

Best Value Review of Police Training

Force: West Mercia Constabulary

Date of Inspection: 12–13 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	1.2 million	
Number of police officers	2,365	
Number of police staff	1,447	
Number of special constables	281	
Budget for training for the financial year:	Financial Value	Percentage of Overall Force budget
2003-04	Not asked	3.15%
2004/05	£3.45m	2.1%

Performance

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

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

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/wmerbaseline1004.pdf

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

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

Findings

Area Examined	Findings
TRAINING STRATEGY NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE	HM Inspector was encouraged to find that the Force has a training strategy, which is fully aligned to relevant Home Office circulars, and organisational objectives.
QUALITY OF COSTED TRAINING PLAN NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE	<p>HM Inspector found the Force has an effective system for the development and production of its CTP using the NCM. This conforms fully to national guidance.</p> <p>However, little use is made of the costing element of this plan in relation to management activity or budget setting.</p>
MONITORING COSTED TRAINING PLAN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR	<p>HM Inspector was concerned to find that the CTP is not monitored as the financial year progresses. Any amendments to the plan occur without monitoring, and such changes are not subject to executive scrutiny.</p> <p>HM Inspector found that the PA has no active role in the monitoring arrangements.</p>
TRAINING NOT INCLUDED IN THE COSTED TRAINING PLAN	HM Inspector was pleased to see the significant amount of training that is captured within the CTP. However some elements of training have been, and continue to be, omitted from the costing process, in particular some divisional training, call handling and dog training. The Force expects to incorporate all training in to the CTP in the future.

Area Examined	Findings
<p>CLIENT/CONTRACTOR ARRANGEMENTS</p>	<p>The Force have a clear understanding of the client/contractor arrangement. However HM Inspector found the Joint Chairs of Training Panel group could be better able to perform its role with the inclusion of senior client staff. HM Inspector is pleased that the Force has indicated that it will be increasing its meeting structure in order to take place more frequently than the current bi annual process.</p> <p>HM Inspector was encouraged to note the effectiveness of local training panels at divisions and departments, in fulfilling the requirements of client/contractor activity.</p>
<p>MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>The Head of Training and Development does not have overall control of all training for the Force, for example, divisional training and dogs training are not included. HM Inspector encourages the Force to review the present situation whereby all training is not under the control or professional influence of the Head of Training and Development and is aware that there are discussions taking place within the Force to address this matter.</p> <p>HM Inspector is encouraged to note the attendance of Head of Training and Development at the Force Strategy Group, and Performance Group.</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Learning • Training Matters • Diversity Matters • Foundations for Change 	<p>HM Inspector was pleased to note that the Force has either already addressed or is in the process of addressing those recommendations within the reports that it is able to at the local level. Where recommendations are still in progress they are reviewed at relevant management meetings.</p> <p>There is good activity by the Force and region in relation to FfC, which is subject to monitoring arrangements. The Force executive is included within this process by nature of the fact that the DCC chairs the quarterly ACPO/APA meetings. In addition the FfC are reviewed quarterly at the Regional Heads of Training meeting.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p> <p>NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE</p>	<p>A thorough and wide-ranging Best Value review led to an IP containing 89 recommendations, of which all but a few were implemented shortly after the completion of the Best Value project in Force. The IP with the outstanding recommendations was incorporated into a Balanced Performance Framework document (BPF) in 2003 and the actions cascaded as part of the PDR priorities for individuals. This framework acts as a comprehensive action plan for all report recommendations perceived by the Force to impact upon training and development. This includes Centrex QA, Investors in People, and IITT recommendations, as well as BVR recommendations. A new format BPF incorporating a database is under development, and remains to be tested for purpose.</p>
<p>MONITORING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p>	<p>PA monitoring of the original IP took place via the PA Best Value and Stewardship Panel. Monitoring subsequently became the responsibility of the PA Human Resources and Professional Standards Panel. HM Inspector found the Force to have a well-engaged PA liaison officer.</p> <p>Currently there is no high level systematic monitoring of the BPF, nor is there a clear audit trail of internal historic monitoring. However, HM Inspector was encouraged to find that the Force propose to carry out bi monthly monitoring via the People Strategy Group.</p> <p>The PA engages with the training function through monthly meetings.</p>
<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</p>	<p>HM Inspector found a developing QA framework and a commitment by the Training and Development Department to QA and staff development activity. Whilst this is already in place for trainers within the central training function, plans have now been put in place to take this work forward for divisional and departmental trainers.</p> <p>The Force has held Centrex Approval and IITT accreditation for several years. In order to support that accreditation they have implemented a system of course and lesson master files and version control.</p>

