

# Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: Thames Valley

Date of Inspection: 23–24 March 2005



A Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

ISBN 1-84473-528-1  
© Crown Copyright 2005  
Published 2005

# Context and Force performance

## Context

Population served by the Force	2.1 million		
Number of police officers	4,136		
Number of police staff	2,705		
Number of special constables	377		
Number of PCSOs	81		
Budget for training for the financial year	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget	
2003/04	Not asked	2%	
2004/05	£10 million	3%	

## Performance

A baseline assessment of the Force was undertaken in October 2004. The findings of HMIC relating specifically to the HR area can be found at: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/tvpbaseline1004.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/tvpbaseline1004.pdf)

Further details of the Force performance can be found at: [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.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 a three year learning and development strategy in place that conforms to HOC 53/2003. The strategy is fully integrated with the HR strategic plan. In addition each Basic Command Unit (BCU) has its own Learning &amp; Development Plan in support of the force's strategy.</p>
<b>QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN</b>	<p>The Force has a detailed costed plan for the training function. The 2005/06 plan captures most of Force training; exceptions to this are locally delivered training. Captured but not costed within the plan is tactical support training (firearms, dog section and public order training). The Force has made good use of the Bplan training opportunities to provide resilience in this area and a good level of management information is being produced. There is good evidence of communication with the National Costing Model development team.</p> <p>The training planning cycle has influenced the budgetary decisions and ACPO have been engaged throughout the process. An example of this is the costing exercise of the predicted growth in training probationers. The results were used as part of the business case to secure more training resources to deliver the probationer training.</p>
<b>MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR</b>	<p>The learning and development plan is routinely and regularly monitored at the Training Prioritisation Board (TPB), who also authorise significant changes as appropriate. Activity and budget spend against the plan are also reported. In order for the Force to see year on year improvement in the accuracy of training predictions it needs to synchronise the training planning process with the corporate planning process and PDR.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN</b></p>	<p>The locally delivered BCU training has not been captured or costed in the 2005/06 plan. There are plans to capture this in next year's plan.</p>
<p><b>CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to find that there has been good leadership of the training function by ACPO and the Police Authority to prioritise and monitor the key training programmes. The Training Prioritisation Board (TPB) oversees the training function across the Force and is chaired by the Director of Resources, an ACPO member. The PA also sits on the TPB.</p> <p>Training requirements for the BCUs are specifically discussed between the Head of Training and Development and BCU managers bi-annually, also at the TPB and at the Chief Officer Performance Management meetings, which occur monthly.</p> <p>There is no lower level training user group which could oversee the training function at BCU level and provide an effective focal point across the BCUs. HM Inspector acknowledges that such a forum exists within the Force Control Rooms &amp; Enquiries Department which could be a model for elsewhere in the Force.</p> <p>The Force needs to ensure that the senior client side develops a more effective and consistent monitoring regime of the training function by routinely holding the training deliverers to account for the outcomes achieved.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING</b></p>	<p>Responsibility for the training and development function rests with the Director of Resources, via the Head of HR who is line manager to the Head of Training and Development.</p> <p>The Head of Training and Development is seen as the ‘head of profession’ for all training. All centralised training providers, including the operational trainers, have adopted common standards within the CENTREX quality assurance framework to ensure consistency of standards.</p> <p>Local training on the BCUs is delivered by local training staff, although most training in the Force is provided by central providers. The Force is currently extending Professional Development Units (tutor units) to achieve coverage throughout each of the newly formed BCUs.</p> <p>The Force is introducing BCU learning and development managers to provide the link between BCU and central training and at the time of inspection they were being recruited. They will be line managed by the BCU Commander via the BCU HR manager, and report professionally to the Head of Training and Development.</p> <p>There was some concern among the trainers that succession planning is not being consistently applied across the training function. This can affect the ability to deliver to capacity and is likely to deter new staff from applying for training posts. HM Inspector was encouraged to see a recent change in policy that enables training managers to recruit over establishment for a short period to bridge predicted gaps.</p> <p>The Head of Training and Development is included in strategic meetings outside the Training and Development Department and holds regular workshops with all staff to aid communication.