these standards for training will be applied and rolled out across the Force, where they do not already do so.</p>
<p><b>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</b></p>	<p>Improve management development training so that it is timely and relevant.</p> <p>Develop alternative methods of learning, exploring in particular the value of e-learning.</p> <p>Ensure training needs from PDRs are realistic and appropriate.</p>
<p><b>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</b></p>	<p>Strategically, the Best Value ethos remains in the Force and there is evidence that there is effective challenge by ACPO in the development of new training programmes. The Force needs to make better use of the NCM outputs that are emerging to enable comparisons to be made routinely across the whole training function.</p>



Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</b></p>	<p>The Force is implementing the national PDR process in April 2005. Role profiles and objectives are being produced for all police officers and police staff. There is a PDR communications plan to ensure all staff are kept informed. However, there is little confidence amongst staff that the problems that currently exist with the value of PDR in the development process generally will be any different.</p> <p>Although PDR is linked to priority payments there is concern at BCU commander level about the ability of supervisors to apply the assessment criteria objectively. The Force needs to consider whether there are training needs in this area.</p> <p>Some new lesson plans have been aligned to NOS but there are no plans to revisit existing training. The link between evaluation and NOS has not been explicitly defined.</p>
<p><b>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</b></p>	<p>PDRs are monitored on Areas as well as centrally. Force completion rates average 77 per cent for officers and police staff. The new PDR system will be IT based and HM Inspector encourages the Force to explore how the training needs identified in PDR will be fed back into the costed training plan.</p>
<p><b>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</b></p>	<p>This training business planning cycle correlates to HOC 53/2003 and assists the corporate planning process. HM Inspector was pleased to find that training planning is effectively integrated into the Northants Policing Model and is clearly being driven by performance requirements.</p>
<p><b>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector found that prioritisation is carried out at a strategic level by the ACPO led Managing Staff Group and T and D Sub-Group forums. Existing training programmes are either on schedule, rescheduled or cancelled, and new priorities are programmed according to Force needs.</p>

# Recommendations

## **Recommendation 1**

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

## **Recommendation 2**

**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 3**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a robust evaluation function for all training, which includes evaluating the impact of training on Force performance. This should include a clear mechanism for following evaluation recommendations, together with a monitoring regime for the application of evaluation generally by trainers and the implementation of recommendations**

## **Recommendation 4**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force ensures that all training programmes are mapped against the Integrated Competency Framework**

## **Recommendation 5**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a clear strategy in respect of collaboration with external organisations together with protocols for agreements concluded**

### **Recommendation 6**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a mechanism which allows the monitoring of PDR to ensure that training needs that result from the PDR process are integrated appropriately into the costed training plan**

# Judgements

## Judgement 1:

Historically, the Head of Training post has experienced relatively frequent change. A recently appointed training professional is now more likely to bring the stability necessary to develop the training function. Currently, it remains fragmented as the main focus for improvement is within centrally provided training. The Force has acknowledged the need to bring all training under one head of profession. There are elements of the training process that need further development, such as QA, evaluation and the integration of PDRs into the planning process. The Adult Learning Inspectorate also found indications that there is no routine monitoring or assessment of learners or the training itself.

There is clear commitment within the Force to drive performance through training and the Northamptonshire Policing Model is providing the drive to ensure that the training function is focused on performance.

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

## Judgement 2:

The resulting Best Value improvement programme has been regularly monitored and a revised improvement plan for the training function has been developed. The revised plan has clearly set out detail of timescales, milestones, resourcing and there is clear ownership at ACPO level. The Police Authority too is actively engaged in the training process and is committed to close monitoring and scrutiny of the training function. The emerging plans for developing the existing training standards and applying them across the whole training function are likely to significantly impact on improving Force performance.

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

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

### Achievement and standards

- Data about pass rates or learners' success rates on all courses is not maintained centrally within the Force. For some courses, trainers had no clear criteria for learner success and did not monitor or review learners' success or pass rates. Trainers and learners on HOLMES 2 courses had a clear understanding of the criteria for success. Driver training courses are structured to meet national standards, and learners' progress against these standards is carefully monitored.
- In observed driver training sessions there was very good informal and formal feedback on learners' attainment and achievement, together with good skills development at each stage of training. There was informal verbal assessment of learners' attainment in most of the training observed, but often this was not carried out against clearly stated aims and objectives.
- Numbers on some courses were very small. HOLMES 2 training involved only three learners, of five on the course register. Diversity and Family Liaison Officer training involved five and six learners respectively. For some courses, it is difficult for trainers to develop discussion and group work with very small numbers. On some courses, there were a number of learners absent from training. Trainers were not always clear why learners had not attended and did not know whether procedures were in place to report on or follow up absences.

### Quality of Teaching and Learning

- All of the training observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. Over two thirds (67 per cent) of observed sessions were good or very good. All practical training sessions (44 per cent of observed sessions) were very good.
- In practical training sessions, learners were given very effective guidance and support by trainers and they quickly developed new skills and increased their understanding of the topic or exercise on which they were engaged. Trainers very effectively related the practical work to learners' operational roles, drawing upon personal experience to provide examples of ways training would benefit learners. There was a clear growth in learner confidence and understanding in all practical and most theory sessions observed.

- The ratio of trainers to learners is good in both firearms and driver training. Often two trainers will work with a group of four learners in driver training to provide very detailed and constructive individual feedback and guidance throughout training. In firearms training three trainers worked with nine learners. In observed practical sessions, trainers were careful to check learners' understanding frequently, giving clear comment on the strengths and development areas from each activity carried out by learners. Learners were given good opportunities for comment on each stage of training.
- In HOLMES training, learners are given clear information about course requirements and there is a range of good quality written materials to support learning. Airwave training provided learners with clear guidance on system capabilities and changes in communications procedures. There were opportunities for learners to practice making and receiving calls, and trainers dealt competently with questions.
- At the start of some courses and sessions, learners are not provided with a programme outline or description of learning outcomes. Learners in these sessions did not have a clear idea of what they would be doing, nor did they have a full understanding of the skills they were expected to develop. In most observed sessions, however, learners were aware of the operational impact of their training.
- There are good resources for firearms training. A modern, well-equipped indoor range with drive-on capacity is available at the Force headquarters, and there is ample parking for training vehicles and adequate storage space for equipment. At the outdoor training area at Yardley Chase, there are good resources for method of entry, search to contact, or search and clear training. The range and variety of purpose-built structures within the facility gives good opportunities for learners to develop skills in a wide range of situations. There have been some very good adaptations to buildings to provide trainers with overhead walkways from which training may be observed without impact or interruption. However, many of the enhancements to facilities have been carried out by the training staff themselves, and some of the resources have been gathered privately by trainers. Rest and social areas at the Yardley Chase facility are unsatisfactory. The single rest room is cold, cramped and has no space for storage of personal belongings.
- Classrooms at the training village generally provide adequate space for training activities. Classes take place in semi-permanent structures, but these have been well insulated and are air conditioned. There are modern audio and visual aids in classrooms and many trainers make good use of these. In addition to the classrooms at the training village a number of large rooms and a lecture theatre are available to house large groups. Driver training theory sessions take place in well-equipped rooms with a good range of well-used audio-visual aids. In training areas at divisional sites rooms were rather cramped. E-learning and online training materials and opportunities are not well-developed throughout the Force.

- There is insufficient use of initial assessment on all courses. In some cases learners were attending courses many months after requesting training, and often when the immediate need for training had receded. Some learners were unsure why they had been sent for training.
- There are no formal checks of prior knowledge or understanding applied Force-wide. Formal assessments are applied when required by legislation or to meet national or external standards. For most other courses, initial and formal on-course assessments are not used routinely to monitor progress or establish individual learning needs.
- Where there is a requirement for formal assessment of learning, for instance in driver and firearms training, learners have a clear understanding of how they will be assessed and know what the criteria are for succeeding on the course. In HOLMES 2 training, national standards are no longer applied, but an internal assessment scheme has been developed to provide periodic skills assessment during training.
- There is informal assessment on most courses. The frequency and form of informal assessment varies, but generally provides adequate measurement of progress during sessions.
- Not all learners know how to request training, and some learners did not know why they had been recommended for the training they were receiving. In most cases however, learners had confidence that the professional development review or appraisal system would allow them to request and receive adequate training.
- Centrex packages form the basis for most courses, unless they are to provide training in the use of specific equipment or refer to local conditions particular to the Force. Trainers do adapt Centrex packages to suit need where appropriate.
- Most learners are well supported by trainers during teaching sessions. Learners felt confident about extending their skills and knowledge during observed sessions and were well supported by trainers through each stage of learning. Trainers were often able to call on their own practical or operational experiences to give useful advice about ways to deal with problems. In some cases, for instance in driver training, there was good support given to learners, which raised their confidence and allowed them to attempt new techniques and rapidly develop new skills. In diversity training sessions a supportive and productive atmosphere was created, allowing learners to discuss some complex and difficult subjects without feeling unduly vulnerable.









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