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<p>EVALUATION OF TRAINING</p>	<p>The Force has one full time and one reduced hours staff member engaged in evaluation activity at Level 3. This team works closely with associated design and delivery staff.</p> <p>This team reports to, and is managed by, the Quality and Service Manager, who in turn reports to the Head of Training and Development. Whilst the evaluation function resides within the training department HM Inspector was satisfied that there are systems in place to ensure the independence of this challenging role and which also allow executive level engagement through the Joint Chairs of Training Panels.</p> <p>Level 1 and 2 evaluation remain the responsibility of service deliverers, and HM Inspector found that this process is used by trainers and managers to make continuous improvements to courses.</p>
<p>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING</p>	<p>HM Inspector notes the work in engaging with communities particularly around diversity training however there was limited overall formal engagement with community members or groups in relation to wider training. The Force accepts that a good deal of work remains to be done. HM Inspector encourages the Force to respond quickly and decisively to the guidance contained in HOC 4/2005, and the recently published APA paper relating to community involvement in training.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS</p> <p>NOTEWORTHY PRACTICE</p>	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to find a wide range of collaborative events associated with the Force. A partnership with University College Worcester in relation to evaluation and research projects is considered to be noteworthy practice.</p> <p>More work needs to be done to record the scope of collaboration, to disseminate the variety and extent of such activity, and to carry out an evaluation of its effectiveness.</p>
<p>COLLABORATION – OTHER POLICE ORGANISATIONS</p>	<p>The Force is involved in all regional activity and management processes, and has used FfC a key driver for this activity. Examples of collaboration include Investigative Skills training, Public Order training and ICIDP.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>ADOPTION OF NATIONAL GUIDANCE</p>	<p>HM Inspector noted that the Force has adopted the recommendations contained in national guidance in respect of TNA, design, and evaluation and has appointed a dedicated TNA/design officer. However the awareness in relation to this guidance is currently weak at the point of local delivery and needs to be raised. HM Inspector is aware that work is ongoing to address this matter.</p> <p>In respect of e learning, the Force products are based on the Institute of IT training models.</p>
<p>MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FORCE</p>	<p>The Force have highlighted their aspiration to improve work based training, and blended learning, and to enable staff to be better able to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them.</p>
<p>APPLICATION OF THE 4Cs SINCE THE REVIEW</p>	<p>There is no single arena in which to set new training or developmental opportunities against all of the principles of Best Value. However the general concept is embedded within the central training regime. A challenge for the Department is to replicate this ethos across all departments and divisions in relation to training.</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK</p>	<p>HM Inspector was encouraged to find that the Force have introduced the elements of the ICF. The national PDR was introduced in April 2004, and role profiles for almost all staff have also been produced. These profiles have been used for promotion for three years and are also used for selection and recruitment. NOS are used to underpin and guide the development of new training.</p>
<p>MONITORING PROCESS AND COMPLETION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE STAFF</p>	<p>The PDR is aligned to the ICF and the national PDR process. Personnel managers monitor the mandatory PDR system locally and electronically, with PDR rates forming part of monthly Force performance group meetings.</p> <p>Qualitative monitoring is carried out locally by dip sampling by managers and through the application of the Standardisation Panel. Generally completion rates were found to be high.</p>

Area Examined	Findings
<p>BUSINESS PLANNING FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING</p>	<p>The business planning cycle for training has clear timelines and integrates with the corporate business planning cycle. However the Force is encouraged to review the training planning process, so that it is better able to respond to divisional and departmental plans. HM Inspector is concerned that little or no account is taken of the opportunity to use the NCM as a tool to effectively challenge the budget setting processes within the Force.</p>
<p>PRIORITISATION MODEL FOR TRAINING</p>	<p>The Joint Chairs of Training Panels have responsibility for balancing demand against capacity through prioritisation. This relies upon an abstraction and training forecasting matrix. This is also the model used locally by divisions and departments via local training panels. The Force has also adopted national guidelines from Skills for Justice in relation to training prioritisation.</p> <p>HM Inspector considers that it would be beneficial for the Force to carry out an evaluation of the prioritisation process to ensure that such a key process remains fit for purpose.</p>

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

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

Recommendation 2

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

Recommendation 3

HM Inspector recommends that the Force ensures the Joint Heads of Training Panel review its terms of reference and its composition to better reflect its position as a strategic client led body

Recommendation 4

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

Recommendation 5

HM Inspector recommends that the Force ensures that all relevant personnel are conversant with, and are utilising, national guidance in the Form of the *Centrex Models for Learning and Development*

Judgements

Judgement 1:

There is a good deal of positive activity taking place within the training function, but there are also some elements which require further development, and HM Inspector acknowledges that, at the time of the inspection, some proposed changes had yet to be embedded. An exemplary training strategy and costed training plan are in place, along with a Head of Training that controls most development activity within the Force, and who has good access at strategic level meetings. There is also positive regional engagement and activity, along with good internal and external collaborative arrangements. However, it is also evident that there are areas of development for the Force including identifying and receiving a budget based on need, further work around a senior client group, and a lack of monitoring of the costed training plan or the balanced performance framework.

The Force needs to remain alive to these areas of fragility, and develop an effective response. It is very clear that there is a commitment at all levels within the Force to drive performance through training, and there is good training provision from the training staff at all levels, as evidenced by the Adult Learning Inspectorate inspection. The Force has a highly visible and committed Police Authority liaison member. A committed and well-qualified workforce within the training function continues to deliver professional training, and displays enthusiasm for the challenges ahead despite the organisational problems.

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

Judgement 2:

HM Inspector considers that the Best Value review processes was undertaken in line with national guidance, and that recommendations arising were speedily addressed with the outstanding recommendations located in an effective improvement plan (now within the balanced performance framework). This in turn has led to unprecedented change within the learning and development functions of the Force. The inspection found a great deal of detailed work under way designed to facilitate improvement, and this includes action plans arising from IIP and Centrex Quality Assurance, as well a comprehensive diversity action plan. The Force is moving towards all recommendations from action plans being incorporated into one overarching improvement plan, and this is seen to be very positive.

However, the Force has recognised and is currently addressing the need to enhance the way that the performance improvement programme, via the balanced performance framework, is monitored.

The improvement plan/balanced performance framework has had a demonstrative impact on performance in the workplace.

The Police Authority has been, and continues to be, actively engaged in the process. There is definite enthusiasm and commitment of staff, and a defined future aspiration and direction within West Mercia Constabulary.

It is clear that the culture of the training function within the Force is positive and it has an appetite to take on appropriate change in a mature and structured manner.

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

For further information on the judgement criteria refer to AppendixH/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. A summary of their findings is shown below:

Achievement and standards

- Learners on internal training programmes complete regular checks of their knowledge to indicate their progress. Many knowledge checks require learners to successfully achieve a prescribed pass rate. Learners show satisfactory improvements in their background knowledge and development in their skills. Learners make satisfactory progress, effectively building on their prior learning and apply their learning to a range of situations.

Quality of Education and Training

- Much of the training in the Force is good. Tutors make good use of their expertise to illustrate learning points and make good use of questioning to draw on learners work-related experience to reinforce learning. Lessons are well planned. Learning aids, including handouts and presentation material and assessments are well prepared. Learners describe the training they receive as good. They are motivated and attentive. In practical sessions tutors demonstrate good coaching skills giving clear supportive and structured guidance as learners develop their skills. Tutors have a good rapport with learners. Learners appreciate the support they receive.
- Weaker lessons lack pace and subjects are not sufficiently linked to previous or future learning.
- Tutors are well qualified and experienced for their role. Many tutors also have, or are working towards further teacher qualifications. All police officer trainers have significant policing experience.

- Training facilities are good. The training rooms are bright and well maintained. They are well equipped with LCD, DVD, video, flip charts and white boards. Some training rooms also have interactive whiteboards. There are a wide range of specialist learning materials and facilities, including close circuit television, and an extensive video training library. There are several IT suites with network computers. The training facilities for custody training are very good. These cells and custody facilities are realistic and are designed to home office specifications. The Force is effectively developing the use of the intranet to support learning, and in particular the use of e-learning. Some learners have inadequate time allocated to them to access mandatory e-learning.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. Types of assessment vary according to the duration of the course. Learners are adequately briefed on the nature of their assessment and are given satisfactory feedback. Assessment records for learners who have attended driving courses indicate well structured assessment practice. On the advanced driving course learners are given good daily written feedback which clearly indicates what they need to do to improve their performance.
- Some courses inadequately meet the needs of all learners. Learners on some courses have a very wide range of ability. In one lesson on the use of a database one learner used the database as apart of their daily routine, whereas another learner had not used the database since initial training two years previously. The Force intranet contains the training syllabus and all learners receive course joining instructions. This information contains insufficient guidance on which staff should and should not attend each course.
- Initial assessment is inadequate. All new police officer applicants are screened for their literacy and numeracy skills on recruitment. Support is given to applicants who do not achieve the required standard. On successful achievement of the standard, recruited officers join the Force. The results of the initial assessment are not used by the Force, and no further assessments of individual learning needs are undertaken. Learners who declare that they are dyslexic are given support by individual tutors. There are no formal arrangements that clarify what support is available or how it can be accessed.
- Some staff do not receive a regular professional development review.
- The Force makes insufficient use of data for the benefit of learners or to support quality improvements. Data on training is recorded however reports on attendance, retention and achievement, or the performance of different groups of learners are not available.
- Some training that is undertaken within divisions is not endorsed by the training needs and design team.

- Trainers have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. Many of the trainers in general policing have spent six months as diversity trainers within the Force. Lesson planning includes a requirement to address equality of opportunity issues.
- Quality Assurance arrangements are incomplete. Quality of training is assured using the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation. Formal arrangements for tutors to regularly review the quality of each course are insufficient. A programme of observation of teaching and learning has been in operation for three years. Not all trainers have been included in this programme. Some have been missed and the scheme does not include divisional trainers. The observation programme focuses on individual professional development and does not give a clear indication of the quality of teaching and learning within the Force. The Force has insufficient arrangements to check the quality of the observation programme or other procedures.



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