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to see there is consistently good support from the Police Authority, who meet regularly with the Head of Training and Development and who sit on many of the strategic project boards.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>IMPLEMENTATION OF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Managing Learning</b></li> <li>• <b>Training Matters</b></li> <li>• <b>Diversity Matters</b></li> <li>• <b>Foundations for Change</b></li> </ul>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find there has been sound activity which supports the <i>Managing Learning, Diversity Matters</i> and <i>Training Matters</i> recommendations, with action plans for each, together with effective Police Authority monitoring. The remaining work to be done is being integrated into improvement plan objectives.</p> <p>Progress against FfC is monitored Regionally, although the strategic group have not met for two years. The Force is leading on PDR for the Region.</p>
<p><b>CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b></p>	<p>The BVR service improvement plan was completed in October 2004 and has been signed off by the Police Authority. HM Inspector was pleased to find well documented progress of the recommendation areas and that it has had regular monitoring by ACPO and the Police Authority. The Force has an improvement plan contained within the Learning and Development Plan that is owned by ACPO. This plan includes a high-level Gantt chart, and the milestones are contained in project documentation for the individual projects. Progress of the improvement plan is monitored at both monthly training and development strategy meetings and the quarterly Training Prioritisation Board meetings.</p>
<p><b>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b></p>	<p>The Learning and Development Plan is routinely monitored by Head of Training and Development and by the TPB.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</b></p> <p><b>NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to see a very well structured approach to QA that brings together all training deliverers to work towards the common standards detailed in the QA briefing files. In addition the Force has achieved Centrex approval since 1999. IiP status for the Force is located only within the Control Rooms and Enquiries Department; there are no plans currently to pursue this elsewhere in the Force.</p> <p>Briefings to all staff regarding QA, TNA, design and evaluation are an on-going event. There is also an annual training conference for all training staff to improve the quality of the training and trainers and complements their continuous professional development.</p> <p>The Force is also working with Skills for Justice as an early adopter of their developing QA framework.</p> <p>There are routine trainer assessments and clear audit trails of the changes to the content of training courses. Lesson plans are routinely validated, mapped against NOS and monitored through the QA process.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to see planned development time for all the delivery units. Each training section works on a two thirds delivery ratio with the other third being dedicated to design, evaluation, TNA and trainer development time. The Force utilises the TDOs within Force to evaluate the performance of their peers.</p>
<p><b>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</b></p>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find a clear and cogent evaluation strategy. The Force evaluator is line managed by the Needs Analysis and Quality Manager who in turn is line managed by the Head of Training and Development. Tasking and reporting is undertaken at TPB, however monitoring of recommendations is ad hoc and the Force needs to ensure there are processes in place to track their progress.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<b>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</b> <i>(continued)</i>	<p>There has been effective level one evaluation using a computerised system, 'Easi Quest'. There is sound evidence that trainers are routinely checking knowledge and understanding to achieve level two evaluations.</p> <p>Some level three evaluation has explored the value of vulnerable and intimidated witness training, StreetCraft training and training for PCSOs. The Force has not fully engaged higher level evaluation to explore the return on investment in relation to training courses or their impact on Force performance.</p>
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING</b>	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to find some good examples of community involvement in diversity training, such as training with the Terence Higgins Trust for all uniformed staff. In addition, Reading BCU has secured LSC funding to deliver Hindi language training. Up to 60 staff have signed up to take part in this voluntary training project. It was disappointing to find however that this training has not formed part of the Force training plan.</p> <p>HM Inspector was pleased to hear of the creation of a training IAG which will seek to impact across the training cycle, from TNA to evaluation. Its terms of reference are being defined and will be aligned to the full IAG in the Force.</p>
<b>COLLABORATION – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</b>	<p>The Force is a leading provider of training in two areas; surveillance/investigation skills and driver training, which is provided within the justice and allied sectors such as HM Coastguard, Army and Customs and Excise.</p> <p>There is other sound evidence of collaborative effort across a range of training programmes. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working with Reliance employees for the provision of custody training.</li> <li>● Developing management training with 'LINAC' a management development and training company, which will link to the Core Leadership Development Programme.</li> <li>● Joint training with the CPS for witness care and evidence training.</li> </ul>

Area Examined	Findings
<p><b>COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS</b></p>	<p>There is good collaboration within the Region. The Force has played a full part in the establishment of the Regional collaborative training framework that is, in turn focusing on all the stages in the training cycle. To support this work there is a Regional collaborative work plan, however, it is widely considered the geography of the Force has impeded a fully cohesive approach to collaboration with other police organisations.</p> <p>HM Inspector found limited examples of intra-Force collaboration between BCUs. An example of such activity relates to improving sanctioned detections, however there needs to be a more collaborative approach generally across the BCUs when developing training to improve Force performance.</p>
<p><b>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</b></p>	<p><i>The Models for Learning and Development</i> is the basis against which all training is quality assured. Furthermore, a self assessment process has been designed to achieve a consistent standard by all training deliverers.</p>
<p><b>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</b></p>	<p>Develop the involvement of the community throughout the training life cycle.</p> <p>Improve performance measurement.</p> <p>Implement E-Learning, as appropriate and QA for all training sites within the Force.</p>
<p><b>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</b></p>	<p>The principles of Best Value have continued to be applied to the training planning process through effective challenge at a number of strategic forums by ACPO and the Police Authority. This level of challenge to centrally provided training needs to be applied to BCU training so that good practice can be identified and shared.</p> <p>The Force has a sound costing methodology which they apply to most areas of training and outputs will be used as the basis for comparisons across the Force to improve efficiency and reduce wastage of costs.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</b>	<p>The Force is implementing the national PDR process and for the last year has delivered this through a computerised system called 'Snowdrop'. Role profiles and objectives have been produced for all staff. The PDR process is linked to payments for police staff and promotion and specialist posts for police officers. However, there is a concern among staff that whilst the new PDR system is process driven the required change in culture has not been fully tackled. There needs to be more emphasis on the development aspect of PDR and how it will link to other processes.</p> <p>The Force is planning to link PDR to the Force Learning and Development Plan and evaluation so that it will encompass career development and Force performance needs as well as contributing to performance review.</p>
<b>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</b>	<p>PDRs are monitored on Areas and it is planned that central monitoring will be introduced to improve the integration of the new PDR system. Force completion rates average 96% for officers and police staff.</p>
<b>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</b>	<p>The 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 so that it can contribute to and influence the budgetary decisions in the Force.</p>
<b>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</b>	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to find that prioritisation is led at the strategic level by ACPO through the TPB, although currently there is no formal prioritisation matrix to assist this process. However, the prioritisation decisions are robustly revisited quarterly at TPB where resources are revised as appropriate.</p>

# Recommendations

## **Recommendation 1**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force Learning and Development Plan is developed to ensure it captures all training in the Force irrespective of where or by whom it is provided**

## **Recommendation 2**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force develop a more distinct client/contractor arrangement that ensures that the client has a clear role in the commissioning and evaluation of training and the contractor is held accountable for delivery. This should also include a forum that can provide a focus for the training function and collaboration across the BCUs**

## **Recommendation 3**

**HM Inspector recommends that the Force develops a robust evaluation function for all training so that it can report on the outcomes of training in relation to return on investment. PDR should also be an integral part of evaluation activity and outlined in the evaluation strategy**

# Judgements

## Judgement 1:

The Head of Training and Development has provided a great deal of stability and expertise to develop the professionalism across the training function. The 'Challenge and Change' programme is presenting new challenges to the Force and the training function is planning to meet the resulting requirements. There is a high level of standardisation and good management oversight of all Force training and QA is being applied systematically to all training areas.

The Learning and Development strategy has been influenced and supported by ACPO and the Police Authority and there is clear commitment to its successful implementation to deliver improved performance, together with effective monitoring.

There are elements of the training process that the Force acknowledges could be improved such as the integration of PDRs into the planning and evaluation process, collaboration, the clarity of the client/contractor arrangements and the engagement of the BCUs.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate observed some good training by committed trainers and this also deserves to be recognised.

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

## Judgement 2:

The Best Value improvement plan has been regularly monitored and there is a clear audit trail that shows how the recommendations within it have been implemented. The Learning and Development Plan has laid out the Force's intentions for improvement across the training function. The areas for improvement have been clearly set out within a project management framework, with milestones and timescales. There are robust monitoring arrangements at ACPO level together with a resourcing mechanism that will consider the cost implications at an early stage. The Police Authority too has been consistent in its scrutiny and monitoring role and has been actively engaged in the training process. There has been realistic year on year investment in the training budget that reflects growth elsewhere in the Force and the training resources have kept pace in order to meet increasing demands.

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

**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 in March 2004. A summary of their findings is shown below:

### **Achievement and standards**

- There is good attainment of skills and knowledge. Where courses are examined pass rates are high. In all observed sessions attainment was at least satisfactory and, in many cases, good. Learners' knowledge and skills are clearly demonstrated in recap sessions and when teachers check understanding.

### **The quality of education and training**

- There is good training. Of the observed lessons, 75% were good or better. There is a variety of types of training used. In practical lessons, briefings and scenario setting are clear and effective. Learners are fully aware of what they are required to do. There is good use of other staff to play the role of prisoners etc, for simulation sessions. Teachers use question and answer sessions well to enable learners to develop their knowledge and to check learners understanding. There are very good working relationships with teachers and learners.
- There is good use of tutor and learner experience. Many of the teachers are experienced police officers. They make effective use of their experience to give practical examples of points being discussed. Most learners have some experience of police work. These experiences are effectively drawn out by teachers and used to discuss and illustrate teaching points. Learners benefit from being able to relate the training to their, and their peer's, experiences.
- There are excellent practical training facilities. These are used for a range of public order and specialist training courses. They are housed in a large building at the former RAF base of Upper Heyford, and there is use of the adjoining surfaced area to provide training both indoors and outdoors. The facilities allow a range of realistic simulation, in a controlled environment, for example use of petrol bombs in riot training. The training environments can be reconfigured to meet the training needs of the learners. They are very well laid out to enable teachers to clearly observe learners.

- Other training resources are satisfactory. The staff observed were all well qualified with suitable relevant vocational experience. They had received trainer training and some hold other training qualifications such as certificate of education. Classrooms contain adequate furniture and other training equipment. Some of the classes are large [in number] and stretch the limits of the rooms. Learners are provided with joining instructions prior to each phase, or course of training, which are clear and informative.
- There is little use of initial assessment. For learners new to the Force there is no formal initial assessment of learning needs. The training school does not receive any information prior to learners joining their course. Reports from other training organisations, for example those on probationers leaving stage 2 training, are not sufficiently detailed to provide information about individual learning and development needs. Learner's progress is monitored effectively by teachers, and their understanding is checked in lessons. However, for some learners there is little formal monitoring and review of their progress. Some learners have not received any feedback on their progress at any stage of their training.
- The training delivered is to meet the corporate needs of the Force. In general learners needs are identified by teaching staff and specific examples are used, where possible, to meet the individual needs. There are a few learners on an inappropriate course. The custody sergeant's course is designed for police officers new to the post. However, there is no specific refresher course and all but one of the learners was an experienced custody sergeant. This affected all the learners, for example the opportunities for role play.
- Within lessons, tutors provide good support for learners. Many courses are residential, however, there is insufficient accommodation for the current level of learners and some of them are in local hotels and lose the benefits of residential training. There is inadequate involvement of area supervisors for some learners. There are many examples where the area supervisor is involved with the learners' progress; however, there are some learners who do not have any contact with their area supervisors, during their training.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic)