

# Home Office Police Front Line Review: Workshops with police officers and police staff

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In 2018 the Home Office initiated the Front Line Review of Policing<sup>1</sup> (subsequently referred to as the Review), to provide police officers, police staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) throughout England and Wales an opportunity to share their ideas for change and improvement in policing. The Review consisted of several workstreams of primary and secondary research and engagement activities. The activities included a series of workshops with frontline police officers and staff from all police forces in England and Wales. The Home Office asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to conduct these workshops, providing the Review with independent qualitative research expertise.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the workshops were to explore the front line's views and experiences relating to the four pillars of the Review - wellbeing, professional development, leadership and innovation – and gather their suggestions for changes to improve the working lives of officers and staff. The themes identified in this research would be used by the Home Office and wider policing partners to develop policy recommendations. Topics not in the scope of the Review included pay and resourcing, with other work being done to address these challenges.

This report forms one appendix to the overall Review report document. The other appendix documents include a Home Office Technical Annex, an evidence review and academic papers. Note that in addition to this full report on the workshops, there is a summary report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/front-line-policing-review/front-line-policing-review>

## 2 Methodology

Twenty-eight workshops were conducted between November 2018 and January 2019, open to all 43 forces in England and Wales. Two pilot workshops were also conducted, in October, and have been included in the analysis. In total 244 officers and members of police staff participated.

### 2.1 Sample strategy

A purposive sampling technique was employed. Qualitative research of this kind does not aim for statistical representation of the population being studied, so does not use random probability sampling as would a survey. Rather it aims to include participants reflecting the diversity of the population being researched and having characteristics that enable exploration of the research objectives. Members of the key subgroups, or 'constituencies', are included but not in the proportions they appear in the whole research population.

It is important to point out that it is not possible, or appropriate, to draw statistical inferences from a purposive sample. The number of people taking part in the research is less important than the criteria used to select them. Certain characteristics may be deliberately oversampled or undersampled. A finding need only appear once in the data to be of value.

The intention was to capture as broad a range of opinions and experiences as possible. We aimed to include participants to reflect the composition of the workforce, across the sample as a whole, as far as was practically possible, with regard to several sampling criteria. For each criterion we aimed to include people from a range of categories. The criteria are described below.

**Police force:** All 43 forces in England and Wales were in scope. The workshops were conducted across 12 regions. Most regions covered three or four forces, one of which acted as host (details within Appendix A[i]).

**Officer ranks and police staff:** In all regions a pair of workshops was held, one for constables and sergeants and one for members of police staff and PCSOs. In addition, three regions (London, Kent and Lancashire) also hosted workshops with inspectors and chief inspectors and one workshop was held with superintendents and chief superintendents, in London. Attendance at the inspector and superintendent workshops was not limited to people working in those regions. The groups were divided in this way

for three reasons. Firstly, because officers and staff might have different perspectives on the topics from each other. Secondly, so that officer participants would feel comfortable by discussing their views and experiences with people of a similar rank to themselves. Thirdly, the officer groups reflected, approximately, the proportions of the officer workforce in ranks below and at inspector/superintendent level.

**Units and roles:** In scope were any member of the workforce in frontline or public-facing roles, in line with the standard HMICFRS (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) definition of 'frontline':

- officers from teams/roles including response, neighbourhood, investigation, public protection, custody, intelligence, command and control and specialists
- special constables
- members of police staff from units and roles such as crime scene investigators (CSIs), scene of crime officers (SOCOs), forensics, custody, command and control, call handlers, dispatch and front desks
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

**Length of service:** We aimed to include participants across a range of levels of experience: less than two years; two to five years; six to 10 years; and 11 or more years.

**Gender:** We aimed to include men and women in approximately their proportions within the workforce (due to being included in different workshops, the ratios differed between officers - 70% men, 30% women – and police staff - 40% men, 60% women).

**Age:** We aimed to include participants across the age range: 25 and under; 26 to 40; 41 to 54; 55 and over.

**Ethnic group:** We aimed to include black and minority ethnic group participants in approximately their proportion within the workforce (7% nationally).

**Health condition/disability:** We aimed to include some participants with self-declared physical or mental health conditions and disabilities.

## 2.2 Recruitment strategy

The Home Office Front Line Review policy team asked each force to communicate details of the workshops in their region to the front line. They sent communication teams in each force a promotional document (Appendix A[i]), an information leaflet (Appendix A[ii]) and a screener questionnaire (Appendix A[iii]).

People interested in participating were asked to reply directly to the Office for National Statistics, with a completed screener. ONS researchers then selected participants for each group, using the screener information to ensure the range of sample characteristics was covered within and across the workshops as far as possible.

Participants were invited by ONS and given attendance details. The target number of participants per group was eight. Ten to twelve people were initially invited to each group, in the expectation that some would be unable to attend on the day. Invited participants who informed ONS that they could no longer attend were, when possible, substituted by another applicant. When the number of applicants for a workshop, the number of participants able to attend, or the mix of sample characteristics fell short of that intended, the Review team were asked to contact the forces concerned to seek additional participants.

In this way, the selection of participants was unbiased, and participants' confidentiality was maintained. Neither their forces nor the Home Office would know who took part, except for a very small number of members of the team who needed the names for the practical purposes of providing attendance lists to the host forces and meeting participants on arrival, or who 'topped up' the recruitment as described above.

## **2.3 Achieved sample**

Approximately 600 applications to participate were received. A total of 244 people attended a workshop (including the two pilot groups). The targets were broadly achieved for most characteristics. See Appendix B for details of the achieved sample characteristics.

## **2.4 Workshop format and content**

The workshops were conducted by trained ONS researchers.

A topic guide was developed, covering the areas to be explored to address the research objectives. Probes were developed, from ONS's analysis of data from digital engagement, another workstream of the Review that had recently taken place to gather front line views about the Review topics. The digital engagement consisted of a series of Twitter conversations on the #WeCops channel, contributions to the Review invited via POLKA (the Police OnLine Knowledge Area), a secure online collaboration tool for the policing community run by the College of Policing, and forces' own communication channels such as email boxes. The analysis informed the topics to be explored in the workshops, in conjunction with ideas for probing put forward by the Review team.

Members of the Review team introduced each workshop to explain the purpose of the Review, including showing a video of the Policing Minister explaining his interest in the Review and encouraging participants to contribute. They explained that the topics of pay and resources were not in the Review's scope. The Review team members were not present for the rest of workshop.

We, the ONS researchers, explained our role and the aims and format of the workshop. Participants introduced themselves. Then each of the four Review pillars was explored in turn. For each pillar, we presented on screen some high-level findings from the digital engagement and talked through them. Then participants were asked to reflect on the findings: whether or not they agreed and whether they wanted to add anything further. A series of probes about the pillar was put up on screen, and participants invited to give their thoughts. Emphasis was placed on the desire to identify solutions to issues or problems that had been identified in the digital engagement or by participants, and how barriers to achieving these could be overcome. Participants were encouraged to provide examples of anything they considered to be good practice in their force or other forces.

In view of the number of pillars and themes within each to be explored, a time limit was placed on each pillar, in order not to exceed the target length of roughly two hours per workshop.

See Appendix D for the Topic Guide and the slides presented to participants.

## 2.5 Analysis and reporting

The workshops were audio-recorded and transcribed. The qualitative data were analysed using a thematic framework approach, whereby the themes are identified from the data.

Report structure: The report is structured into four chapters corresponding to the Review pillars.

Reporting 'voice' disclaimer:

- ONS's role was to summarise and present what the front line said. All the findings reported are the participants' experiences, opinions and suggestions, not the ONS authors' views or those of the police service or policing partners. We often say, for example, 'participants said...', 'it was suggested...', 'there were calls for ...', but even when such phrases are not included it is still the front line's opinion that is being presented, as in this example: 'Specialists, staying in a particular area or role, should be more valued.'

- We have interpreted and grouped the findings into themes, but we have not evaluated them.
- We have not assessed the factual accuracy of participants' claims or perceptions.
- Nor have we made any recommendations about individual findings: we do not have the necessary expertise and those tasks are the responsibility of the Home Office or Police Service.

Disclosure control: To preserve the confidentiality of participants we do not identify them individually or by providing information that could lead to identification by deduction.

Quotes and attributions: Direct quotes from participants are in quotation marks. We attribute findings and longer quotations to members of sample subgroups when relevant to the understanding of the point being reported; for example, if it was said by an officer (often grouped as 'constable/sergeant' or 'inspector/superintendent') or member of police staff, or by a more specific role. Very few findings relate to the other sample characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity and health/disability status.

Caveats: We recommend the Home Office bear in mind some caveats when using the findings to develop policy proposals:

- Completeness of findings: It should be acknowledged that our participants were self-selecting, willing and able to take part in the research. We do not know how representative of the frontline workforce participants were from non-participants, in respect of their experiences, opinions and ideas for solutions. The report reflects individual lived experiences and views. We can be confident that many key issues were identified, particularly those that recurred widely, but we cannot assume that all related themes or aspects of a theme were raised. Groups differed in the emphasis they gave to the topics they discussed, and in what matters they mentioned spontaneously. It is possible that other people – whether participants in other workshops, or non-participants - would have alternative opinions, experiences and solutions.
- Weighting of findings and wider extrapolation: As noted above, statistical inferences and quantitative reporting are not the purpose of qualitative research; we do not report numbers, percentages and proportions. Findings that arose at a number of groups, are sometimes indicated by words such as 'widespread, 'repeated' and 'recurring'. However, there were many unique or rarely mentioned findings; where possible we have grouped these with related ones, as being one aspect or example relating to a theme, or an item in a list. There are some completely unique items; though appearing only once they might be important and have wider resonance, and should be considered on their own merits in terms of feeding into policy initiatives.
- Proposed solutions and implicit desire for change: We report the specific proposals and suggestions that participants put forth to address the problems they identified.

We also report examples of what participants considered to be good practice, that could perhaps be employed more widely. Often, however, they did not offer such solutions and examples, rather they expressed a non-specific desire for change or it was implicit that they wanted something to change. We recommend the Review team consider policy solutions for all the issues identified whether or not participants offered them up.

- In presenting the range of participants' experiences, opinions and suggestions for change, there are some inconsistencies, tensions or contradictions within the findings. We have sometimes noted these in the narrative, but probably not identified all instances. We have cross-referenced topics that are covered in more than one place in the report, which may help the reader identify further instances.

## 2.6 Definitions

We have used the following terms and definitions in our reporting.

'The workforce' or 'people' generally means officers and police staff (including PCSOs) collectively, or when it was not specified who a point related to. Some references are made to those constituents separately, that is, to officers alone, or to police staff alone.

'Officers' usually means of any or all ranks, or that specific rank was not specified. Where known and relevant, specific ranks and/or roles are stated.

References to 'managers' and 'supervisors' means officers and/or staff at any level or role, or the level was not specified.

'Middle managers' often means inspectors and superintendents or staff department heads but was not always specified by participants.

'Leaders'/'leadership' are used in various ways; to mean anyone with supervisory/management responsibility, from first line supervisors upwards, or to mean more senior ranks/staff grades. Often it is clear from the context which was meant but sometimes it was not specified.

'Senior leaders' generally means chief officer ranks (Chief Constable, Deputy and Assistant Chiefs), but was sometimes a term used without specification.

## 3 Wellbeing

In this chapter we present findings about various factors which were perceived to influence the wellbeing of the workforce - how able and motivated they are to perform well, their job satisfaction, and their mental and physical health - including:

- the ‘challenge stressors’, relating to the impact of organisational structures, operating models and change management on workloads, roles, work patterns, the ability to decompress and safety (3.2)
- the ‘hindrance stressors’, that is constraints to performance such as bureaucracy and inadequate tools (3.3)
- the organisational climate and culture, including the role of managers, force leadership and policies (3.4)
- the provision and adequacy of wellbeing support services, in preventing wellbeing issues arising and reacting to them once they do arise (3.5)

In identifying these themes, we have drawn on academic work in the other Review workstreams<sup>2</sup>.

As explained in the Introduction, all the findings reported are the participants’ experiences, opinions and suggestions, not the ONS authors’ or the police service’s views. The accuracy of participants’ perceptions has not been assessed by ONS.

### 3.1 Introduction

The participants engaged positively with the workshops. They demonstrated a strong public service ethos, and clearly wanted to contribute to improving the police service. They found the very process of sharing experiences and ideas with their peers and us, cathartic and beneficial. Despite them relating sometimes difficult experiences and expressing some critical and negative opinions across the four themes, they were constructive in their contributions.

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<sup>2</sup> Graham L, Plater M, Brown N, Zheng Y and Gracey S (2019), ‘Research into Workplace Factors, Well-Being, Attitudes and Behaviour in Policing - Summary of Evidence and Insights Presented for the Front Line Review of Policing’

Author: Knight L; Contributors: Britton I, Cahalin K, Callender M, Doran B, Moloney D and Lugli V (2019), ‘Key themes in qualitative research projects with police forces in England and Wales’

Ordon G, Dewar L, and Cameron A (2019), ‘Leadership, Wellbeing, Professional Development and Innovation for the Police Front Line: an evidence review’, Home Office.

Participants broadly agreed with the findings presented to them from the digital engagement, across the pillars, for example:

“What you said there, all these four categories, they’re exactly the true image of the things how people are feeling. And I have quite learned, the stuff which I’ve heard, it gives me a bit of encouragement today that I’m not really the ... only one who is ... thinking what I’m thinking, and things to change.” (Member of police staff)

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Members of the workforce spoke of their dedication to public service and desire to do an effective job of preventing and solving crime, serving communities and victims well. There were those who spoke of policing being their vocation and taking great satisfaction from it and enjoying their role. Reasons given for joining the police service included the wish to help people and to make a difference to the community.

However, it was said that sometimes those ends are achieved despite constraints faced. It was thought that although resources had been cut the police strive to make things work, ensure the job gets done and not fail people, to their own detriment, for example by regularly working beyond the end of shifts. Varying levels of job satisfaction and wellbeing were expressed. Some members of the workforce feel less able to meet their first duty, preventing crime. They feel they have to defend themselves to the public who comment on the lack of police on the streets. They must explain what the police will and will not investigate these days due to reduced resource. Giving the public negative messages, when they have been the victims of crime, impacts on the workforce:

"It’s always saying yeah I’m sorry I can’t even do what I want to do to look after you. And that kind of thing has to have a negative impact on your wellbeing. Just the constant drip-drip-drip of providing a poor service to the public is psychologically impactful."

(Inspector/superintendent)

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Initial enthusiasm and motivation can be lost as people become disheartened by reality differing from their expectations and training.

Low levels of wellbeing and morale were reported by some participants across the sample subgroups, who related various examples of depression, stress, trauma, breakdown and other forms of mental ill health, or were said to be common in their forces.

Much of the impact was the result of continual demands of the job over time, including on their family life; for example, a participant had seen colleagues who had broken down. The link between resources, austerity, wellbeing and ability to perform the core police role was highlighted:

“The number one priority for the force has to be staff wellbeing, because ... you can’t protect vulnerable people and fight crime and fight terrorism if your cops are tired.” (Constable/sergeant)

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The causes of lower states of wellbeing were partly due to the demands of the core role, partly to organisational factors. They were said to cause a build-up of frustration and a sense of helplessness.

It was felt possible to improve the situation in part by lessening the organisational barriers that caused frustration by using some creative thought and boldness to implement ideas. The following sections describe the various organisational barriers and frustrations the workforce mentioned, along with their proposed solutions, expressions of desire for things to be changed and examples of what they saw as good practice that others could learn from.

## **3.2 Factors affecting wellbeing: ‘Challenge stressors’**

In this section we report findings on challenge stressors that impact on wellbeing: including:

- changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles
- change management
- hours, shifts, rest days, leave, breaks and commuting
- detachment from work, ‘24/7’ culture, switching off and rumination
- opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health
- facilities/space for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health
- safety issues

### **3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles**

#### **Impact of changes on work units and general resilience**

Various changes made to organisational structures and operating models were described by participants, such as area mergers, force collaborations, restructuring of departments/teams and revision of individuals’ roles. They were felt to have impacted on frontline resource in some teams or areas. Such changes were said to be made at least partly in response to reductions in funding or reallocation of resources. There were participants who referred to significant reductions in workforce numbers in their forces,

for example: closures of teams; losses of a half and of a third of response officers; loss of 80% of PCSOs; a significant reduction in control room staff; and fewer dispatchers per shift. It was said that the police service had become insufficiently robust and able respond to changing circumstances; it had:

“Adopted an engineering philosophy about building the leanest possible structure ... But [it had not built in] the ability to be able to change to respond to the environment. ... and that leaves us incredibly fragile and brittle when circumstances change.” (Inspector/superintendent)

A lack of clarity among the workforce about the detail of the changes being introduced and their intended impact was expressed. It was repeatedly reported that there had been inadequate consultation beforehand, or none at all. Changes were thought to have not necessarily worked out as intended, sometimes being considered a waste of time and money and to have resulted in unintended consequences. Members of the front line variously felt they had not been listened to, the impact on them had not been acknowledged by their leaders, mistakes had not been admitted to and that there was a lack of accountability of decision makers. (See also 6.2 *Consultation and user testing*.)

It was felt that changes were sometimes followed by crisis management, with people being shuffled around teams, roles and areas to back fill gaps in staffing, without consideration for their wellbeing. Resources ‘on paper’ were said to not always reflect what is available to the front line, due to individuals being absent or otherwise not operational.

Examples given of such management included:

- officers not knowing until the start of a shift where they will be working, planning conducted dynamically on a day to day basis without consideration for how that affects people
- control rooms under pressure to clear 999 and 101 calls with fewer officers available
- inexperienced supervisors having to work things out for themselves and not taking the lead in managing workload or challenging the control room
- individuals covering two roles
- neighbourhood teams having to cover response calls, instead of reducing demand, with those attending calls not being fully sure what to do including the required administration, because they do not do it enough

Comments were made on more teams having been created and ‘silo’ working. This was said to have resulted in misunderstandings between teams and unnecessary duplication of work. There were said to be sergeants at odds with other departments over how a particular crime is defined, and which department should deal with it, in order to reduce

their own team's workloads. A need for more sharing of information, such as between supervisor peers, was identified, as was the need for more collaborative working, for example between call handlers, dispatch and the crime bureau.

Suggestions were made: to conduct 'fact finding missions' in other departments; for control room staff to be trained about what officers do, to better understand end-to-end processes; and for call takers to deal with more at the initial phone call from a member of the public rather than necessarily refer to officers straight away. A call was made for hybrid neighbourhood/response teams - this was said to be happening gradually in a force, but only informally due to neighbourhood officers doing more response jobs. However, see alternative views about 'omnicompetence' and the response role below.

An example was given of a procedural change perceived to have impacted badly on operational effectiveness in one force was the handover between arresting officer and office team not working due to lack of continuity. This was thought to have impacted on the quality of statements being collected and the progression of the entire case.

In a force which had centralised operations, it was thought that things had worked better when they were run locally; each station dealt with its own crimes and had all the specialisms required to cover that area. Members of the workforce knew who to talk to; knowledge was built up and could be shared. 'Centrally based locally delivered' policing was thought not to work, just to be a way to spread out thin resources.

Less 'back office' support was said to be available to the front line, impacting on their ability to cope with core demand. It was thought specialist police staff could take over many of the jobs that warranted officers are currently doing, often in offices, and do that work more efficiently. An example was given of one force's Intelligence Bureau having been changed from predominantly police officers to predominantly police staff. A suggestion was made among officers for police staff to take over the remand and custody process after the handover of an arrest.

It was said that the nature of crime had changed – for example more online or cyber-crime, new illegal drugs, different ways criminals operate – but that structures and models had not necessarily been changed appropriately or kept pace. Such changes were in addition to more traditional crime, but no additional resources were thought to have been provided to address them, nor had the workforce been given the necessary training.

There was some acknowledgement of changes having positive impacts on operations. An example was given of a change that resulted in loss of a third of the workforce but also a similar sized reduction in workload. Another change was said to have helped ensure the public could talk to an officer and that it had reduced pressure on the Criminal Investigation Department. However, this was qualified. Sometimes gains in

one department or team were thought to be at another's expense. Departments were said to vary in whether they have adequate resource and it was thought difficult to come up with a solution that would benefit a whole force. Better service to the public was sometimes said to be provided at expense of workforce wellbeing. For example, a change to response team structure and shift patterns in a force had a positive impact on some shifts but a negative one on the numbers on the night shift:

"It's enabled us to generally respond better to the needs of the public, but at the expense of the safety of the officers involved." (Member of police staff)

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It was said among inspectors and superintendents that in efforts to reduce demand, officers in some forces are being sent to fewer 'irrelevant' incidents that police should not deal with. This has the effect that they only deal with critical incidents, without breaks in between, creating more pressure and resulting in more sickness and mental health problems.

## Impact of changes on individuals and their roles

Changes to structures and models, including those resulting from reductions to resources, were said to have had detrimental impacts on individuals and their roles. Participants spoke variously of, for example:

- being less proactive and more reactive in their work
- having a lack of clarity about their roles
- the need to demonstrate new or different skills that they did not have
- conversely not utilising advanced training skills following changes
- more lone working and having larger areas to cover (requiring more travelling and impacting on safety (see also 3.2.7 *Safety Issues*)
- their local knowledge reducing; less community engagement being possible
- feeling frustration as a result

Calls were made to re-establish or improve community relationships that it was felt had diminished, to show that police are working to protect and serve the public and to restore the workforce's pride in what they do. A need to do more community policing, including a return to 'safer neighbourhood' teams, was expressed, to address the loss of intelligence and response 'firefighting'. (See also 5.3 *Setting direction and the purpose of policing.*)

Participants variously reported being overloaded, working under constant pressure, feeling less able to do a good job serving the public and solving crime, having increased stress/mental and physical health problems (including anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, other diagnosed conditions), and increased sick absence. The impact on

wellbeing of a new model and loss of resilience with the same amount of work was described as an underplayed side effect of the current working conditions.

Views were expressed that the response officer role, despite being core to policing, had over time become undesirable. It was described as, for example, "the hardest job"; "relentless" and "the department that can't say no". Response officers were said to sometimes lack the right experience and skills to serve the public well, or to be demotivated. A view was expressed to make response more attractive and for it to be seen as a specialism, in order to better service demand and improve retention. An example was given of a force said to have reduced the demand on response teams by allocating more crimes directly to specialist units where possible, such as domestic abuse, drugs and sexual offences.

A recurring view was that there are more inexperienced officers and staff than in the past, who are less able to perform their roles, with impacts on themselves and their colleagues (see also *4.1 Recruitment and Initial Training*). They were being put in situations that in the past would have been the responsibility of more experienced officers. Constables with little experience are teaching new recruits, feeling the pressure of expectation:

"I'm like oh crikey, I feel like I need to ask somebody else now. And then I'm like well no should I know, should I know this answer or how to work it out." (Constable/sergeant)

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As a result, added pressure was placed on experienced colleagues and supervisors to provide advice and support.

A belief was expressed that the definition of a police officer career has been changed, deliberately: force leaders do not want officers to have long careers, due to more experienced people receiving higher salaries and having higher sick absence rates. Rather they encourage turnover; young, expendable officers will be less emotionally tied and leave before their wellbeing issues need to be managed by the police.

Long term impacts and risks were perceived: in combination with expected retirement patterns, some teams/roles will be left with those largely inexperienced and lacking resilience. Resilience and enthusiasm levels were said to drop within two to three years of recruitment, with resultant retention issues. This, it was said, will impact on policing's future ability to perform its role. A need to address recruitment and retention issues was identified; another was to review initial and ongoing training/development. (See also *4.1 Recruitment and initial training*).

There were PCSOs who said they had been affected by reductions in officer numbers. They described an increase in and change to the nature of their workload: being moved

around frequently, dealing with more calls as first responders, including more complex cases, having to complete crime reports, doing work not intended to be included in the role and for which they do not have powers or training. Sometimes jobs would take longer than if an officer had been able to attend. They felt a safety risk, needing to defuse situations, and that the 'non-confrontational' job description should be changed as it has not kept pace with social change, for example more belligerent attitudes towards them by young people. (See also 3.2.7 *Safety issues* and 3.3.3 *Statutory and legislative requirements*.)

## Omnicompetence

There was repeated expression of dislike and scepticism about 'omnicompetence', that is being expected to acquire and demonstrate a variety of competences within a single post. This requirement was said to be difficult to achieve, resulting in people who are all-rounders but lack deeply specialist skills: a "jack of all trades, master of none." They felt a lack of experience, knowledge and training to carry out such roles effectively. It was said that chief officers advocate the concept but appear to be unaware of the complexities of roles and tasks, and that specialisms were being discouraged but were needed and wanted:

"This idea of omnicompetence, everybody can do everybody else's job, but I can't walk into anybody else's job in this room and immediately pick it up. They're better at it because they're experienced at it."  
(Constable/sergeant)

"Why do you have to be omnicompetent ..., why can't you have a specialism that you're very good at, that you like, that you want to stay in."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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A desire was expressed for specialisms to be introduced in a named force where it was said there are none.

There was some concern that national leadership programmes were not delivering, due to focusing on individual development more than organisation need. However, individuals may not be benefitting in the way intended, being subject to stress and sick absence. The results of omnicompetence were thought to include mistakes, risks, and not putting victims first as per stated policy. Some people are deterred from seeking promotion as they do not want to move to an unfamiliar area or role they do not want.

More positive views were expressed among inspectors and superintendents, that it was good to be omnicompetent provided people are given support, and that officers in local policing teams in their force were "pretty much a Jack of all trades".

Calls were made for managers/leaders to recognise individuals' abilities and interests, and to put together mixed teams.

Examples of omnicompetence or expectation of people to take on new tasks included response officers now investigating crimes that they formerly would have passed to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) or other teams. Keeping jobs to resolve themselves rather than handing over to others was very different to what they were used to and resulted in stress and a struggle to provide good victim care. A particular force's scheme was said to be a good concept in theory, by ensuring the public could speak with an officer and relieving pressure on CID, but did not work well in practice due to lack of officer numbers and necessary training (for example in how to investigate burglaries, sexual assault and cybercrime, how to download a mobile phone, and in Achieving Best Evidence). Calls were made for such schemes to be dropped and to bring back a department to progress case files or to progress the administrative side of an investigation.

However, there were also views that multiskilling is sometimes desirable. An example was that forces vary in whether individual call handlers deal with 999 calls only, 101 calls only, or both; a view was that staff prefer to take both types – the former being more straightforward, the latter needing more interrogation. Another example was of a force where Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs), forensics and crime scene investigation (CSI) staff used to 'cross fertilise', being trained in each other's skills so they could provide each other with cover when required and gain wider experience; however, following the introduction of collaborative working with neighbouring forces they were told to work in own bureaus only, to their dislike.

## Further overarching solutions

In addition to the specific proposals, ideas and examples of good practice reported above, participants spoke of the need for more fundamental or overarching changes. Root causes of wellbeing issues were often said to be reduced resources, changes to pay, pensions and conditions. Calls were made for more police funding but there was also acknowledgement that additional resources are not the only solution, rather there was a need to look at things from the ground up (see also *5.4.2 Government support for the front line*).

Proposed solutions included:

- redesign and simplification of operating structures and models
- changes to command structures (see *5.3.3 Leadership versus management cultures and rank structure*)
- more consistency nationally, not 43 independent bodies; including a national police service or force mergers, or at least more central control, standards and mandates.

Though some drawbacks to such mergers/collaborations/centralisation were identified (see 6.3 *More collaborative approaches to policing*)

### 3.2.2 Change management

It was widely considered that one of the drivers of transformation of organisational structures and operating models, with consequent impacts on teams and individuals as described above, was the phenomenon of 'change for change's sake'. There was widespread criticism of the amount of change parts of the service is subject to and how change is managed. While it was acknowledged that change is sometimes necessary, it was thought often to be unjustified and not well motivated.

There were views that structures and processes that work were unnecessarily changed, that there was reinvention of the wheel, and that changes were sometimes reverted or things ended up back where they began.

A prime motivator was repeatedly identified: the competitive promotion process whereby to progress in their career people must demonstrate that they have made impactful changes or been innovative, adding achievements to their portfolio. This was often associated with those people not staying in post long before they move on.

Changes, even when quite small or localised, had some undesirable impacts on people in the area concerned: they were said to be unsettling for the workforce both before they were introduced (including, for example, alarm among police staff at rumours of change and their potential impact) and after implementation. Impacts were said to include: discontinuity in line management/supervision; no build-up of expertise by the person introducing a change; negative outcomes on operational activity; loss of accountability as the impact of change can take time to materialise, by which time the introducer has moved on; and risk that it would not be easy to undo the damage caused by poorly considered or implemented change. The quote below summarises such opinions:

"Now there's such a fight ... everyone's scrambling up to get wherever they need to be and it's like 'I've just got to do this, I've just got to do this'. And they're just focused on that and they're not focused on actually what's going on around them. 'Oh, I know, I'm going to change the bin from that side of the office to the bin from that side of the office, because that's openness to change and I've just changed something' - really, you know. Don't worry about changing it, because actually it works fine as it is. Don't come in, mix it all up and then [leave] in six months' time, because that's what's happening all the time."

(Constable/sergeant)

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Even when it was thought that the motivation for change was well intentioned it was pointed out that change takes a long time to bring about. Long term vision or goals cannot be set if a person is going to be in post for a short time. (See also 4.3.2 *Effectiveness of promotion processes.*)

For their part, among inspectors/superintendents it was felt that they had large change portfolios to manage along with operational or command responsibilities, but too few staff to be able to deliver that change.

It was thought that changes should only be made for positive reasons, that evolution was better than revolution and that changes should not be implemented without consultation of those who would be affected. It was also thought that learning from other areas or forces should be considered before coming up with solutions in isolation. (See also chapter 6 *Innovation.*)

A recurring opinion was to end the requirement to demonstrate implementation of a change in the promotion process. Another was to end the culture of having to fulfil two or more roles in a rank before progressing (provided the individual can demonstrate transferable competencies). It was thought that individuals should stay longer in a role (for example, a minimum tenure or having to see a change through its implementation). Specialists, staying in a particular area or role, should be more valued. There was a need to achieve balance between individuals staying in post and helping their lateral development and progression. (See also 4.3.2 *Effectiveness of promotion processes.*)

Examples were given of forces with change management teams that have long term aims and systematic approaches to reviewing processes, identifying need for change and what it should be, resourcing and managing change properly.

### 3.2.3 Hours, shifts, rest days, leave, breaks and commuting

#### **Working hours and shift patterns**

Various issues relating to the shift patterns and working hours of officers and police staff were identified. Some participants were content with their work patterns, but others were not. There were comments on shift patterns impacting on people's work, through fatigue, and their wellbeing, for example shifts described as "terrible" affected sleep, with consequent health issues. It was thought that an effect of reduced staff numbers was that those who manage shift patterns are more concerned with having people to cover all 24 hours and meet demand, rather than the impact on individuals. Patterns were said to be defined by business need and 'inflicted' on people by managers who do not have to work them personally. A lack of forward planning of shifts was identified.

Shifts are changed at short notice which disrupts people's plans. Calls were made for more joined up thinking, a national shift pattern and for better IT systems to generate patterns. However, it was said that individual preferences differ, there is no single solution, and the range of opinions supported that view.

Officers varied in the shift patterns they worked and their views of them:

- The shift pattern of two earlies/two lates/two nights met with varied views, tending to the positive. It was repeatedly thought to be a good pattern and one that forces should adopt if they did not have it. An example was cited of a change to six on/four off having resulted in a great improvement in wellbeing. It was said that there were statistics which showed this pattern, with gradual increase to nights, then some rest days, being better for the body than some other patterns. It was suggested this be introduced nationally rather than leaving patterns up to forces. Provisos were that there should be crossover period between shifts, and adequate cover on the night shift, not a 'skeleton' number between 3am and 7am. There was also a view that this pattern affected some officers' ability to progress crime investigations, for example they cannot take a witness statement late at night. Forces were said to define 'lates' in different ways.
- The two earlies/two lates/two nights pattern was considered better than six on/three off, where earlies, lates and nights were considered to lack regular pattern, or seven/two or seven/three.
- A different preference was expressed, for four on/four off.
- Varied views were expressed about long shifts of 11 or 12 hours.
- The importance of the statutory 11-hour gap between shifts was mentioned. It was said to not always be attained in practice through, for example when training was arranged to start early following a late shift. An issue was identified for officers on custody whereby they were kept late on shift due to the needs of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act ("PACE clock"), having to return six or seven hours later to start a new early shift. It was said that should stop and related police regulations perhaps be reviewed. It was said a change to PACE could be required so people do not have to be interviewed until the morning.
- There was felt to be a need to consider what are the appropriate patterns for certain roles or teams, such as neighbourhood and investigation (for example whether they need to work nights).
- There were calls to ensure debriefing, fitness and/or paperwork time were built into shifts (see also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*).
- There were officers whose six-week shift patterns create an extra or spare day every 10 weeks (see also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising,*

*team support networks and maintaining physical health* regarding the use of such days for training or teambuilding/wellbeing activity.)

Police staff similarly had varied experiences and views about shift patterns/working hours.

- There were mixed views about the preferred length of shifts. For example: five to six days of 12-hour shifts was thought tough, difficult and lonely when working separately from a team; a forthcoming move from 10-hour to 12-hour shifts was mentioned with the opinion that staff do not think they will be able to cope and that increased sick absence was anticipated. A different opinion was 12-hour shifts with a few days off being preferred to eight-hour shifts, with benefits of less overall commuting time and longer breaks. A participant considered their current pattern of 10-hour shifts, never more than four days in a row, to be the best. However, 10-hour shifts were thought too long for some units such as control room, where staff work non-stop, under great pressure.
- Different rotating patterns with their benefits and drawbacks were mentioned. For example, six on/four off was liked while seven on/two off on a three-week rotating pattern was thought difficult, staff being tired and their mental health affected.
- Issues were identified with inadequate numbers of staff per shift, for example in call centres and control rooms. Numbers were unevenly spread through day, for example a call taker spoke of 'pinch points' when they have few people taking calls. Staff worked longer hours than they were meant to - double in some cases - due to the need to meet workload; this was thought unsustainable. Late shifts that should finish at midnight did not because the following night shift would be short staffed. People had to be moved between shifts to cover; a participant described how sometimes there are few people handling calls for a whole county which they said can be extremely difficult to cope with. Such issues were described as 'destroying' work-life balance, for example a lack of time to spend with family when working lots of nights or weekend afternoons.
- Some positive views about working hours were expressed among staff, such as flexibility of hours when office based, not needing to stay late or do overtime. A view among PCSOs was that their work/life balance was better than for officers, allowing more flexibility; this was cited as a reason for being put off applying to become an officer.

A comment was made that requests for flexible working patterns for an individual take a long time to be considered and should be dealt with more quickly as wellbeing can be affected, for example worrying about childcare. One force was mentioned as an example of local management having discretion to quickly approve a flexible working

pattern for up to eight weeks while the process of approval by a resource management group, chaired by a superintendent, is ongoing.

## **Rest days, overtime, annual leave and bank holidays**

Some issues with taking time off work were identified.

It was repeatedly said that rest days are cancelled frequently. This was said to impact on the following rest day, with the result that people are unable to catch up on rest, feel exhausted and that they are never away from work. An individual can regularly lose rest days; examples were given, including a supervisor having to fill in for another for weeks on end, despite contacting those who manage shifts and their human resources department (HR); and an officer who had to be signed off with exhaustion. There was a suspicion that rest days are cancelled because that is less expensive than paying overtime.

Overtime was said to be offered as an incentive that some could not resist, a necessity for many to increase their income and 'make ends meet'. This was felt to further reduce opportunity for rest and recuperation.

Annual leave was said to be sometimes difficult to book, due to low staff numbers; people need to be competitive, even 'ruthless' to secure it. Varied examples of booking processes were mentioned. For example, in one force people were required to submit requests many months in advance; approval could take some time and by the time the leave comes around people have changed role/team or work requirements put pressure on them to cancel or revise it (for example, to fill gaps on shift, attend court, training). Examples were given of better systems where people applied for leave less far in advance, and an automated system that would show if the date(s) were available and could be booked by the individual.

Some lack of fairness in allocation of bank holidays was identified; for example, it was said some people can work six out of the eight days, or do not get time with their family over Christmas. It was felt that allocation should be more equal.

A general issue identified about working hours and days off was resource management departments not knowing what resource will be needed when and where, with people being pulled in different directions. There was a view that gradually minimum or critical staffing levels have become the acceptable standard. Calls were made for better planning of shifts and leave, and for more protection of rest days. There was a view that a rest day should be enforced when someone has worked a certain number of consecutive days (for example, six). It was thought that should be the case even if the individual wants to come in, because they might not recognise their own need for rest. Better planning, months in advance, was said to be needed for particularly busy events

that occur each year, but some forces nonetheless are not prepared for; examples included Halloween, Christmas, New Year's Eve and festivities held in public spaces.

## Refreshment and toilet breaks

Issues with breaks during work were identified by officers and police staff, including not having time to take breaks at all and breaks being often shortened or cancelled.

Meeting demand was considered to take precedence over having something to eat.

This was despite, for example, officer regulations stipulating a 45-minute break. It was said that their only option was to consume food while working. Some participants felt they have no down time, but just go from job to job. Consequently, there was a lack of opportunity to decompress and socialise (see also *3.2.5 Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*).

Examples of inadequacy of breaks given by members of the workforce who work largely away from stations and offices included: a PCSO having no toilet break in 13 to 14 hours; officers having a five-minute break in a nine-hour shift; no breaks for a staff investigator when at crime scenes; and there being only one vehicle taking refreshments to people to cover a whole county.

For office-based staff, examples of issues with breaks included: working 10-hour shifts without a break; only getting a 15-minute break on an eight-hour shift, including time to log off, go to the toilet, get something to eat and return (contrasted with 25 minutes on a 12-hour shift); time being monitored, and lateness queried. Timing of breaks was also mentioned, for example the lunch break being eight hours into a 12-hour shift, the preference being for it to be closer to half way.

It was felt difficult to complain and get things changed. Calls were made for supervisors to take responsibility for ensuring people have a break; for better planning of breaks in shifts; and for more flexibility in allowing changes to timing of breaks. An example of what was considered good practice was a force that tries not to have staff lunchtime meetings and ensure all get a break, though it was said that is not always achieved, and is different for those working shifts.

## Commuting to work

It was said that many members of the workforce have long journeys to work, due to being unable to afford living costs near the workplace. The following points about commuting were mentioned.

- The length of commuting times (on top of long hours) and difficulties experienced on journeys was said to affect wellbeing. The ability to socialise and decompress after work is reduced.

- Car parking space was said to have been reduced or was not available, in part due to sale of police estate. Calls were made for more car parking near the workplace.
- A complaint was made that a senior management team have free parking at the station while junior officers and staff, who are lower paid, must pay for public car parking; this was seen as outdatedly hierarchical.
- Safety concerns were mentioned among members of the workforce about walking to their car, bus stop or train station, or being on public transport, late at night, and about how to get home if working late after public transport has stopped.
- Travel time not being factored into duty planning especially for people living a long way from the workplace, which can mean the statutory time off between shifts is effectively reduced to less than the minimum.

### 3.2.4 Detachment from work, '24/7' culture and work life balance

There were participants who said they were able to leave work behind at end of their set working hours. For example:

“I’m in a very good position where I’m in custody and I do my 12 hours and that’s it. And as long as everybody is alive when I leave I can forget about it and I don’t give it a second thought when I get home.”

(Constable/sergeant)

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There were others who felt less able to clearly demarcate between work and home; they talked of difficulty ‘switching off’ and getting to sleep, and of not getting enough sleep. Their tiredness impacts on their effectiveness on the next shift.

There were people who spoke of ruminating on work at home, including about specific incidents/ experiences, when decompression and debriefing at work is not adequate (see also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health* and 3.5.3 *Debriefing of specific incidents/experiences*). Some mentioned passing their stresses on to family members or felt unable to talk to their family about their difficult or traumatic experiences because they would not be understood.

There was also widespread reporting by participants of working outside set working hours, including staying on after the end of a shift, taking work home and feeling obliged to be contactable off duty.

Some benefits to working outside set hours were identified, including being able to complete work they had not had time to during normal hours/in the office and catching up on emails. A desire was expressed to be able to concentrate on new jobs/tasks the

following working day/shift, starting it with a 'clean slate', or to continue the momentum of other tasks, rather than needing to catch up on the previous day.

However, there were repeated concerns about the culture of long hours and taking work home being unhealthy.

Work was said to increasingly encroach on home life. People do not have time to recover and be fresh when they next go into work. Mobile technology was considered to have had a major impact, for example people being encouraged to check mobile devices at home for emails, social media messaging, or expected to take phone calls, such as requests to come into work to provide cover and offers of overtime. Email culture was seen generally as a problem: the large quantity of emails to deal with was described as overwhelming, with people questioning the necessity of so much email use.

Precedents were said to be set by some managers working long hours. People spoke of the pressure of being seen to work long or late hours if they have career aspirations. Middle managers sometimes felt expected to be like senior leaders. Among inspectors and superintendents feelings were expressed of never being away from the office, always at work, including time working at home and being on call; that there are not enough hours in the day to deliver; and doubt about being able to work at such intensity for the rest of their career.

Feelings of pressure included conflict between obligations felt to colleagues and the public and how much work they are physically capable of doing, described as a "sense of moral anxiety" and "severe tension". This included guilt at letting victims down, the risk of something happening to a vulnerable person for whom they had responsibility, and at being absent ill (see also *3.4.6 Sick absence management/policies*). These feelings were thought to apply across ranks. People spoke of no longer having faith that someone else would cover their investigation, and of worrying that if something went wrong while they were off duty they could nonetheless be examined or interviewed under caution. The quote below illustrates the obligation members of the workforce feel and how it impacts on their off-duty time:

"As a sergeant, I spend more of the time with my officers saying try not to think about it whilst you're off, we will deal with it, while you're training, whilst you're on annual leave. I had one of my staff messaging me yesterday regarding a high risk domestic: I've passed this over, I've done this, can do you do that, can you make a call there, duh-duh-duh. He's off, he should be off, but he's that concerned about this victim that he's at home and for the last two days he's been doing bits and pieces whilst he's been there trying to keep the wheel on; whereas, if he was

slightly more sanguine about it he'd be saying I've done my bit, and left." (Sergeant)

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Among participants the following solutions to the culture described above were proposed.

- There should be a separation of work and home life; policies and rules need to be introduced. It was mentioned that Police Federation advice is to not work at home or to claim the time back, but this was not always being followed.
- There should be culture of leaving work phones at work.
- Reduce the use of email and manage email culture so people, for example, consider what is appropriate to use it for, who they need to send or copy an email to.
- Supervisors should ensure better handover of work to the following shift, informing them of the background of cases, what has happened so far, what needs to be done next.
- There is a need to design a system that looks after individual accountability throughout the day, every day so people can leave work knowing that someone else has taken on a safeguarding risk.
- Forces that do not already have night superintendents should explore having them; there was a view that those who do probably have better wellbeing.

### 3.2.5 Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health

This section describes participants' experiences and views relating to relationships with their team colleagues and opportunities to decompress – talk about work with their peers – socialise and maintain physical health, on a day to day basis. (Later sections cover mental health checks and wellbeing services relating to build up of stress, and debriefing after exposure to, for example, trauma, critical incidents and abusive material).

The importance of decompression and socialising in helping prevent the gradual build-up of mental health problems was mentioned. However, loneliness, a lack of company or communication with colleagues and difficulty finding opportunity to talk with colleagues were described by participants across the workforce, among officers at different ranks, PCSOs and other police staff. Examples mentioned included the following.

- Officers, PCSOs and other police staff such as crime scene investigators working alone much of the time, in both urban and rural areas, sometimes geographically

large. They felt distant and isolated from colleagues and supervisors, affecting their morale.

- Getting together with the rest of their team being a rare occurrence (for example, only once or twice a year).
- A PCSO working in a mixed team with constables where the interaction and communication between them was considered inadequate, described as a “them and us” atmosphere (see also *3.4.2 Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs*).
- People going straight home at the end of their shift without returning to a central point (for some their lengthy commuting time compounds the need to do this), finishing shifts at different times to their colleagues, or staying late, all resulting in less time for socialising, less camaraderie, relationship building and understanding of each other.
- A view that superintendents lack time and opportunity to decompress with either those they manage or their own managers – described as being a “lonely” rank. Peer support can come from keeping in contact with the cohort they trained with, though they may be spread across forces.
- Police staff in telephone operations feeling lonely, with no-one to go on break with.

Participants proposed the following solutions to address issues such as these.

- Allow officers and police staff time out to decompress. This was mentioned among inspectors/superintendents as well as constables/sergeants and police staff.
- Create opportunities for day-to-day interaction between individuals. Repeated mentions were made of the benefits of being able to talk informally with a trusted colleague, perhaps needing only a few minutes to mentally process an incident or experience, learn lessons and share intelligence before moving to the next job. Widespread calls were made for (a return to) more double crewing and greater teamworking among officers. One view was that such time to talk was more effective than volunteer or non-professional initiatives (see also *3.5.4 Volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services*).
- Have debriefings at the end of a shift or in the overlap between shifts, for the team to share experiences and learn from colleagues (at least once/twice a week; instead of doing paperwork). (see also *3.5.3 Debriefing of specific incidents/experiences*).
- Create time for teams to exercise together (go for runs, time in the gym), built into shift patterns, for example after handover of work to the next shift (an example was given of a force doing that). It was noted that this would require supervisors to ensure that it does happen, and chief officers should be prepared to stand up for the benefits to officers. There was a suggestion that such exercise could be mandatory. (See also *3.5.6 Physical health promotion and support*).

- Integrate a focus on wellbeing into the daily routine (for example a mindfulness session).
- Enable teams to talk together and bond informally away from the day to day role. For example, team building/wellbeing days (which could be structured or left to the team and supervisor to decide what would be beneficial, such as a hike). Some existing training days (not all of which were considered to be useful) could be used for this. There was acknowledgement of potential difficulty in finding mutually available time for all in a team, for example due to shift patterns or flexible working; and that it might require some people to come in on rest days but that could be shared across team. Good advance planning would be necessary.
- A call was made to bring back residential courses.
- An example was given of an internal social media forum being a good means for officers to have interaction.

### 3.2.6 Facilities/space for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health

In addition to the discussion of time and opportunity for decompression and socialising, there was discussion of facilities and common spaces that support such activities: for example, canteens, bars/social clubs, gyms, breakout/refreshment rooms and kitchen equipment.

Various examples were given of police stations/offices which did provide such facilities; and of efforts by forces to improve the environment.

There were also widespread examples of the lack of or inadequacy of facilities. This was seen to indicate a lack of care for the workforce by the employer. Participants spoke of their basic requirements not being met (including a reference to Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs') and the need for a good environment, such as somewhere to store kit, a tidy report room, a decent place to have a meal break (not at the desk, in a corridor, or in a cramped room), a breakout area or quiet space. Water coolers were cited as lacking, despite being important in public facing spaces and for officers wearing body armour in hot weather.

Facilities that are provided were thought to often be inadequate; for example, faulty equipment, provision not sufficient to serve the number of staff and unwelcoming communal rooms. Mention was made of the lack of common spaces for people to mix with colleagues more widely resulting in unintended segregation of teams or roles.

There were examples of requests for such facilities being refused by force managers/facilities teams, lack of money for them, and people obtaining a room, painting and furnishing it themselves due to lack of organisational support:

“The fight and bureaucracy you’ve got to go through to get it in the first place, and it’s people I think like us that either care or are passionate about that sort of thing that had to get it started, the organisation aren’t providing it.” (Member of police staff)

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Loss of spaces like canteens and gyms was linked to reduction in the estate, due to sale of buildings, and increased sharing of locations with other services, such as social services or other local authority services. An example was given of tension created by such proximity, because police workers did not feel able to talk about their work within the hearing of those services’ staff in an open, shared environment.

Officers, PCSOs and staff who must buy and consume food in public (from cafes and takeaways), as a consequence of the lack of opportunity or facilities to take a meal break in the station or office, said they have to deal with being judged and criticised by members of the public for doing so.

Solutions to these issues that participants mentioned included the following.

- Provide more and better facilities/spaces of the kinds mentioned above, throughout the service. This includes local stations/offices not just at HQ/central buildings.
- Fund sports and social clubs (as used to be the case).
- Provide gyms/physical recreation facilities (See also 3.5.6 *Physical health promotion and support*).

### 3.2.7 Safety issues

Several issues around the safety of officers and police staff were mentioned.

#### **Lone working/single crewing**

Changes to operating structures and reductions in team sizes were said to have resulted in more lone working and single crewing. This applied to officers, PCSOs and other police staff such as investigators and scene of crime officers (SOCOs), both male and female, and applied in rural areas and urban areas. Concerns for safety have resulted: people feel vulnerable, with back up not available quickly or at all. This is sometimes compounded by, for example, a police radio not working or being out of signal range. Supervisors are sometimes unaware of their officers’ or staff’s whereabouts - for example the control room will dispatch a PCSO without informing their sergeant - and therefore cannot ensure back up if needed.

Among police staff, examples of safety concerns through working alone included a SOCO covering a very large area with long distances to travel - sometimes at night, and, if on call, possibly after having done a long shift - with no-one knowing whether they got home safely after attending a job. Another example was of an investigation support officer not having defensive or risk assessment training and having to justify the need for a radio. Another member of police staff reported having been physically attacked.

Such issues resulted in people feeling that their safety is not of concern. Tension was felt between doing the job required and maintaining personal safety. Members of staff and officers can be reluctant to challenge the control room when dispatched to a solo job.

A view repeatedly expressed was that double crewing should be the norm, for safety reasons (see also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*). A proposal was made to revert to open radio communications rather than point-to-point, to increase awareness of everyone's movements; it was said that some forces still use this or have reverted to it.

## **Officer safety equipment**

Views were expressed that more, or all, officers should be issued with Tasers, especially when single crewing. A similar point was made about issuing body worn video more widely. Some officers felt that incapacitant spray is ineffective.

## **Police staff concerns**

PCSOs in some forces perceived their role to be non-confrontational but described how that was not always the case in reality. Examples were given of dealing with drunken fans at a football match, of how conflict is frequently encountered in a city centre, and of concern at being unable to escape an assailant while on moving public transport without adequate means of self-defence in comparison to officers.

There was a view that PCSOs are not always differentiated from officers by the public: their uniform has gradually become almost identical to that of officers, and they drive similar vehicles. It was suggested the uniform should be more distinct. Though it was also thought that this in itself might not be sufficient, because, for example, people under the influence of alcohol or drugs would not notice; rather PCSOs should be given suitable equipment and training (for example, confined space training, for those working on public transport).

There were PCSOs who would like ability to maintain personal safety, and that of the public, by being issued with handcuffs, incapacitant spray or body worn video, and/or by having power of arrest or detention. It was felt this should be reviewed before a PCSO

gets killed on duty. However, there was also reference to variation in PCSO's views, for example one force's survey showed some PCSOs do not want handcuffs. Mention was made of the 2017 Policing Act allowing chief officers to equip PCSOs and police staff with incapacitant spray, but it was not known whether any had.

It was felt the PCSO 'non-confrontational' job description should be changed. There were calls for PCSO powers to be reviewed. (See also 3.3.3 *Statutory and legislative requirements*.)

Similar comments were made about the uniform and vehicle livery of other police staff such as SOCOs and CSIs not being distinct from officers. They included an opinion that there was deliberate 'blurring' to create the impression of there being more officers. As a consequence, they felt an expectation by members of the public that they can do what an officer could. They felt at risk of attack and experience of this was cited. The view that staff should have a more unique image was expressed.

It was said that the reduction in officer and PCSO numbers means police staff investigators are often the first responders, but do not have safety equipment or self-defence training. The view was expressed that they should not visit a scene until an officer or PCSO has evaluated its safety.

## **Driving risks**

Risks associated with driving on police duties were mentioned. This including when driving with blue lights, especially on long runs in larger geographical areas.

It was felt that the dangers of driving when tired (whether on blue lights or not), due to long shifts, particularly at night, are not recognised. There was perceived to be an expectation for officers to be out of the station - an example was given of officers being reprimanded for being inside - so they go out in cars, even if in their view that would not be productive.

## **Miscellaneous safety issues**

There was a view that the inability to recruit sufficient numbers of officers has resulted in lack of 'safety in numbers' when responding to incidents or when policing events.

It was felt among custody officers that the number of suspects having to be managed alone or by very few people is too large and very unsafe. An example was given of being personally responsible for 90 people, and of that number made even larger by having to cover for an absent colleague.

There was a view that the inexperience and/or lack of resilience of new recruits can put the safety of the more experienced at risk through having to look after those colleagues as well as themselves during incidents.

A perceived risk relating to the police's focus on using mobile technology was mentioned: for example, officers can be distracted by having to use an app on a device during a confrontational situation when they need to have an eye on maintaining their safety.

### **3.3 Factors affecting wellbeing: 'Hindrance stressors'**

In this section we report findings relating to hindrance stressors, including:

- external demand and the relationship with partner agencies
- bureaucracy and procedural inefficiencies
- statutory and legislative requirements
- targets and performance measures
- IT systems/equipment, uniforms, vehicles, other equipment and services

#### **3.3.1 External demand and the relationship with partner agencies**

There was widespread frustration at the police service having to absorb demand that was considered to be the work of 'partner agencies' including health and social services, particularly relating to dealing with people experiencing mental health episodes, detaining people under the Mental Health Act, and vulnerable children and adults. It was said that this demand was not core police work.

This demand was particularly acute overnight and at weekends when some of those agencies are not open. It was perceived that the police are seen as the service that will not refuse to assist, that is constantly on duty and that takes on responsibility from 4pm on Friday to 9am on Monday morning. Repeatedly, frustration with the other services was mentioned, for various reasons including:

- ambulances taking some hours to respond
- police only being informed late in the day about safeguarding cases which the agencies have known about for some time but not dealt with themselves; for example, a school concerned about a child with a non-accidental injury and not allowing the child home; social services' 'concern for welfare' cases
- mental health establishments being able to refuse to take in a patient that the police are looking after

- other services not reciprocating when the police ask them for assistance, for example to provide information about individuals

Picking up such work was thought to have a major impact on the police's ability to meet its core demand. It was said that a substantial proportion of all calls that police respond to, even most, are not crime-related. For example:

“[We’re] getting snowed under at times, we’ve had it recently where five response crews on, all five of them have been at mental health jobs, or safeguarding jobs, which should be social services or the mental health teams.” (Constable/sergeant)

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Dealing with such work was felt to impact on workforce wellbeing. Police officers and staff are picking up safeguarding risks: they feel guilty if they leave a person or incident and the threat of repercussions or sanctions, including scrutiny by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) if something goes wrong. Officers go on sick leave due to resultant stress.

"Once a police officer hears the information they are in the frame."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

“If anything happens to that person and they die through no fault of the police officer, they’re just trying to help, the IOPC are straight on us and it’s our fault.” (Constable/sergeant)

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It was felt that the workforce lack expertise in how to deal with people with mental health or substance problems in their care or custody, and want training.

“We cannot manage what they want us to manage. I’m not a mental health expert, I’m not a social services worker, I’m a cop.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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## **Solutions and examples of local action and arrangements**

Various forces had taken action to tackle external demand. Examples of local arrangements were given. A number of potential solutions were suggested.

- There were some contrasting examples of how multi-agency partnerships had been effective or otherwise. There were positive views of police and other agencies co-locating and attending calls together. In one force officers and social workers work together well, going out on jobs. However, in another force it was said they just complain to each other, end up sending the problems elsewhere, not working as a team ‘hand in hand’. A suggestion was made for cross agency ‘hubs’ throughout the country:

“Where we all come together, and they sit as a group, discuss it. They talk about the problem, they work out what the action’s going to be, and we resolve the problem.” (Constable/sergeant)

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Such an arrangement was said to exist, however frontline officers do not get invited so things do not get dealt with properly.

- Calls were made for more mental health professionals to go out with officers. Examples were given of forces having ‘mental health cars’, driven by police officers with mental health staff and an on-board IT system so relevant information can be accessed as required. This allows the officers who initially respond to return to other duties.
- An example of a force having a mental health single point of contact (SPOC) who reviews all Mental Health Act Section 136 cases ((when the police detain someone in need of immediate care, to take them to a place of safety where medical staff can assess them) and provides feedback to the health services about what they should be doing.
- A call was made for provision of more stringent guidance to enable control room staff to decline some requests for assistance from the ambulance, social and mental health services. Mention was made of the ‘Mental Health Concordat’ that sets out what are the responsibilities but was said to not be followed. The example was given of slow ambulance response times that mean officers must stay with a person, administer medical treatment or take them to hospital themselves: it was felt control room staff should be able to say the police will not triage; a force was said to have started doing that.
- An example of a force having mental health triage staff in the control room, who are very effective (but are only on duty from 2pm-midnight).
- A force had successfully put the onus back on mental health and other services with regard to missing from home cases and ‘bed watches’.
- A force had reached a clear position with its legal services around what appropriate practice was for 'safe and well' checks (that is, requests to safeguard vulnerable people).
- To tackle the problem of missing from homes a group of sergeants had taught themselves about the Mental Health Act and were thus able to say they will not send an officer until the partner agency has taken certain actions.
- Scope for ‘quick wins’ was seen in a force that has to put resource into dealing with children being reported as technically missing from children's homes, but who are actually just late back after curfew; it was said that staff in the homes do not inform the police when they have returned (a solution was not specified, but implicitly the home should not report them as missing so quickly or be better at telling the police they have returned).

- Regular meetings are held between an inspector and local children's homes to review all missing from home cases, explore the reasons and identify what the homes can do to prevent them – the police set their expectations.

## National solutions

Frustration was expressed that despite the issue being raised over the years with management locally and nationally there had been no great change. There were said to be some protocols in place but they are not followed. A reference was made to amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983 made in December 2017 which were perceived to recognise the health service's responsibility and give police the autonomy to say no, but it was thought that nothing had changed in practice. Some acknowledgement was given to National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) work relating to external demand.

A desire was repeatedly expressed for the Government to say that such external demand is not in the police service's remit and will not be answered unless it requires application of the law or protection of people.

There was a view that police leaders should make some 'bold' decisions around the management of some types of non-crime incident which were perceived to be at the margins of the core business of policing.

It was repeatedly said that partner agencies should take responsibility and provide the required services round the clock, including responding more quickly. An example was given of a health service's crisis response target of attending within four hours thought not always to be met.

A need for a cross-government approach with equitable accountability and responsibility was expressed. For example, it was suggested money for mental health services could be made being conditional on movement towards them providing 24/7 service and increased bed provision. A need for a single public service approach, from 'cradle to grave', was expressed, with more cross agency/partnership working rather than insular services. Related to this was a call for a single public service approach to staffing (including benefits and pensions) to promote collaborative working, making it easier to move between sectors and build a culture of problem solving.

### 3.3.2 Bureaucracy and procedural inefficiencies

#### Internal processes, information recording, replication of effort

Repeated comments were made about too much time being spent on internal processes and paperwork, in offices, rather than being out on police work.

"Bureaucracy, paperwork filling in, nonsense, it all gets in the way, doesn't it? That's what stops progress and it impacts massively."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

"Behind a pc rather than being a PC." (Constable/sergeant)

There was felt to be too much information gathering, over-recording and disproportionate administration requirements, which should be reduced. It was said that promises to cut bureaucracy made in the past had not been fulfilled.

Repeated complaints were made about 'pervasive' replication of effort required in recording information in systems multiple times. An example was that when recording fraud crime an 'action fraud referral', with exactly same information, must also be separately completed; the information should only have to be entered once, or at least the facility to forward or copy and paste the information from one to the other. Another example was of being required to record notes in a pocket notebook, though virtually everything in it was also recorded in IT systems.

Software systems were seen to create a 'cascade' of required actions: these should be reduced to specific actions that require immediate attention.

Systems requirements were seen to have caused loss of local or individual discretion: "We have taken away localism and put it into a process." For example, a control room classed a case to a priority level which requires response within an hour; the receiving sergeant argued it did not need to be dealt with until later (with reasons) and that his officer had other jobs, but was overruled because it had gone into the computer system so had to be dealt with.

It was said some forms do not reflect reality but fields within them cannot be bypassed so answers have to be made up. An example was given by one participant where, in a domestic abuse risk assessment, there was no means to record that a person refused to talk or that it was not possible to talk to them within the desired time period; there should be a means to record such eventualities. Similarly, some details required are not available initially, only once an investigation has proceeded; it should be possible at first to record minimal information.

While domestic abuse was acknowledged as a very important area of work, among participants there was a view that some associated policy in their forces is not fit for purpose. The bureaucracy required for some cases of domestic abuse was considered excessive; the same amount of risk assessment (more than 25 questions to be asked of victims) is required for cases of differing severity. This adds to workload and thus to stress. There should be different requirements, not the same for every victim.

There were views that while police should be externally answerable for their actions, in some instances the requirements go too far, and that police are 'too accountable' to more vocal interests and lobbies.

Disproportionate administration was perceived to be required after, for example, the use of force or stop and search. It was said that submitting intelligence is essential to policing but if procedures are made too onerous people will stop following them.

Other examples of perceived bureaucratic inefficiencies in some forces included the following.

- Taking 90 minutes to record a bag of powder (suspected illegal drugs) brought in by a taxi driver only to then destroy it.
- An officer bringing seized property (such as cash, drugs, firearms) back to the station and recording it into a system but not being allowed to place it in a secure cupboard unaccompanied.
- Access to a stationery cupboard being too tightly restricted.
- Completing a form to fill a vacancy requiring several time-consuming steps before HR will proceed.

Some suggestions were made to improve efficiency of certain operational aspects, and examples of improved procedures given.

- Ensure everyone knows what other people or parts of a process require of them (for example in other teams) so they do everything they are required to do, do not do something they are not required to do, and reduce the need for discussion, checking and further work. An example was given of 'burglary packs' that district teams in one force use, which ensure they have recorded everything required, correctly, for CID.
- A suggestion was made to increase the facility for the public to report crime online, or even to insist on it for low risk matters. It could be agreed what should and should not be reported online across forces, so the public has a common understanding. It was thought that would enable better management of workload by reducing peaks and troughs in call taking. Administrative time would be reduced because information is being input into systems directly by public; it would just need to be read, checked and processed.

- One force was said to have introduced a 'social media desk' which responds to messages provided by the public about, for example, road incidents - to say it is already being responded to, so preventing more calls. The desk can also create new incident logs and dispatch officers, as an extension to people being able to report incidents by phone.

## Financial inefficiencies

A few examples of financial bureaucracy and inefficiency were mentioned.

- It was thought there is some wasted expenditure in the rush for budget holders to spend their money by the end of the financial year (else it is returned to the force centre); a percentage should be allowed to be rolled over.
- A complex, lengthy train booking procedure was described; it can take weeks to buy a ticket when it could be personally booked in a very short time and without paying an outsourced service provider.
- Similarly, it was felt that hotel bookings are more expensive through an external provider.
- 'Bureaucratically overcomplicated' procurement systems were identified. An example was given of the complex process and expense of buying a sofa for a station. Potential was seen to save money by shopping around; an example was given of how a force's business centre, the source of ordering stock, does not shop around; it pays £8 for five litres of screen wash which could be bought for £2. (See also *5.3.5 Need for specialists in non-core police roles* and *6.3.1 Unifying approaches within the current force structure* for discussions of the need for procurement/finance experts and economies of scale in procurement.)

## Cross-force issues

A number of inefficiencies relating to the current 43 forces structure were identified. (See also *6.3 More collaborative approaches to policing.*)

- There was said to be a lack of ease in sharing of intelligence between forces, merely because they are separate:

"Because there's this imaginary line between them, they won't tell him what he needs to do to be effective and do the job. It's a real stumbling block, things like that, and that's just one example."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- A need for a national policy/approach to policing in force border areas was identified (for example relating to investigation, response, neighbourhood, custody arrangements).

- Forces were said to not recognise each other's qualifications, such as driving permits (see also *4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression* and *6.3.1 Unifying approaches within the current force structure*)
- More consistent processes and systems nationally were called for, so people do not have to learn new ways when moving forces or when asking another force to do something for them.
- There is some inconsistency in forms between forces. For example, the MG file system (Manual of Guidance file preparation forms) was rolled out by government but forces added their own elements to it. Some forces use SFRs (Streamlined Forensic Reporting) or MG22 as an evidential statement, when it is a 'streamlined report', which some courts accept but some will not.

## Further comments and suggestions

In addition to the suggested changes above, or those implied by the issues identified, the following comments and proposals were made.

- Introduce or widen agile working: it was thought this would reduce stress, improve work-life balance and that staff output should not be measured by length of time at desk.
- Changes to processes (such as dropping use of a form or introducing a new one) should be better communicated; sometimes people do not find out until they actually need to use a new procedure.
- Calls were made to increase administrative support or reinstate that which had been lost, to release officers back to the front line (see also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles* and *3.4.2 Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs*).
- Frustration was expressed that proposed improvements are not implemented, even when supported by managers/leadership, due to risk aversion (see also *3.4.1 Culture of risk aversion and blame* and *6.1 Innovation and sharing good practice*).

### 3.3.3 Statutory and legislative requirements

Various comments were made about legislative and statutory requirements and regulations hindering the workforce. Suggestions were made for them to be reviewed and changed, including the following.

#### Authorisations

There was a view that some legislation was old and needed to be brought more up to date to reflect modern conditions. It was thought some 'archaic' requirements originated when there were more superintendents, but nowadays take up a lot of their time, require them to travel, and could be done differently or by other ranks. Suggestions were made

to review authorisation levels and other requirements and change legislation where necessary. For example: the need to be physically present at a PACE custody extension (some forces allow video); Domestic Violence Prevention Notices; downloading mobile phone data; tracking a missing person's phone under RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act); and closure of unlicensed events.

It was noted that such authorisations and decision making can cause stress, due to for example the threat of IOPC or judicial review, which could be potentially in the long term, years later. Their decisions must be carefully logged.

## **Police and Criminal Evidence Act**

Calls were made for review of parts of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 24 hour clock and the Bail Act. There were concerns that current processes increase the risk of dangerous people being released from custody due to under-resourcing and staff shortage. Additional time is needed nowadays, for example to check CCTV footage or download a mobile phone. Officers were said to have to stay on shift or come in early, to avoid a detainee accusing them of abuse of process – being detained unnecessarily while officers are not present.

## **PCSO and other police staff powers**

Various calls were made for the powers of non-warranted roles such as PCSO and police staff investigators to be reviewed and made more consistent. It was felt that some are not working, and that changes to them could mean less reliance on officers, freeing up their time.

- PCSOs could administer civil injunctions and criminal behaviour orders if trained.
- HMICFRS was said to have highlighted the number of crimes investigated by PCSOs in certain forces, because they are not qualified investigators. However, that was considered to have led to a poorer service for the public, with crimes being investigated by officers based in an office rather than victims being visited.
- Inconsistency in PCSO roles within a force was identified. For example, in one area they attend burglaries but not in another. This creates the view that although they are of the same rank some are doing less work and creates friction around the expectations by officers from one area of PCSOs from another. Another example was traffic PCSOs being allowed to issue parking tickets but the other PCSOs cannot.
- More consistency in the PCSO role/powers was also wanted between forces or nationally. For example, it varies whether PCSOs are allowed to seize uninsured vehicles, to search, or to use reasonable force to detain someone.
- Calls were made for a uniform, generic PCSO role. It was thought Home Office leadership was needed, rather than powers being at Chief Constables discretion.

- Varied opinions were expressed as to whether a two tier PCSO system would be required, if PCSOs were to be allowed more officer-like responsibilities or powers, as some but not all would like, and whether this was appropriate given the purpose of PCSOs is a neighbourhood role, not response. (See 3.2.7 *Safety issues* regarding the non-confrontational job description and for PCSOs to have powers of arrest and be issued with safety equipment; see also 4.2.3 *Barriers to development*).
- A call was made for better communication of changes to PCSO regulations and powers. PCSOs were sometimes unaware of these.
- Criticism was made of changes to regulations in PACE removing power of further arrest of someone in detention, for the purpose of asking questions during interview, from police staff investigators. This was said to have implications for resources, being a 'massive' drain, in having to find an officer to make an arrest during an investigation.
- It was thought that adherence to a new ISO Scene of Crime standard from 2020 (a Home Office requirement) will increase administration and impact on time available to be out dealing with incidents.

## Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts Service

Several matters related to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Courts Service were mentioned, as follow.

- A sense of frustration was expressed about the respective roles of the police and CPS in the process of making charging decisions.
- There was a view that the CPS could deal with evidential matters and save police time.
- A desire was expressed for the police to have more autonomy to make charging decisions, especially relating to some domestic abuse cases, and not have to refer all of them to the CPS, which it was said has an effect on officers' morale.
- Some alternative – perhaps contradictory – views related to custody sergeants. It was proposed that powers (not specified) that had been given to the CPS be returned to custody sergeants, who have experience and training. However, another view was to replace the custody sergeant with a CPS prosecutor who could make independent decisions, freeing up officer time. This would require a PACE amendment.
- It was said that improvements to administrative systems - such as better transfer of documents between the organisations or sharing of systems - can have unintended impacts, with a difference between the high-level policy intention and expectations at practitioner level.
- There were some frustrations among officers with appearing as witnesses in the courts system, including spending long days waiting to appear in court, gaps

between shifts being shortened due to having to attend court and not being informed of court adjournment. For example, there was a perception that:

“we get treated with ... disregard ... when it comes to us being witnesses. All we’ve done is go out and do our job to the best of our ability, and what we joined for is to catch people and prosecute them, and get them to court. And when we’re in the court system as witnesses ...they constantly call us in on rest days. They’ve got complete disregard for police officers’ time off.” (Constable/sergeant)

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- A need to review the whole Criminal Justice System was expressed; it was felt joined-up thinking was required to bring about improvements because the police service is only one ‘cog’ along with the CPS, courts, prisons and probation services.

### 3.3.4 Targets and performance measures

#### Culture of targets and performance measures

Various criticisms were made of forces’ cultures of targets and performance measures. The existence of these varied across forces; some forces were said to have them while others do not. One force was thought not to have them officially but does in effect which was thought insincere. The culture was felt to result from society watching over the police’s performance and conduct, politicisation of policing and treating policing as a business:

“We’re under so much scrutiny, we are obsessed with gathering data and storing data.” (Constable/sergeant)

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It was questioned whether collection of data for performance measures helps in dealing with crime or helps the public. (See also *5.3 Setting direction and the purpose of policing* and *5.4 Public support for the front line by police leaders and government.*)

It was thought that pressure cascades down a force, with chief officers putting pressure on superintendents to achieve targets, who in turn put pressure on inspectors or police staff supervisors and so on down to those at the bottom of the organisation. This pressure was said to impact on workforce morale, wellbeing and effective operational activity. Examples given included having timed toilet breaks, call handlers dealing with calls in a set time and requirements to achieve a certain level of stop and search.

It was thought that individuals can feel pressure to meet performance targets and that this can sometimes affect operational practice or how cases are recorded.

It was thought that background measures could continue to be collected for management use but not for pressurising the workforce. More meaningful targets

should be considered, such as relating to quality of performance not quantity. For example, whether a call handler has resolved the issue for the caller, so negating the need to pass the case to someone else or the attendance of an officer, even if it took 30 minutes because it could not be resolved in five minutes as per a time target. An example was given of a force said to have eradicated such time targets from the control room with positive impacts on staff wellbeing and more effective handling of calls, better victim-focus.

Other issues and proposed solutions identified with collecting information included the following.

- It was said measures sometimes do not change in line with policy priorities, for example from detection rates to community focus.
- It was thought each force collects different statistics in different ways, with implications for marrying resource to demand. More alignment was needed.
- Police already know much of what data tells them, such as which are high crime areas. Rather there should be focus on collecting data to predict and get ahead of the situation. An example was given of a force's collaboration with a major online company on analytics, predictive policing, 'streamlining' and being 'solutions-driven'.

## Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime

Repeated comments were made regarding the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime. The value and purpose of crime recording rules were questioned by some participants. Changes that had been made to the rules were seen to have created additional demand with more incidents and jobs needing to be classified as crimes than previously. Some thought incidents that in their view were relatively trivial, while crimes in law, need not be recorded. Many more hours of work per year were said to be added to workload. It was perceived that the additional workload resulting from changes to recording resulted in less time available to be spent investigating crime.

"They've gone crazy this year, Home Office Counting Rules in relation to recording of crimes. We're all now busy just recording crimes. We're not investigating crimes; we're just recording them."

(Constable/sergeant)

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There was a view that the rules reduced discretion on whether or not to record a crime. In addition, there was a view that time can be wasted in having to justify why a case is not classified a crime, rather than taking an officer's word for it, due to a perceived increase in scrutiny of crime recording decisions in the wake of critical reports by HMICFRS. Some felt this had led to officers not thinking so much about each job, and simply recording everything as a crime.

The fear of being taken to task for not recording crimes was mentioned. Concerns were also expressed around pressure of increased caseloads when it came to investigating crimes. Even when senior managers allow staff to make decisions as to whether or not to investigate, middle ranks were said to be concerned about the potential impact on them, such as a serious case review.

### 3.3.5 IT systems/equipment, uniforms, vehicles, other equipment and services

The importance of the equipment, tools and services required to do police work was repeatedly highlighted, and particularly the perceived problems with their inadequacies.

"The people who work for the police are predominantly fantastic people and it's the support services and the equipment, the cars, the computers and all that stuff ... that really stops them doing a better job ... That makes their life worse. They can't get anywhere, they can't communicate and those sort of things are where we need to improve."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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#### Computer software systems

There were widespread discussions of various computer software systems used by different forces. Many were mentioned such as Niche, Athena, MetConnect, iOPS (integrated Operation Policing System), Pronto, Connect, Saab SAFE, Storm, Police Works and Red Sigma. Some systems were said to be used in a number of forces; though versions and functionality appeared to vary. Sometimes contrasting views were given of the same systems by users of them in different forces. Individual systems were considered to have strengths and weaknesses.

Some positive opinions of systems' merits were given, for example a description of one being 'amazing'. Sometimes these were qualified: 'wonderful' if it works properly, brilliant in principle. An example was given of a new system that caused a major impact on its introduction, for control room staff and officers, and is still unstable but from radio operator's point of view it is an improvement.

However, more common were reports of systems' faults. They were variously described as slow, liable to crash, not up to date (for example old versions of Windows), not fully functional, not user friendly, complicated and generally not fit for purpose. Information 'disappears' within them. There were views that money had been wasted on them. There was much reporting of time lost in using them, resulting in, for example, officers being prevented from attending more calls. They caused much frustration and impacted on workforce wellbeing. It was thought that younger recruits, with their facility with

technology, would be particularly frustrated and potentially deterred from joining or staying in the service.

There was repeated criticism of IT systems not linking up well, either between or within forces. The fact that many forces cannot access the systems of another force, link intelligence databases or transfer information was described as, for example, 'ridiculous'. It was thought astounding that all forces do not operate the same command and control system. Some exceptions were mentioned of forces whose systems could link. As well as between forces links, it was thought police should be able to link with external partners such as the CPS.

Examples of systems not linking up or being incompatible within forces were given, such as:

- Workforce Manager and CARMS (Computer Aided Resource Management System)
- CRIS (Crime Report Information System) and Merlin
- Storm (command and control) and Niche (crime recording system)
- Web Storm, Aspire, Niche and windows-based systems
- Athena and tuServ

Such incompatibility was said to result in critical information being missing, which has consequences such as worry about decision making and the implications of a serious case review later. It also has safety implications; for example, information recorded in one system about a weapon having been pointed at officers during a previous incident not being flagged in another system, so not available to those attending another call to the same address.

Even when a particular force had a unified system for case crime and custody, it was said they could not be linked because they rely on officers inputting reference numbers, which might not be done. The force was developing tools or applications so a name or address can be entered and all connected information from all systems be collated. It was suggested that a national solution could be developed. Such a solution would need to work on mobile devices so officers can get information at the scene. An example was given of a force whose officers' mobile phones can look up persons, addresses and see warning markers – the Control Works command and control system can speak to Niche.

An urgent need for modern, up to date and integrated systems was identified. It was thought that a national strategy was required, with common systems used across all forces. There were views that government needs to lead, because Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners will not want to give up their discretion and because forces will never agree what they all should use:

“It would take someone like the Policing Minister to say what are you all doing, so why aren’t you all sharing information and intelligence and why aren’t you sharing your demand.” (Constable/sergeant)

"How about the Home Office design a police system for every single force to use and it all speaks to each other."... "Start with the very basics of your intelligence and your incident handling"... "Your business continuity factors, so it’s your ability to respond to core policing, your criminal justice, your missing from home, your intelligence management, all the core business ... are all identical."

(Superintendents/inspectors)

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A number of comments and proposals were made with regard to how such modern systems could be implemented.

- There were varied views on whether buying off-the-shelf or developing bespoke systems was better. It was thought off-the-shelf products do not necessarily provide what police need. A suggestion was made to invest in IT experts and IT departments to develop systems, with a force being cited as a good example of having done this.
- It was thought procurement should be done by experts, taking advantage of economies of scale and ensuring contracts are beneficial to police (see 5.3.5 *Need for specialists in non-core police roles*). Views included not buying the cheapest products, or basic versions of systems, and ensuring that ongoing maintenance contracts are affordable.
- Engaging with the right people/teams and thinking about the data processes and ‘journeys’ were highlighted. Participants mentioned the importance of consultation with those who will use systems, proper user testing (across a range of users and skill levels) and good training for users (which did not always happen or was not at the right time - for example months before the actual introduction):

“I keep saying this, get a group of cops, ... PCs, the end users are vital. Get them in a room and tell them you’ve got a week to go and design a system. So you design a system, and then you go there’s the system, and you go to an IT developer and say go and make us that system. Then test it to the nth degree to make sure it’s working.”

(Constable/sergeant)

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- Learning from forces with good systems including from other countries was proposed; for example, French police were said to be able to access UK DVLA but not vice versa; and to have the facility to scan passports in car.

Some issues and warnings relating to implementation of new systems were mentioned, as follow.

- Consideration should be given to required infrastructure such as shared servers: a force was said to have joined another's system with the result that servers crashed.
- New systems should be introduced gradually, ensured to work before going live and staff trained in their use: an example was given of a new call handling system not working properly, staff not having been trained, resulting in duress for callers and call handlers, a build-up of calls, long queues, pressure from supervisors and staff having to take time off with stress, or leaving.
- A warning was made of new systems potentially raising expectations and creating more bureaucracy. For example, case files being linked to whole Criminal Justice system and the forthcoming ability to upload CCTV footage so it can be shared with CPS quickly with the result, in a participant's view, that CPS now want more information than they need.
- Scepticism was expressed that 'sunk cost fallacy' would be apparent - that too much has already been invested and that despite warnings or experience that a system does not work well, decisions will not be reversed, and 'propaganda' will tell everyone that a particular system is good and its use or roll out will continue.
- It was thought forces will see how long implementation of a new system takes in other forces and conclude it is too hard and they will not follow.
- It was felt that scrapping and replacing systems would be wasteful of funds. So perhaps the service should look at fixing rather than changing systems, and at better maintenance and training.
- Delivering national systems was thought difficult. There were examples of existing ones that were thought to be effective, such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) - considered to be 'amazing' – and the Police National Computer (PNC) - which has been in use for many years and, every force uses to access all criminal records. However, the proposed replacement of the PNC, the National Law Enforcement Data Programme (NLED), was thought among participants to have faced problems. A more conservative approach might be required:

“National infrastructure projects aren't necessarily going to just deliver something overnight that's going to improve. I think that mainly it's about us joining the dots between us is going to improve things.”

(Constable/sergeant)

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## **IT equipment: mobile phones, tablets, laptops**

Similar comments to those about software systems were made regarding IT equipment. Numerous specific examples were given; some positive but more negative. Descriptions such as 'shocking' and 'backward' were used. Repeated calls were made for investment in good new technology.

There were views of certain mobile phones and other handheld devices that are issued to officers and staff not working properly, being described, for example, as 'rubbish', letting the workforce down and a wasted opportunity. Examples of problems included devices' mobile network connections dropping out, not being able to get a signal, batteries draining quickly (a particular problem when in a rural area), devices crashing and devices being too small. They were said to impact on the ability to carry out core functions. They are intended to enable reports and statements to be written while out but do not work outside. Officers lose a report half way through completing.

There were descriptions of such problems being embarrassing for the workforce, who are made to look unprofessional, for example, when a device fails when in a victim's home or they must ask to use a victim's Wi-Fi password. Complaints were said to be received that officers appear uninterested in victims because they are looking at their phones.

Training in the use of new devices was not always thought adequate.

Some members of the workforce therefore do not use their devices or feel they have no choice but to use pc terminals in stations, and are then questioned by supervisors as to why they are not out on the streets.

It was said not all people who would benefit from mobile or portable devices have them; an example was given of response officers, described as the most mobile department, not having any mobile devices and having to use desktops in the station, while in contrast CID have laptops which are never taken from the office. An example of insufficient supply was of two laptops being shared by stations 10 miles apart so people have to make 20-mile round trip to get one when needed.

Calls were repeatedly made for better, more up to date mobile devices with access to systems. This would enable more working while outside or in cars and reduce officers' and PCSOs' need to contact offices and control rooms. It was felt procurement needs to be faster; by the time equipment is delivered it is out-dated.

There were positive comments about some forces' equipment. For example, there was a view that one force's is second to none: the ability to talk to a supervisor on an iPhone via Facetime for guidance was appreciated. Being able to upload information to the cloud was considered to be efficient. It varied whether devices are able to access all or only some systems.

There was a concern that provision of more and better mobile devices to enable officers to be out and work more efficiently might be used as a rationale to reduce officer numbers, because they still need more people.

Issues with repairs to equipment, both in the office (including printers) and mobile devices, were mentioned. There were views that equipment often does not work and much time is spent arranging for things to be fixed. Examples were given of it being personal responsibility to repair or replace smartphones and to buy screen protectors and cases.

## Vehicles

Several issues related to police vehicles were identified.

The need for more vehicles was identified. Repeated comments were made on the inadequacy of car provision or availability, there not being enough vehicles, even in large districts, or the right vehicles. Various reports were given of departments only having one car; sharing cars between teams; having to spend time finding a spare car that can be used; new vehicles that have not had livery put on them so remain unused; and lack of cars to provide back-up, resulting in, for example, a participant having to restrain an offender for 45 minutes.

PCSOs described difficulties in competing for access to vehicles; for example: a PCSO car being used by officers; not being allowed a long-term hire car despite one being fundamental to the job; and being told to use public transport instead. Issues with using public transport included journeys taking longer, so arriving very late or too late to answer a call; potential impacts on safety, data security (for example leaving a file on a bus); and being 'embarrassing' for the public image. An example was given of a PCSO not being able to get a parking permit, for use in a city centre where there is a lack of public parking, resulting in them receiving parking tickets that they have to pay for personally.

It was thought that forces should all use the same cars and that they should be procured nationally, for reasons of economy. The front line should be consulted about vehicle specifications and test them (see also *6.2 Consultation and user testing*):

"I just want somebody ... to say right I'm going to provide the UK with x because it's actually the best van, it's the best multiservice vehicle."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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Some issue with equipment in police vehicles were mentioned, including the following.

- Police radio that does not work.
- Navigation systems not being provided but would make a big difference especially for those covering large areas; an example was given of not being connected to GPS for security-related reasons, so having to stop and check maps instead, slowing down the journey.

- Torches in vehicles being without charge; recharging is supposed to be responsibility of the vehicle's previous users or maintenance staff but is not done.
- In a coastal area, throw ropes and life vests for sea rescue could be kept in vehicles, rather than being stored in a building to be collected when officers respond to calls.

## Uniform

Similar comments to those above on procuring nationally were made about uniform. A mention was made of there being a national uniform procurement, but forces were said to differ in, for example, whether officers have a boot allowance, according to how they individually manage finances. Comments were made about buying uniform cheaply not being cost effective. An example was given of firearms trousers not lasting as long as more expensive ones.

"It's a false economy to buy the cheaper ... But get that quality one as cheap as you can by buying volume." (Constable/sergeant)

Miscellaneous comments made about uniform issues included the following.

- A force introducing uniform for control room staff, the necessity of which was questioned on grounds of the staff not being in face to face contact with the public and shortage of money.
- A force was perceived to have provided new coats to officers as though they were a gift or reward rather than being a necessary part of uniform, the need having been identified from an innovation forum. It was complained that the command team presented them to individuals in a way that was considered patronising.

See also 3.2.7 *Safety issues* regarding uniforms and equipment for PCSOs and other police staff.

## Buildings, furniture and office equipment

Some issues were raised relating to the shrinking of police estate, including due to sale of property. The closure of stations was questioned, with the view that the 'central hub model' is not working. Use of hubs, combining with other public services and having smaller stations results in fewer opportunities police workers to decompress and debrief. Sharing non-police accommodation was also thought to have security implications; for example, staff located in a council office annexe were reported to feel vulnerable due to their proximity to interview rooms. Despite recommendations to address this nothing had been done.

Furniture and equipment were said to be sometimes lacking or inadequate. Examples were given of having to use broken desks and chairs; of not being allowed a new whiteboard but told to find one somewhere; and of officers needing somewhere secure

to put their paper case files - important documents – other than their personal locker. (See also 3.2.6 *Facilities/space for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health.*)

## Translation services

It was said that in a multicultural society forces need more translators, for interviews or while out in the street. There were said to be various current approaches across forces; the quality of interpreters from agencies was sometimes not very good. A solution at national level rather than individual forces level was suggested, for example being able to dial into a central facility. An example of such a service being used by a force, the Big Word, was given.

## 3.4 Factors affecting wellbeing: Organisational climate and culture

In this section we report findings about organisational climate and culture, including:

- culture of risk aversion and blame
- culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs
- culture of stigma around mental ill-health
- role of line managers/supervisors in wellbeing
- role of senior leadership in wellbeing
- sick absence management/policies

### 3.4.1 Culture of risk aversion and blame

A culture of blame and risk aversion was thought to exist in some forces. In part this was thought due to the potential threat of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which though intended to hold police to account has a constraining effect on behaviour. People feel their actions and decisions to be under scrutiny, resulting in anxiety and fear of being investigated and punished.

An example of perceived risk aversion was a force's domestic abuse policy that incidents must be investigated even when the risk of threat is interpreted to be minor (such as a Facebook comment, a text message). Sergeants feel they cannot use their common sense, because they fear consequences; the risk is not to the organisation but is:

“On your collar number, it’s on your shoulders and if it goes wrong you’re the one who’s going to be gripping the rail in the coroner’s court.”  
(Constable/sergeant).

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It was felt that a ‘permission to fail’ culture was needed, which accepts that people make mistakes, that things cannot always be done 100 per cent right, recognises and rewards decisions made for the right reasons even if failure resulted. People should be allowed to be brave, fail, learn and move on; not criticised or threatened with dismissal. There was a view that errors would reduce if supervisors intervene early when errors become apparent, implement prevention measures, and advise or develop staff. A force’s professional standards department was thought to be changing for the better from blame to learning from mistakes, although individuals still face the threat and stress of investigation. Examples were given of Chief Constables thought to be focused on learning rather than sanctioning, and to have empowered staff by saying that policies are advisory but can be side-stepped from if there is good reason. However, at the level of middle manager/sergeant/supervisor people behave in a more constrained or ‘transactional’ manner, because if they follow procedure they will be clear from scrutiny.

Concerns that staff raise, for example about the impact of decisions or proposed changes on operational competence or wellbeing, were said to sometimes be dismissed, considered to be negative and seen as complaining, when the person raising an issue is in fact well motivated - a ‘moral compass’ or ‘critical friend’.

It was said people who challenge can be perceived as troublemakers. Managers and supervisors were felt to not stand up to those above them for fear of being seen to say ‘no’, or to not tell them the truth, when they should be protecting their teams. There were thought to be senior leaders who do not want to hear objections, but just instruct people to ‘make it work’. It was thought that consequently, money may be wasted on initiatives, with no accountability.

It was thought that the police are sometimes not transparent in public, for example about problems with capacity. However, a reluctance among the workforce to challenge public messages that are not felt to reflect the truth was mentioned, because the challenger might look bitter when actually they feel passionate about the job. A fear of speaking out or whistleblowing was mentioned, because of potentially losing your job or being marked. It was thought people making critical comments in public, such as on social media, can be charged with bringing police into disrepute.

## 3.4.2 Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs

A number of issues relating to the relationships between officers and police staff were identified. Most of the following was raised in the workshops with police staff including PCSOs.

### Officer centrism

Police staff wanted frames of reference to be less 'officer-centric'. It was felt senior leaders and Government tend to focus on officer numbers rather than police staff or the total workforce. Staff feel they are second class and do not like being described as 'back office' or 'support staff'; rather they are an important, integral part of the police service, often doing the same work as officers or roles that enable frontline officers to operate effectively. There was a view that some officers lack awareness that PCSOs and other police staff work on the front line too, including having to face violent people.

"The public ... will end up speaking to police staff more often than not than they would speak to an officer first, as the first point of contact."  
(Member of police staff)

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PCSOs desired more positive communication about the purpose of their role:

"The focus has always been on what PCSOs can't do, as opposed to what PCSOs can do... The powers and roles that we've got do need to be communicated to the public in a better way." (PCSO)

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It was also thought the Home Office could show greater public appreciation and promotion of all staff roles, not just that of PCSO.

### Officers doing work that should be for police staff

There were widespread comments that police staff do many frontline jobs that do not require officer powers, and that they could do more such work. It was repeatedly said that increasingly officers take roles that police staff could do, or used to do, including 'business development' roles that do not require police powers. It was described as wrong, including among officers, that able bodied officers are used that way and that it was pointless increasing officer numbers if they will work in offices. There was a view that officers who know they are likely to be posted elsewhere in future do not perform or develop into the job to the same standard as police staff. It was said forces should stop officers doing tasks that do not require a warrant card. (See also similar comments in *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles.*)

Some resentment was expressed at retired officers returning as police staff. While some justification was seen, regarding them taking specialist roles and the benefit of their experience, it was thought to take posts from police staff and also block fresh ideas.

## Job insecurity

Police staff worry about whether they will lose their jobs. Their conditions of employment mean it is possible to make them redundant unlike officers. A force was perceived to have wanted to reduce superintendent numbers and to have replaced police staff heads of department with them because it could not make them redundant. Officers have security of tenure and do not understand staff anxiety about job security or the impact of reviews or changes to pay or pension. Staff feel they are viewed by officers conducting reviews as dispensable. The officer centrism as reported above was thought to mean staff cuts can be masked from the public:

“Police officer numbers is a figure that you hide cuts under.” (Member of police staff)

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## Relationships between officers and police staff: ‘them and us’ culture

There were examples given of good relationships between officers and police staff (including PCSOs), of collaborative working and respectful treatment. There was acknowledgement among officers of the important role staff play in policing. As reported (in section 3.2.1 *Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles*), officers saw scope for increasing the numbers of police staff to take specialist roles and to perform work currently done by warranted officers. Administrative support was seen as an important part of everyday working for everyone - the ‘lifeblood’ of the station – such as keeping supplies topped up.

However, there were widespread feelings of officers and staff not getting along well, described as, for example, a ‘them and us’ culture. Staff mentioned various examples of differences between how officers and staff or PCSOs are treated, including:

- lack of interaction between constables and PCSOs on the same team: “them and us, white shirts, blue shirts”
- PCSOs not being given food and drink that was brought out to officers, despite dealing with the same incidents
- lack of sympathy for PCSOs wanting to adjust work duties or hours to suit family life: “you just get told to go and find yourself a different job”
- staff not having debriefing after incidents, or the same quality of it, including when they have witnessed or attended the same incident as officers
- staff safety not being given due consideration

- resentment that some staff do exactly the same job as officers but are paid less, for example in a public protection office
- fewer training and career development opportunities for staff and opportunities being given to officers instead (see *4.2.3 Barriers to development*)

Officers, at various ranks, were considered to treat staff dismissively, with disrespect, even to be 'punitive' toward them. Reports were given of: overheard comments on how staff are 'useless' and should be got rid of; insensitive announcement of redundancies; and credit taken (and promotion consequently achieved) by an inspector for work done by staff member.

For their part, officers mentioned that police staff should never be paid more than officers at the equivalent level. It was thought wrong that the force can attract staff but not officers because of pay, related to low the starting pay of constables.

## **Officers managing police staff**

It was repeatedly mentioned that officers do not understand the difference between officer and staff/PCSO roles and their terms and conditions, for example relating to meal breaks, rest day changes/cancellation, staying late. Even when it was thought chief officers and the staff trade union representatives work closely, at the working level sergeants and inspectors were felt to be less aware of the respective differences. It was felt officers should be more familiar with the staff handbook and be better trained; an example was given of the union suggesting to an HR department that they have input into the sergeant training course. Officers were said not to understand the work of staff well, for example sergeants in the control room.

Some issues with management and communication styles were identified. It was said that officers do not have to provide evidence of being good managers when promoted or put into a management role. It was said officers are not meant to order staff in the same way they are used to ordering more junior officers; however, they tell staff what to do rather than ask. Experiences were related of antagonism, confrontations and staff being put on an action plan for standing up. Staff were said to feel uncomfortable challenging officers and experience stress.

An example was given of sergeants trying to reverse the decision made by an inspector that a PCSO with supervisory responsibility could intervene if the sergeants want the PCSOs to do things outside their role description or conditions. The sergeants tried to change the management arrangement; it was felt their attitude needs to be changed.

## Police staff managing officers (including ex-officers)

There were staff supervisors who said they experience officers who do not listen to or obey them, for example, ignoring email requests. Staff do not have the authority to give orders to an officer, for example to do more work relating to a case file. It was said that ex-officers who are employed as staff can use their friendship with officers in ranks above to their advantage.

## Staff holding their own and representation at senior levels

There was a view that police staff managers do not carry the same weight as officers even when of equivalent grade. Staff do not always have confidence to give their opinion in a room of officers. Staff are taught about officer ranks and protocols, such as whether they can address someone by name or need to call them sir or ma'am, whereas officers do not necessarily respect the staff culture in the same way. Staff should expect to be treated with respect and dignity by officers.

There were views that staff need representation at top level and that the senior team in a force should be opened to staff. A call was made for a rank structure for staff.

### 3.4.3 Culture of stigma around mental ill-health

Mixed experiences and views were provided relating to stigma about mental ill-health.

There were views that policing was improving in terms of people feeling able to admit they are suffering and in need of help. This was evident in the introduction of various initiatives and services such as Blue Light Champions and Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) practitioners (see 3.5.4 *Volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services*). The culture was felt to be changing, whereby a middle manager can say they need to take time away from high risk jobs (such as around vulnerable people, sexual offences) when they feel it to be affecting their wellbeing. Nonetheless further improvement was said to be required.

However, there were also views that there was still considerable stigma. People pretend they are alright when they are not. People are not supported but told that trauma is just part of the job and they should, for example, 'get up and get on with it'. Fears of the consequences of admitting to mental health issues include: being seen as weak, showing emotion, or to be a 'shirker'; not wanting their state to be talked about by colleagues or their case to be recorded on file; and the impact on career aspirations. Examples were given of sick absence for mental health issues being recorded under 'other reasons' instead (see also 3.4.6 *Sick absence management/policies*). It was said to be a huge step for some to admit the need for help and leave their colleagues. This can lead to delaying the seeking of help until is very late, if at all. A view was that

younger officers are better at verbalising their feelings than older ones, who keep issues to themselves.

The importance of having supportive colleagues was mentioned. An example was given of a work team where older hands were not supportive of newer staff and express negative opinions about work (described as being “mood hoovers”) resulting in people feeling negative about coming to work and wanting to leave. It was thought managers need to deal with them. The contrast between such people and more supportive colleagues was described as “drains and radiators, people who drain your enthusiasm and [those who] radiate it” (Member of police staff).

A need for good role modelling by senior managers was identified; they should acknowledge being affected personally by stress and trauma. Giving the opposite impression, of having a ‘thick hide’ or ‘brushing it off’, was said to cause pressure on other people to not admit to being affected – they ‘wear a mask’ and internalise issues.

### 3.4.4 Role of line managers/supervisors in wellbeing

#### Wellbeing support by line managers/supervisors for their staff

The great importance to the wellbeing of officers and police staff of being supported by their immediate line managers/supervisors was repeatedly mentioned. The level and nature of support affects how much people give to the job.

The view was expressed (among inspectors) that positive aspects of wellbeing are due to individual supervisors while negative aspects relate to things beyond their control, at organisational level or views from outside policing about police. However, participants in the constable/sergeants and police staff workshops related varied experiences of their line managers and supervisors. Qualities and behaviours that people wanted to see included the following.

- Line managers should: be good listeners, have ‘emotional intelligence’, empathy and understanding; show common sense; have awareness of their staff’s individual personalities and lives, for example their childcare needs. They should be proactive in monitoring their staff for signs of stress, knowing when they have dealt with a difficult situation and talking to them without waiting to be asked.
  - Examples were given of managers/supervisors who have such skills, including: a supervisor making a point of weekly face-to-face contact with individuals over tea/coffee; an inspector visiting a staff member who was absent nursing an ill parent; and a PCSO who felt able to approach their line manager about a mental health issue.

- Examples were given of managers/supervisors lacking such skills, such as: only providing feedback when something bad happens; being solely focused on dealing with the work load or meeting targets, for example in the control room; not supporting with staff welfare issues or dealing with them badly; and having trivial concerns with seating arrangements or the appearance of staff. High staff turnover was sometimes said to be a consequence.
- Managers should recognise a team's need to take a break and decompress, for example sharing food in the station after a tough night shift, rather than being criticised and sent out on streets again. Small gestures can make big difference, boosting morale, for example a sergeant providing bacon sandwiches to a team.
- They should also support their team up to their own managers. An example was given of senior leaders said to have given orders that did not conform to health and safety regulations regarding breaks and refreshments, until this was pointed out to them by a team manager.
- Having a consistent manager or supervisor is important; examples were given of high turnover of individuals' managers (see also 3.2.2 *Change management*). Lack of a consistent supervisor means less opportunity to share concerns and less comfort in their disclosure:

“If you've got a personal issue or an issue with someone in your team and you're having to explain it to a manager who then gets replaced within three, four months, well, people don't want to start telling their personal lives again and again and again to different people.”

(Constable/sergeant)

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- Also, it is important to have consistency in management style and approach across teams/departments, or else some people will feel less valued or well treated than others.

## Support required by line managers/supervisors to manage their staff's wellbeing

Managers and supervisors themselves need support in looking after their staff's wellbeing. It was felt important to give them necessary time, tools and training. They themselves experience stress related to managing wellbeing; for example:

“I feel as though as a supervisor I'm failing my team ... I can't look after them on a day-to-day basis. I can't guarantee that they're going to get something to eat. I can't guarantee that they're not going to get called on their rest days for something. I can't guarantee that the force aren't going to change their hours at short notice for ... anything from a fly landing on the window to oh my god is it Halloween already?... I've got

three on the sick with long term stress and anxiety, which again I've got to manage. I have to in my own time go and meet them for coffee."

(Sergeant)

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People repeatedly spoke of managers'/supervisors' lack of time to attend to their staff's wellbeing, in addition to their other duties. Reasons for this included: the decrease in the sergeant to constable ratio; managing large teams and/or across large geographical areas; changes to operating structures/models meaning sergeants are more confined to offices and spend less time out with their staff, so have fewer opportunities for one to one time with staff. It was thought that even a few minutes could make a big difference to an individual. It was felt that first line supervisors and middle managers should not manage so many people, so they can know them better and recognise changes in them that might require intervention.

Operational requirements were said to take precedent. An example was given of a manager only being able to talk to staff on their days off. An example was given of a force decreeing that managers should periodically meet each staff member individually but does not provide them with the necessary time. There were views that supervisors should be able to reject operational requests if they need to deal with a welfare issue as priority; and should be able to pull someone from the front line and not be pressured to get them back out. It was felt middle managers should support supervisors, empowering them to make decisions. Suggestions were made that managers be given dedicated wellbeing management time, protected from other duties (for example 30 minutes a day). An example was given of a force whose shift system provides cover to enable supervisors and staff members to talk one to one.

A lack of management training, including about wellbeing, among those with staff responsibility was identified repeatedly.

"They should all be trained in recognising early signs of stress before it reaches crisis point and do something about it when they recognise it."

(Constable/sergeant)

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It was thought difficult for supervisors to know how to help if they have never experienced similar issues themselves. It was felt training would be a good investment, reducing sick absence and grievances. There were various suggestions as to what training should be provided. Managers should be trained in people skills, though it was felt that not everyone can be taught them, to some degree it is a natural quality; and that people will vary in how seriously they take welfare. They should be trained in early recognition of signs of mental ill-health. One opinion was that all line managers should be Mental Health First Aid practitioners, or similar (an example was given of a force where some but not all supervisors have been accredited).

Managers are not always aware of the wellbeing provisions available; it was said they should be trained in welfare-related policies and procedures.

"I don't think supervisors necessarily are aware of all the mechanisms they can offer to staff to either prevent or assess." (Member of police staff)

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It was thought supervisors struggle to understand by just reading HR guidance. Managers should have equality and diversity training and be aware of employment law. Some training was said to be given to police staff supervisors, but there was no structured programme or support during probation. The staff supervisors' handbook should include content on managing wellbeing, it was thought.

Examples were given of forces that did provide such training including:

- A programme ('Live Well, Feel Well') which as well as courses for all staff has one for supervisors, that covers what they can do to recognise issues in their staff.
- Training for call handler supervisors to recognise stress and changes with staff:

"We've all had inputs on how to recognise stress, and changes in people that may be a bit concerning. ... If we get those nasty incidents come in to us, then we will, after that call has finished, the incident has been dealt with in our world, we will then intervene and speak to the staff and put the relevant referrals in." (Member of police staff).

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- A local leadership training programme for sergeants and inspectors, focused on 'people skills'.

Abstraction for training was identified as a potential issue; an example was given of mental health training for sergeants being repeatedly cancelled due to resource issues.

Views were expressed that line managers/supervisors should not be expected to be welfare managers, for example: their primary role is to supervise operational work; they did not join police to be a welfare manager/counsellor; and they might be able to do their police role well but not be a good person manager.

"We start off as police officers, then all of a sudden you go through the ranks and you're expected to manage people, and it's a completely different set of skills as far as I'm concerned." (Constable/sergeant)

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The promotion process was said to not prove how well an individual can manage people. There was a view that the welfare side of individuals' management should instead be the responsibility of, for example, an HR department that would have specialist skills and knowledge.

Another view was that managers/supervisors need to be able to refer to a mental health professional, for assistance or to hand over responsibility for a staff member when they cannot deal with issues themselves.

### 3.4.5 Role of senior leadership in wellbeing

In addition to the above views and experiences relating to immediate line managers/supervisors, organisational support for wellbeing by forces' chief officers and government was discussed. Many and varied experiences and opinions were expressed.

There were views that welfare provision in the police service compares badly with private sector, with various well-known companies and corporations being cited as looking after their employees well and benefitting in return from their staff's better performance. It was thought the police's provision would not meet standards expected by courts or employment tribunals. To reap long term gains of reduced absence and better performance was thought to require forces to invest money in wellbeing structures. But there was also a view that the police do provide wellbeing services that other sectors do not. Some forces were acknowledged to be doing good work in looking after wellbeing, such as one said to be providing substantial welfare support: "we've gone overboard with regards to wellbeing".

Disjointedness and a lack of coordination in wellbeing service provision and policies was thought to occur both between forces and within forces (for example wellbeing SPOCs in different parts a force who do not coordinate). There was a view that government needs to support wellbeing and provide a structure, not just by outsourcing wellbeing services. But it was also said that it was hard for the Home Office to say what all forces should do. A suggestion was made for a national wellbeing portfolio led by a Chief Constable, whereby all forces would have to adopt the policies/practices (or, it was said, answer to the Police Federation). A mention was made of a forthcoming (at the time of the workshops) National Police Wellbeing Service rollout of a uniform approach. Better coordination within each force was thought possible, whereby the Home Office could make each force have a mandatory wellbeing board at which each area/branch is represented.

It was thought staff who do not feel supported by their organisation will have negative feelings about the job and what they give to it can be affected. The need for leading by example regarding the importance of wellbeing, from chief officers through superintendents to federated ranks, was expressed. An example of demonstration of top-level support was a force's policy of any assault on an officer being raised at the daily management meeting and leading to a senior officer contacting them.

There were repeated views on the importance of ‘credibility’ in forces’ support for wellbeing, and on not paying ‘lip service’ to it as merely the latest fashion or ‘buzzword’. The importance of senior leaders genuinely listening to the workforce was stated. It was felt that some chief officers and senior leadership teams ignore wellbeing issues, do not provide direction and are ‘burying their head in the sand’. Some cynicism was expressed that the motive behind a focus on wellbeing is to keep people at work because forces cannot afford to lose them. Various examples of perceived inauthenticity were given as follow.

- The impact of organisational/operational changes on wellbeing (see 3.2.1 *Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles*) raised questions as to senior managers’ practical application of their duty of care.
- Pressure to push wellbeing from senior managers has added significant extra work for supervisors.
- Understaffed wellbeing departments do not indicate genuine support.
- Some wellbeing initiatives are part of promotion ‘tick boxing’ (see 3.2.2 *Change management* and 4.3.2 *Effectiveness of current promotion processes*), especially at Chief Inspector and Superintendent level, but are not innovative because the people behind them do not want to risk failure or disapproval.
- There was a view that the wellbeing needs of members of the workforce involved in high media profile cases are dealt with well, but not those due to more routine day to day issues.
- The impression that a force was not interested in an individual, just covering itself regarding civil litigation, was given to a line manager who had completed a required stress referral risk assessment but not been contacted about the case subsequently.
- Some promotional activities, such as wellbeing weeks and other events, wellbeing buses (see also 3.5.1 *Raising awareness of wellbeing and wellbeing promotional activity*).

Various examples were given of teams/departments or other groups of individuals perceived to have experienced highly inadequate wellbeing support by their force, such as the following.

- A control room said to have high levels of staff suffering mental ill health – in some cases severe - yet fearful of informing the employer in case they were taken down a sick absence process; the managers’ only concern was with keeping on top of the calls and meeting targets.
- Very inadequate welfare for people in aftermath of an event, the impacts of which were said to have included very serious effects on some officers’ mental health. Responsibility for providing support to a traumatised team was considered to have stopped with sergeants, themselves feeling severely stressed. A lack of

understanding and support for the occupational health recommendations made was felt to have been shown by officers from Chief Inspector upwards:

“As a sergeant you’re almost feeling that you’re fighting against the rest of the organisation to get people support.” (Constable/sergeant)

Further examples of participants personally experiencing good and bad support from their forces, when they have experienced mental ill-health or other wellbeing issues (even if their own line manager tried to help) are described in subsequent sections.

There was a view that wellbeing support is inconsistent and dependent on individual managers, rather than being culturally embedded. Middle managers were said to be less bought into wellbeing than chief officers and first line supervisors. It was said to get progressively harder to deliver wellbeing lower down the hierarchy; pressure to perform cascades down the management chain, impacting on the wellbeing support they provide to their teams. There is a need to stress the benefits to managers of paying attention to their teams’ wellbeing.

It was thought poor supervision should be challenged and dealt with, and support put in place for people experiencing bad management. An example was given of a support network that people can go to confidentially, to get advice and help in escalating issues to higher levels. A view was chief inspectors and above should have their management of wellbeing as a performance criterion:

“Make it mandatory for them to be judged on their performance for managing the staff.” (Constable/sergeant)

Managers, it was felt, need to feel empowered to make decisions and use discretion, not to be afraid of setting precedents (such as allowing working from home) or feel they must refer to HR. Middle managers need local level expertise working with them to develop wellbeing plans, but HR departments have been reduced. A need was identified for middle managers/department heads to be open and transparent, to tell the truth to chief officers about levels of demand, the condition of staff and the impact on the service.

### 3.4.6 Sick absence management/policies

Various issues were identified relating to sick absence policies and processes having a negative impact on wellbeing. They were said to contribute to absence levels.

People spoke of their feelings of guilt at taking sickness absence, due to their workload and obligations to the public and their colleagues. They feel that by being absent the rest of their team will be placed under more stress than they already are:

“Because absence makes your friends work harder.”  
(Inspector/superintendent).

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Middle managers can feel they have to balance individual and team wellbeing, for example one spoke of the need to encourage an officer’s return to work after injury in part because team needs the person and because the individual would move to half-pay otherwise.

It was questioned whether forces’ HR or welfare departments were caring for the workforce or harassing them. Examples were given of people phoned at home within hours of them reporting in sick, people being contacted during their absence by an HR department seen as obsessed with getting people back to work, and managers being emailed about their absent worker. It was felt that such contact should not be until after a few days; it was not necessary for absence reasons like flu, but early intervention could be good in relation to stress or other mental health issues. However, it was thought individuals might prefer to talk to a supervisor, not someone they do not know. An example was given of inconsistency between wellbeing policy and sickness absence practice: a force stating that they will look after workers’ wellbeing but informing someone who had been in hospital that they were heading towards being put on an action plan was described as:

“contradicting themselves by talking the talk but not walking the walk.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Attendance management processes were considered bureaucratic and complicated. It was thought supervisors are not always trained in them properly. Formal procedures were felt to be invoked too early. People were said to worry for their job if their absence will be flagged and automatically start an intervention. It was thought supervisors can tell when someone is or is not genuinely sick. Repeated calls were made for more flexibility in absence management policies, giving more discretion to line managers to discuss with the job holder and assess the individual circumstances rather than follow strict processes relating to trigger points (such as total days absent or number of separate absences in a defined period exceeding a threshold). It was thought that such triggers are not flexible; for example, someone can be put on a plan if they have a number of separate absences but that does not consider the overall time absent.

For these reasons, it was perceived that people often do not take sick absence when they need to, or they return before they are ready. It was noted that despite an observed increase in mental health issues, absence for psychological reasons had not increased, the conclusion being drawn that there is under-reporting because people are not going sick but are ‘going to pieces’ in the workplace or are masking mental health issues with other absence reasons. People were said to return before they are ready. For those on

long term sick leave this can be forced by the move onto half pay after six months. They are sometimes put on restricted duties resulting in more pressure on their colleagues.

An example was given of sickness absence being reduced by a force's supportive attitude. A high proportion of women returning from maternity leave were immediately going on long term sick (for reasons not specified). The force set up a system of maternity SPOCs in each district, with experience or understanding of the issues, and, using a confidential social media platform over a secure network, enabled people to discuss queries and offload concerns, resulting in greatly reduced sickness on return from maternity. It was thought that such a simple solution could be replicated for other wellbeing themes.

## 3.5 Wellbeing support services

In this section we cover various aspects of wellbeing support services provided by forces:

- raising awareness of wellbeing and wellbeing promotional activity
- routine mental health support to prevent accumulated 'drip-drip' effect
- debriefing of specific incidents/experiences
- volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services
- reactive services (welfare departments, occupational health, counselling)
- physical health promotion and support

There were views that forces can be quite good at reactive wellbeing services and management, once staff have reached a critical point (although opinions on such provision varied, see *3.5.5 Reactive services (welfare departments, occupational health, counselling)*), but they are not so good at addressing what might drive people to that point and taking preventative measures. Widespread views were held that not enough was being done proactively to prevent long term build-up of mental ill health.

### 3.5.1 Raising awareness of wellbeing and wellbeing promotional activity

#### Written information about wellbeing services

It was thought information about wellbeing support needs to be better promoted and more easily accessed. Forces need to signpost people to wellbeing support structures and provide practical advice (such as action to take or a person/department to contact if someone has a specific issue). Examples were given of forces that do put up wellbeing information/promotional material on posters, such as on toilet doors, on noticeboards,

and on their intranets. There were varied views on how visible or accessible such material was, from it being thought not difficult for the workforce to know what wellbeing support is available to being thought hidden away. On an intranet it should be on the homepage so is easily visible. Examples were given of information said to be dispersed rather than in one place, or not up to date. Supervisors need training in what support the force makes available.

## **Mental health awareness training**

There were repeated views that mental health training should be available for all, such as in recognising signs of mental ill health in self and others. It was said that in some forces there was not much provision and no agreed standard, in comparison to, for example, officer safety training. An example was given of a two-day mental health workshop ('Live Well Feel Well') being positively received. Although there can be abstraction issues - noted with irony - so the suggestion was made that perhaps it should be mandatory. Similarly, a force ran weekly wellbeing courses, but it was not structured around shifts or working patterns so many people unable to attend. Another force was reported to have a wellbeing support group, which runs a mental health awareness week, though the group is limited to a particular department.

## **Promotional events and activities**

There were mixed views over provision of wellbeing events and promotional activities by forces.

Some were thought to be insincere, a 'token gesture', 'lip service' or just 'patching over' issues (see also *3.4.5 Role of senior leadership in wellbeing*). These included: a wellbeing week with activities including massage, fruit basket and barbecue; the offer of 'a head massage and a smoothie'; and information on walks people might want to do on their day off.

There were varied views of a force's wellbeing bus, which tours the force throughout year, offering mental and physical health checks; some were appreciative, but another view was that it just did things a GP could do (measurements such as blood pressure or weight).

Other activities were more appreciated, such as provision of flu jabs (or vouchers for them), health checks, massages, yoga, awareness talks about, for example, cancer or Alzheimer's Disease, and cold weather 'survival kits' (with lip balm, hand warmers and tissues) issued to frontline officers. There was an example of a motivational speaker being brought in. A suggestion was made to bring in professionals to provide advice on, for example, diet, lifestyle, sleep, meditation, mindfulness and yoga.

As with awareness training and support groups, such activities were not easy to access for all; this was a factor in the views of insincerity. It was said to be easier for office-based staff working office hours in central locations to attend, but less accessible to some of the workforce who need these services most, such as those working out on the streets, working shift patterns and in outstations. It was repeatedly said forces should be providing them in places and at times that more people will be able to access.

Other force wellbeing initiatives that were mentioned appreciatively included:

- giving all officers two 'wellbeing days' in recognition of the stress of the job
- a meal break campaign
- doing work to reduce bureaucracy and other hindrance stressors
- the introduction of mental health triage in the control room, because so many calls are not about crime, which was said to give officers and staff more confidence

### 3.5.2 Routine mental health support to prevent accumulated 'drip-drip' effect

Views were expressed about staff having great resilience and putting up with the stresses of the job because of their love for the work and the people they work with. They can ignore the build-up of experiences – the so called 'drip-drip' effect - until it has an overt impact on their mental health. This can be after some years, perhaps not until they have left the police service.

"Continuous exposure to trauma that isn't treated makes officers go off ill and often not during service, but in retirement."

(Inspector/superintendent)

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The importance of managers and supervisors knowing their staff and recognising the problems they experience, in order they can intervene and provide necessary support or treatment, was cited. However, difficulties were mentioned about supervisors and those they manage having adequate time and opportunity to regularly discuss work and wellbeing and identify signs of mental ill health early and deal promptly with problems. The personal touch was said to be more difficult to maintain, for example sergeants are less able to go out with their teams because they are more tied to the office and supervisors have more people to manage. As described previously (see 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*), people felt they have less opportunity and space to spend informal time socialising and decompressing with their peers and managers.

Examples were given of officers and police staff whose roles routinely expose them to stressful experiences, or to offensive or abusive material, but who said they receive no

regular wellbeing support. They included a staff member exposed to indecent images of children who felt they received no support other than filling in an annual psychological screening questionnaire; in the participant's view a stress management consultant only was brought in after it became evident that the mental health of people in abuse investigation units was being adversely affected. However, that service was said to no longer be provided. Staff who do not see such images but have to read descriptions and write reports, were said also to be affected, but can feel they do not have the right to be as they do not have same exposure.

There were views that people should take personal responsibility for discussing their wellbeing with their managers. However, it was also felt that more should be done to facilitate discussion on a regular and routine basis. This would not necessarily be with a manager, but could be with a peer support network, or with a welfare or mental health professional. Various suggestions, listed below, were made for ways in which forces can provide better routine wellbeing support to staff, including some examples of existing good provision.

- A regular progress and welfare meeting to be held between staff and line manager, one to one, for example every two to three months.
- An example was given of a force where it is supervisors' responsibility to identify signs of ill health in those they manage. They have training, and will talk to staff after incidents, and make referrals as necessary.
- Freedom to talk informally, without it being an official, bureaucratic process, with no reports required, or labelling of individuals.
- Staff should be able to access wellbeing support outside their chain of command, instead of or as well as their line manager. This would provide expertise and relieve pressure on line managers. Independent support might be important if managers are the source of their problems (for example, ordering someone to single crew, refusing leave). Suggestions and examples given included:
  - A regular check up with a mental health professional, or welfare officer, for example every six or 12 months. This should perhaps be mandatory. However, potential difficulties were evident from examples of supposedly mandatory checks not taking place and of a request being made for mandatory health checks to be built into the calendar but being told by HR that it did not have enough staff to provide to them to all.
  - A welfare officer or mental health professional based at offices or stations that people can approach, or who regularly travels around all stations and offices, so they are not a stranger to the workforce.
  - Provision of mentors or buddies with whom both new and experienced staff can talk informally about welfare (and performance); someone who is a good listener and knows the job.

- A suggestion was made to increase chaplaincy services.
- An example was given of a force holding open door sessions where people can talk about worrying issues.
- An example was given of a force with a mental health support network including periodic meetings for those with problems to talk and get peer support.
- See also 3.5.4 Volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services.
- It was also thought that some assessments or checks for people in certain roles should be conducted with health or psychology professionals. This included being done in advance of people being placed.
  - An example was given of mandatory assessments being conducted with a psychologist for certain roles (such as covert policing).
  - Clinical supervision was proposed for, for example, abuse investigators.
  - An example was given of having a monthly stress management consultant meeting that worked well.
  - A suggestion that role profiling and psychometric testing should be done for all new people once they have been recruited to ensure that they are being put into roles that they are suited for:

"I didn't have it before I started and we work in a unit where you're dealing with the child abuse, the sex abuse, the highest risk DV side of things... and that testing isn't done early on to identify those that might need a little bit more help or might not be suitable to go into those roles." (Member of police staff)

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However, it was also considered very important that there is trust in the process and people feel comfortable being able to talk without the fear that they will lose their job if considered unsuited. An example was given of psychometric testing being promised but not delivered.

- A different kind of regular support for wellbeing was the suggestion to provide residential recuperation time to all, for example a week or two annually. The potential issue of cost and/or staffing cover were noted but health benefits were evident, based on personal experience.

"Let every officer once a year go to their convalescence home. I went to Flint House not long ago, and those two weeks away from work were fabulous. I know I did it on the backend of bereavement of [...], but brilliant. Two weeks away from work, and whether you can manage it, it is resources again, but that two weeks of actually finding themselves again, getting themselves rested, working out, nice food. They can talk

to people if they want to, if they're suffering with mental health issues.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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### 3.5.3 Debriefing of specific incidents/experiences

As well as ongoing or routine provisions, debriefing after specific incidents or experiences, to mentally process them and be able to move on, was seen as an important means of preventing long term negative effects on mental health. Varied experiences were recounted of when debriefings had or had not been conducted following difficult traumatic, critical incidents and calls; and when they were conducted, about their effectiveness.

Various examples were given of officers and police staff working in roles that involve exposure to trauma, both on the streets and in offices - such as call handlers who talk to suicidal people and investigators who view indecent images - who did not receive any debriefing, or the debriefing received was adequate. Participants' views and experiences included the following.

- A force seen as complacent about what is normal for people to have to mentally deal with.
- Supervisors not always asking how someone is or if they want to talk about an experience.
- Not being debriefed after traumatic incidents, for example after seeing a decapitated body, so taking the effects home.
- Call handlers not having support in place to talk following a difficult call. Including the view that they might want to talk to someone outside the control room.
- Control room staff not receiving debriefing or welfare checks unlike officers involved in the same incidents.
- Intended debriefing processes not taking place as promised or intended, or only after a long interval.
  - Mandatory assessments (for example of a SOCO) that are supposed to be done by the line manager only happen if requested.
  - Different experiences as to whether 'hot debriefing' – before people leave the scene, at the end of the shift or the next day – happen.
- People being invited to critical incident debriefing by email, with the risk of them being unable to attend or not attending by choice (which can mean the incident is not processed)
- Ineffective debriefings, with poorly trained debriefers, following a formal script, held in an inconducive environment

For their part, it was said that supervisors, such as sergeants, can find it difficult to get a team that requires such debriefing together. They can be conscious of their team's wellbeing but might not think of their own, perhaps until days later.

Participants proposed various things they wanted to see in place and gave examples of what they considered to be good practice, including the following.

- Debriefings of those involved in an incident, immediately afterwards. It varied as to how people wanted them conducted, and with whom.
- One view was there should be a formal target to see an officer at a point of crisis, not rely on voluntary/charity provisions (see 3.5.4 *Volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services* regarding such provision).
- Another view was that Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), or similar assessments, could be appropriate. An example was given of constables and PCSOs involved in same incident all sitting down to discuss it immediately with a TRiM practitioner.
- Clinical supervision might be required for some roles/incidents, such as abuse investigators.
- An example was given of a preference for informal debriefings conducted with the other officers and staff involved, not a formal process with sergeants/inspectors whereby people might be less willing to engage.
- A chat with a line manager/supervisor might be enough in some instances.
- There should be a structure in call centres whereby supervisors talk to staff about traumatic incidents. Allow call handlers a few minutes away from the phones after a difficult call.
- Debriefing should be somewhere quiet, comfortable, with tea/coffee.
- There was a view that debriefing should be mandatory, because people might not acknowledge or be aware of the need for it in themselves. This would also help mitigate stigma about seeking help or admitting issues, address desensitisation and help people become more used to talking.
- HR or welfare staff could monitor command and control systems and contact local sergeants to ask if any support was needed. An email from a wellbeing officer could be sent to individuals involved soon after involvement in an incident, asking them to grade the severity of the experience from 0 to 10.
- Provide a forum such as an open-door session where people can talk about issues/worries.
- All staff should receive training in coping with trauma.

### 3.5.4 Volunteer/non-professional wellbeing services

There were many examples of forces with wellbeing services provided by workforce volunteers or non-healthcare professionals, to help their colleagues deal with both the

accumulation of stress and the processing of specific incidents/experiences. These services included TRiM, Blue Light Champions, Mental Health First Aiders, RedArc, mental health champions, peer supporters and similar schemes.

There were varied views as to the level and effectiveness of such schemes. They were considered a good way of raising awareness of mental health and providing an outlet for the 'drip-drip' impact on mental wellbeing; for example, one force's Blue Light Champions scheme was described as a 'brilliant framework'. Wellbeing in forces was considered to have improved. Examples of provisions that participants thought effective included the following.

- A force with comprehensive arrangements: a number of officers were trained in TRiM to deal with Type 1 trauma (single critical incident), helping to 'defuse' people and signpost them to further help in a 48 to 72-hour window. They deal with hundreds of referrals per month. The same force had recruited many staff and officer volunteers to be 'mental health peer supporters', trained to offer support to workers and managers, including linking them to occupational health or referring them externally. Both schemes were thought to have the advantage of being informal, outside occupational health and prior to it being required.
- A force perceived to have a strong mental health service provision, including a wellbeing team, a wellbeing force lead, TRiM practitioners and wellbeing ambassadors who provide a signposting service to listen and direct or encourage people to contact the appropriate service.
- The Police Federation's RedArc service being positively viewed; whereby people can self-refer for mental or physical health triage and are then taken through counselling or other services as required.
- PCSOs in a force being TRiM trained.
- Case reports being tagged with names of staff exposed to trauma and TRiM practitioners automatically alerted.

Some problems and deficiencies with these schemes were identified, along with some suggestions, including the following.

- Forces need to recognise the volunteers' need for time, support and training to perform the role and provide necessary facilities or infrastructure.
- It was repeatedly mentioned that TRiM practitioners, Blue Light Champions and so on are volunteers who have to fit the role into their other duties; the schemes rely on a 'coalition of the willing'.
- People do not always have time to perform the role effectively. It was said that as a result provision is patchy. An example was given of a force without TRiM but which had potential volunteers; however, unless overtime was offered it would have to be fitted into the day-to-day role.

- Provisions were said not to be available to middle managers; it was thought everyone should have access.
- Examples were given of schemes not being well-managed or poor service provided, such as: a member of police staff in a call handling area taking traumatic call but not being asked by a practitioner in the department if they wanted to talk, and a superficial assessment consisting of a superintendent asking the colleague of a person involved in an incident how they were, not the person directly.
- The existence of schemes needs better advertising, for example in briefings or an email to all, explaining what it is and including assurances of confidentiality.
- The workforce should have easy access to lists of people such as mental health practitioners and buddies they can talk to.

### 3.5.5 Reactive services (welfare departments, occupational health, counselling)

In this section we consider the services that are required once a member of the workforce's need for professional mental health support or treatment has been identified.

There were widespread views that welfare departments, occupational health and counselling service provision, whether provided within-force or externally, was often inadequate, in terms of access, timing, level of provision and expertise of practitioners. Few examples were given of positive experiences of services.

It was felt that the police service contributes to the levels and lengths of staff illness by not providing the required care. Absence, for example due to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, was said to be longer - perhaps considerably - than it might be if care was better. Staff could return to full duties more quickly and the numbers on special/recuperative duties be reduced.

#### **Forces' internal welfare service provision**

There were views among participants that their forces' own welfare or HR departments do not have adequate capacity; some forces were said to be understaffed, others not to have any welfare staff. Instead much of the responsibility has passed to external occupational health providers, which contributes to difficulty getting issues dealt with. There was a view critical of outsourcing.

Those welfare staff who remain were thought to no longer deal with members of the workforce day to day, are not used to communicating with them and to have lost local knowledge.

There were views that forces' own welfare staff are not well trained or qualified and are not equipped to deal with the mental health problems they have referred to them, for example:

“Sometimes you do ring them up and you're just thinking have you actually got a clue what you're talking about. It's almost like they have a tick sheet, they've asked you this question, asked you that question and they don't really know.” (Member of police staff)

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Examples were given of a mental health nurse who did not know what to do for a referred person, and of someone being moved from one department due to a mental health issue only to be put in another which it was thought would be more detrimental to them.

There was an opinion that there are people who take welfare roles to add to their CV to help with promotion aspirations.

It was said that referral to occupational health was almost used as a threat against people rather than to help them:

“It's like if you don't pull yourself together I'm going to refer you to occupational health, and it's like hang on, is this supposed to be positive or - it is almost like if you're not coping then you're going to be sent ... to the headmaster's office.” (Member of police staff)

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Participants wanted to see properly trained welfare or occupational health staff. This included people with experience of police jobs or who know the work and understand the issues faced. Calls were made for welfare officers, or other mental health staff, to become more familiar with the workforce by visiting stations or accompanying the workforce on their duties, to better understand the demands they face. An example was given of a force formerly having occupational health officers.

People preferred that welfare or occupational health staff can be personally contacted – by phone or located in same building – rather than an insistence on using online services, which not everyone wants or is able to use. They want a named contact, a consistent person to talk to, not a 'generic' department where it is difficult to know who to contact. For example:

“You want these people in an office on maybe the next floor from you.”  
... “You do need a human being.” ... “Not someone you can't get hold of because their voicemail box is full. You don't know their names.”  
(Members of police staff)

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## **Access to external mental health services: length of time, distance and method of contact**

There were widespread comments that access to mental health services that people are referred to by their forces needs to be quicker. Various examples were given of it taking weeks to receive even an initial appointment or call after referral to occupational health or counselling services. In some instances there was then further delay between that initial contact and receiving the necessary treatment or counselling. Examples were cited of people who had attempted suicide or felt suicidal not getting the immediate help they badly needed.

Examples of bureaucracy hindering the receipt of services were given, including:

- calls from occupational health/the counselling service that must be answered within a certain period or number of attempts, otherwise the referral must be redone
- being required to see your GP before you can be referred to occupational health or counselling, adding to the length of time; the necessity of this was questioned

It was felt mental health services need to be closer to the people who are referred to them. They should be local to the user, not in another part of the country, as can be the case when provision outsourced, or forces use shared services. Much time may need to be taken out of the working day to visit a distant service. It was suggested that people be able to use another force's service if geographically closer to where they live.

Personal contact was seen as important, not online or automated telephone, which cannot recognise a 'cry for help'. The shortcomings of an experience of an independent confidential counselling service, for a bereavement case, were described: triage by telephone and a counsellor unaware of the case details.

However, there was an example in one force of an employee assistance programme that provides good support by telephone; by 'clever' questioning, it can in some instances help someone identify their problem and resolve their own issues. This could cut the resolution time and address the travel issue.

## **Quantity/level of counselling provision**

The need to assess and treat cases on their individual merits was identified, rather than there being a fixed maximum number of counselling sessions. Examples were given of the number of counselling sessions offered, such as six, being insufficient. Some cases can take much longer to resolve. They included people having to continue treatment elsewhere, in their own time, at their own expense. It was felt people should be afforded time and commitment to deal with issue properly, on individual basis. If forces are going to provide the service it was said they should do it properly, because it could be

unhelpful or even dangerous to start a course that cannot be finished; the person's issue might be unresolved and they be left to deal with the problem alone. There was a view that there should be a minimum ceiling of ten sessions.

A call was made to reinstate couples counselling, to tackle relationship breakdown or difficulties caused by police jobs.

A call was made for provision of services to be available to all who need it. It should not be limited to certain roles, like CID; response officers, for example, never know what they might encounter in their work.

## General solutions and national approaches to wellbeing services

Several proposals for general and national level solutions were put forward.

- A call for provision of mental health services to be nationally consistent.
- A view that occupational health services are generic but should be specific to the demands of policing.
- A proposal for a national framework whereby police and other public sector emergency service frontline workers can be fast tracked to see a GP or other medical professional within a maximum time
- A suggestion was made for a robust framework (a “bulletproof charter”) whereby wellbeing had to be taken into consideration in everything the police do as an underlying principle or overriding factor akin to the National Decision Model. For example, this would stop inspectors pressuring sergeants to get absent people back to work to deal with a staff shortage.
- The view was held that the police should invest in wellbeing to save in the long term. A wealth of research was said to support this, such as that the NHS saves ten times what it spends on wellbeing.
- A suggestion was made to invest in health insurance and private health care for the workforce.

### 3.5.6 Physical health promotion and support

The importance of good physical health was mentioned, in its own right and being beneficial to mental wellbeing. Some suggestions were made as to how forces could promote it.

- Build physical fitness into the daily routine/provide fitness time in shift patterns (see also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*).

- An example was given of a force trying to invest in its workforce's physical health, such as by taking part in a global fitness challenge.
- Provide staff doing sedentary work with opportunities to encourage movement and aid blood circulation; for example, provide equipment at the desk or an exercise bike in the break room.
- Provide gyms or other physical recreation facilities that can be accessed by all staff. Some forces, or departments/teams within a force, have facilities, others not (see also 3.2.6 *Facilities/space for day-to day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*).
  - An example was given of gym access being withdrawn from some members of the workforce because it was not accessible to others so thought unfair.
  - Provide staff with discounts at commercial gyms.
  - Allow staff to use facilities (such as gyms, showers) at other police stations/buildings than their own.
- Provide physiotherapists and physio facilities in-house.

## 4 Professional Development

In this chapter we present findings about the professional development of the workforce. This pillar was defined within the workshops as relating to performance and development activities and career aspirations, and how these can be supported. Discussions covered various topics including:

- recruitment and initial training (4.1)
- continuing professional development (4.2)
- promotion and leadership development (4.3)
- quality and methods of, and ability to access, training (4.4)

As previously explained in the Introduction, all the findings reported are the participants' experiences, opinions and suggestions, not the ONS authors' or the police service's views. The accuracy of participant's perceptions has not been assessed by ONS.

### 4.1 Recruitment and initial training

This section will cover:

- the recruitment of police officers and staff
- the initial training (which refers to both formal training and the probationary period) of new recruits

#### 4.1.1 Recruitment

##### **Applicants' life experience and expectations**

Comments were made that the police as an organisation are recruiting people at a younger age and with less work experience than past recruits and that, consequently, these new recruits are not prepared for the realities of policing:

"No idea what they're coming into; they've lived in a society where they are wrapped up in cotton wool an awful lot. They come into this job and their mental health or their ability to cope with certain situations is just not evident from day one." (Inspector/superintendent)

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The expectations of applicants were not considered to be managed well in the recruitment process. There was a feeling that new recruits apply with their focus on the exciting side of policing, not realising that the majority of time is not spent on these tasks.

Participants gave examples of recruitment interviews where candidates had stated they do not like confrontation or were shocked by the need to work different shift patterns and possibilities of cancelled rest days. However, it was suggested that these unrealistic expectations may be a generational phenomenon related to people who have recently reached adulthood - a “millennial thing” - and not unique to policing. It was questioned whether it was possible to change this culture or whether policing had to adapt to the changing expectations of the younger generation and try to be more engaging as an organisation.

The need to focus on recruiting people with the attributes necessary to cope with the situations they would have to face within frontline policing was repeatedly mentioned. A suggestion was made for forces to recruit people who have worked in jobs where they have had to deal with the public. Participants with this kind of experience found that it had helped to prepare them for the confrontational situations they would later be put into within policing, for example:

"I went and worked in a busy pub... then I joined the police because then I thought right I'm ready for it. I've done that, I've had confrontation, I've grown up and I've toughened up."

(Constable/sergeant)

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Moving away from recruiting graduates and focusing instead on encouraging police apprenticeships where people are introduced into the organisation more slowly was also suggested:

"Other industries are actually now going back to apprenticeships... the sort of slow-learn and the slow-burn." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was proposed that an effective way of ensuring that those with the right skills and experiences are being recruited is to involve frontline police constables in interviewing potential new officers. An example of a force already doing this was given.

## **The application process**

There were comments that the application process has changed over time with a greater focus on things like personality questionnaires and profiling, rather than life experience and personal resilience. There was a feeling that this process is not necessarily effective at identifying the best people for the job. An example was given of a PCSO who had applied to become a police constable within their own force but had not passed the initial recruitment process because the questionnaire they were required to fill in suggested that they were not suitable to the force:

“Even though I already work for the organisation, there’s now a questionnaire at the beginning, which apparently I wasn’t the right sort of person.” (Member of police staff)

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This example was not unique, with others citing cases where those considered capable had failed to pass the application while those with seemingly less ability passed.

The feedback process after an interview was seen to be lacking. For example, a line manager spoke about one of their PCSOs who they felt would be a good officer but had failed the recruitment to become a constable twice without being given an explanation why and therefore struggled to know what skills they needed to develop. There were references to courses teaching people how to pass the recruitment process, but this was not considered useful because they were said to just be taught what to say rather the process itself being an assessment of their capabilities.

There was a call for the application process to be amended to be more practically based so that interviewers can more effectively evaluate the personal resilience of applicants and their suitability for the job before they are recruited:

"Give them two days residential so that we can talk and see how they communicate, see how they deal with stressful situations, see how they can deal with decision making, all that type of thing..."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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There was a suggestion that forces should look to the army for ideas of good practice because there was a perception that they focus on the qualities and experiences of the person applying rather than just assessing them against a set process.

## **Diversity of the workforce**

The feeling that forces should be recruiting people with a wide range of characteristics, experiences and backgrounds was expressed. It was thought forces should ensure the workforce is diverse and representative of the community in the local area, for example regarding ethnicity and socio-economic group.

A perceived requirement for degree-level qualifications on entering police was debated. There was a general agreement that degrees should not be a necessity for entering policing because new recruits are able to learn the skills they need on the job. Those with degrees felt that it had helped them in policing but did not feel moving towards recruiting only graduates would be appropriate because it could miss out on other good candidates. Having diversity in the workforce in terms of educational attainment should be the aim:

"We need some graduates, but we also need some people from school"  
(Constable/sergeant).

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## 4.1.2 Initial training

### General training points

There was a repeated perception that the training given to new recruits (both officers and police staff) is often inadequate. It was felt that training is rushed and sometimes outdated so new recruits do not have the skills they need to perform effectively and are ill-prepared for what they will see and experience within their role. This lack of adequate training results in increased pressure on both the individual and their colleagues, with issues of workforce retention evident:

"We're just getting people to come in and do something without actually giving them the skills behind it and expecting them just to hit the ground running. Some people do it, some people can do it and thrive on it, but other people sink and then eventually go off, because they can't deal with the stress with all the demand." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was highlighted that some areas of policing are very structured in their approach to training and accreditation (such as Firearms Command, Public Order Command and Crimes in Action) but that this structure does not exist for other specialist areas and 'mainstream' police work. An overarching suggestion was made to learn from where training is working well and replicate the good practice across policing.

### Initial training of police staff

Role specific issues with initial training were identified by police staff.

- A lack of training for PCSOs, particularly when joining newly created teams (for example a drugs task force) or taking on additional responsibilities.
- No formalised training structure for Police Staff Investigators (PSIs) to gain qualifications necessary for their role. Those recruited are not being given the training to bring them up to required standard, for example the Initial Crime Investigators Development Programme. Instead, ex-detectives have been brought back because they already have the necessary qualifications.
- Insufficient first aid training, for example, for those working in custody or for PSIs who are often the first responders on a scene.
- Inadequate mental health training for PSIs in how to deal with members of the public who had mental health issues or were experiencing trauma. For example, not knowing what to say to family members of a suicide or of someone involved in a road traffic accident.

There were also calls for training of police staff in the control room to be more focused on how police officers work, so they are better equipped to deal with calls efficiently when they come in rather than them having to be referred to an officer.

A lack of line manager support for training was felt to compound issues. For example, police staff discussed being proactive in finding relevant training to fill a perceived gap in their knowledge or experience, but not being supported by their line manager or given time to complete it.

It was commented upon that people who are recruited individually rather than as part of a general intake can end up missing out on any real introduction into the organisation. There was a suggestion that there could be an induction day every few months for all new staff to ensure that everyone is captured.

## **Initial training of officers**

There was a feeling among officers that new recruits are not being given enough time to learn and practice the skills they will need on the front line. An example was provided of a student who had been approved to work independently but had never witnessed an interview before. Reference was also made to a lack of emphasis on administrative requirements (for example, completing files) during initial training. It was suggested that new recruits should be repeatedly practicing the basics in training school so that these processes become automatic rather than being given a brief, broad introduction to many things.

The initial training provided to new recruits was not seen to match with the reality of frontline policing. Participants who had been recruited as officers in the recent past spoke about how they had felt demotivated to find that the training they had been given on what problems they would face and how they should solve them was quite different from the advice they were then given 'on the ground'. A reason given for this issue was training being delivered by external trainers who do not have experience of policing on the front line. It was felt that the training should be updated to ensure it is aligned to real-world situations and that potentially new PCs should be taught by officers who understand the reality of the job rather than police staff without frontline policing experience.

There were calls for specific training or courses to be included in initial training of new officers.

- Police National Computer: "You are going to be needing these facilities from your day one in the job." (Constable/sergeant)
- Blue light, Taser, Police Support Unit (commonly known as public order training) and search training: in some forces officers were said to not get this training until they

have been in for two years, but it was suggested they may require these skills earlier in response roles if there are not experienced officers on shift. However, there was a concern that not all drivers are suitable for blue light driving and therefore there was some disagreement about whether this training should be offered to everyone.

- First aid training: there were calls for an increase in the medical training given to officers because the current training was not felt to be adequate for the demands of the role:

"We go to jobs where we are first on the scene at serious car accidents, drugs overdoses, stabbings, and what do we get, some St John's Ambulance input on how to put a bandage around someone's head. It's grossly inadequate." (Constable/sergeant)

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There was also a call for there to be greater preparation of new recruits for the confrontational and dangerous situations they will inevitably be put in. One participant spoke of an experience where a new officer had suffered a minor assault during one of their shifts and was left visibly shaking for the rest of the shift and reluctant to go back out. Although there was appreciation that being assaulted is clearly never right, it was something which officers used to be prepared for because they knew it was the nature of the job.

Similarly, there was not felt to be sufficient preparation of new recruits for the realities of what they are expected to deal with and see within their role like there was in the past:

"When I went through Hendon it was post-mortems, it was photographs. When you're talking about crime scenes, when you're talking about RTCs, there were photos." (Constable/sergeant)

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The initial training that new officers used to have where they spent a number of weeks together at training school and got to know their peers and colleagues was felt to have been a good opportunity for developing personal resilience necessary for policing. Having the 'camaraderie' and social interaction amongst peers helped to create a support network which was felt beneficial for new recruits.

It was suggested that new recruits should have greater street duties experience within their training so that they are not put in situations where they are expected to deal with incidents such as stabbings without being prepared. A formalised probationer pathway was described as having previously existed in one force which involved a street duties course, three months in CID and three months in safer neighbourhoods. It was felt that this pathway had worked well in giving new recruits a greater understanding of the realities of frontline policing as well as teaching them the core skills and knowledge they needed before they were put into a team:

"You had an officer who knew how to take a CRIS report, had interviewed somebody, had got all the basics, and then you put them on response team and you whanged them in a car and you said right 999 calls, off you go to the estate." (Constable/sergeant)

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## **Mentoring and on the job support for new recruits**

The lack of mentoring and on-the-job support for new recruits after their initial training was repeatedly raised as an issue by both officers and police staff, for example:

"You're supposed to be tutored for however many shifts and that doesn't happen and you find yourself sat on your own when you shouldn't be, without the confidence or the experience to be able to do the job. So you are dropped in it sometimes." (Member of police staff)

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The lack of experienced constables available on the front line was a real concern for officers especially as line managers no longer felt that they had the time needed to focus on the development of their new recruits. There were multiple references to probationers relying on other probationers, or those only recently out of their probation, for advice. Those who had been in the job for a while compared this to when they joined policing and experienced officers were available to mentor them:

"When we joined you literally had the little folded up piece of paper in your pocket with officers' numbers of who to go to, like the traffic guru." (Constable/sergeant)

"The sergeant who was in charge of the shift would say right who's my most experienced officer? Right you're going out with the newbie." (Constable/sergeant)

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There were comments that new officers and police staff will leave policing if they are not adequately supported and developed. To reduce this potential issue with retention, it was suggested that each recruit could have three people (a tutor, assessor and sergeant) monitoring development during the first two years. Each of these people could be responsible for separate aspects of support and development of the individual, such as supporting their initial training, monitoring their work towards the diploma and providing ongoing line manager support:

"So that this officer knows I've got a few people who actually care about me and they're going to carry me through that two-year process. So they come out the other end a lot more confident." (Constable/sergeant)

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## Probationer portfolios and diplomas

There were mixed views on the College of Policing's decision to introduce a system requiring every probationer to complete a portfolio or diploma within their first two years. There were feelings that it was not a useful exercise and it is just 'writing for the sake of writing'. However, there were also comments that the lack of qualifications earned within the police can be a limitation if applying for jobs elsewhere and therefore the move towards formally recognising policing experiences and skills might be appropriate:

"You can be as qualified as you want in policing, but you go outside and it means nothing, because the outside world doesn't see those skills and actually a lot of skills we have are way more than any qualification in the outside world, because you're dealing with such a variety of things." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was suggested that it would be useful for probationer diplomas or portfolios to focus more on practical skills and upskilling people for their role. For example, response officers are now expected to do a lot more in terms of investigations and there would therefore be value in upskilling them with interview training and investigative skills. The Chief Inspectors leadership course was given as an example of a much more practically based qualification which the organisation could look to adapt for all ranks.

There was a view that more experienced members of the workforce can feel separated by not having opportunities to gain the same qualifications offered to new recruits. However, there was also some understanding that it is not always feasible to offer the same opportunities to all current staff.

It was felt that if the organisation is going to fund any degrees or qualifications, there should be a way of claiming back the money from the individual if they leave before a certain time period has passed.

## 4.2 Continuing professional development

In this section we report on findings about continuing professional development (CPD), including:

- building skills and expertise in current role
- lateral development and career progression
- barriers to development
- the role of the Professional Development Review (PDR) in supporting development
- the line manager's role in supporting development
- the force or organisational role in supporting development

## 4.2.1 Building skills and expertise in current role

There were concerns raised that there is not enough of an emphasis on encouraging the front line to keep building upon their skills and expertise in their current role, particularly when the demands of the role, or on policing as an organisation, change. The ability to access necessary training was repeatedly mentioned an issue for the front line but this will be discussed in more depth within a later section (see *4.4.2 Accessing training*).

### Keeping knowledge and skills up-to-date

The importance of keeping an individual's knowledge and skills up-to-date was not seen to be sufficiently focused upon. For example, issues were raised about officers in specialist roles being brought back into response or neighbourhood teams and seeming unaware of how much the role has changed, particularly in terms of the administrative tasks involved. The need for officers to always be able to perform a response role was expressed:

"There also has to be a reminder that police officers are police officers, and every police officer should be capable of doing a response role."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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The desire for officers to receive better training in dealing with members of the public with mental health issues was repeatedly mentioned (see also *3.3.1 External demand and the relationship with partner agencies*). There were calls for more training on this to be included within officers initial training (see also *4.1.2 Initial training*) and for regular, refresher training to be introduced, as it is with Officer Safety training, to ensure that the appropriate level of skills and knowledge are maintained. Staff in one force mentioned that their force was looking into this issue and planning to introduce a set standard of mental health training into their training days.

There was a call for increased training on IT systems when they are brought in or updated to ensure that officers and staff have the capability to use them effectively. A participant who had recently moved from a force using Niche expressed concern that their new force had not yet begun training on how to use the same system considering it was intended to be introduced within the next year:

"I know that there's 18 months' worth of training. Allegedly this is coming in less than 12 months. I've not seen anybody have any training on it yet." (Constable/sergeant)

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Introducing training on software packages such as Microsoft Office, particularly when there are new releases, was suggested as a simple way of building capability and increasing efficiency in the workforce:

"Everybody's sat there trying to muddle together PowerPoints without knowing how to do it... if we trained people how to do it in the first place, it might be that bit quicker. Same with Excel, same with Word."  
(Member of police staff)

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The legal profession was cited as having a legislative requirement to ensure its members engage in a certain amount of development activities each year to maintain their professional licence. It was felt that policing should have the same requirement in place to ensure that officers and police staff are keeping their knowledge and skills up-to-date. There is a considerable amount of legislation (the example of the new Bail Act was mentioned) which they are expected to be aware of and understand. This was said to often be far more complicated than a simple e-learning package can cover (see also *4.4.1 Methods of training*) but there is not enough protected time currently available to ensure adequate training is taking place. Having a national framework around continuing professional development could help to create more of a learning culture which it was felt the police is currently lacking.

Bringing back Special Priority Payments for those who complete all their necessary training each year might also be an effective way of encouraging people to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date:

"You only got that at the end of the year if you'd done all the courses, the PST (Personal Safety Training), first aid, if you had a really good sickness record and you had to tick all those boxes... I guarantee everybody did them to get their bonus at the end of the year."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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## Upskilling to meet changing demands

There was not felt to be enough upskilling of individuals when the demands of their role change. For example, the introduction of a scheme in one force has increased the expectation for officers in response roles to take on additional investigative responsibilities. However, a lack of time, support and training of these officers to the build the skills necessary to perform their additional tasks was identified:

"No-one on team has been given an ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) interviewing course, but yet we're supposed to be doing that."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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(See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and roles.*)

As an organisation, policing needs to be constantly upskilling the workforce and renewing knowledge on the front line to keep up with changing crime and technological advances that could aid policing. One area where policing was felt to be particularly falling behind was in their understanding of how to deal with online crime:

“Cybercrime is huge and just none of us really know how to deal with it... we underestimated it completely how things have changed and we haven’t kept up with it.” (Constable/sergeant)

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There was felt to be a real need for investment in this area to develop the skills and expertise necessary to tackle it.

It was suggested that forces should be encouraging individuals to build their expertise in, and become 'force leads' for, certain areas of policing. These individuals could be responsible for collecting all the local good practice in their area and would provide a single point of contact for others in the force looking for information on a specific topic. An example was given of an individual who had recognised an 'evidence gap' in policing and had written a journal about the research they had done in this area. Encouraging this type of behaviour was seen to be a simple way of upskilling officers and staff as well as ensuring that expertise is being built and shared effectively. It was suggested that there should be some reward and recognition for officers and police staff willing to take on this additional responsibility.

## Peer to peer knowledge sharing

There was concern raised about the lack of peer-to-peer knowledge sharing within forces. Issues identified by the front line included:

- team briefings not always happening
- limited opportunity to speak to those with their department working different shifts.
- a lack of knowledge about what other teams do

### *Team briefings*

The importance of regular team briefings for providing officers and police staff the time to be updated on any changes and ask questions was commented upon:

“How can you run a department and you never have a briefing?... even if it’s just once a fortnight to get each team together.” (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that better use could be made of the team briefings to encourage peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, particularly given the issues with accessing formal classroom training (see also 4.4.2 *Accessing training*). For example, there could be more encouragement in the morning briefings for learning and sharing from the previous

shift so that people can learn from one another's experiences of what went well and what could have been improved.

#### *Different shifts within a department*

The lack of opportunity to speak to those working other shifts was described as leading to inconsistencies within departments in the way things are dealt with because knowledge and working methods are not being shared. It was suggested that peer-to-peer knowledge sharing time between those working different shifts could be built into training days to try to prevent some of these issues (see also *4.4.1 Methods of training*).

#### *Different departments*

There was felt to be a lot of overlap in work done in different departments and that there should be more emphasis on increasing understanding of how each other's roles work as a way of creating better working relationships and upskilling the workforce:

"Understanding what the specialists think and do, actually makes you more aware of what you shouldn't do." (Member of police staff)

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(See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and roles*.)

Forces that had introduced short shadowing opportunities to other units or departments found them to be very successful, with many benefits to the workforce in terms of increasing knowledge, broadening experience and making new contacts:

"It is CPD, it's one on one, it's free, with people doing the job anyway and it's a day out the office and they're coming back with so much experience, knowledge and joining the dots in who they can speak to and the contacts they're making and it's been really, really successful."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Officers who had been sent to the control room were said to have enjoyed the experience because they had gained a much greater insight into the process ("from the first call and right through, ANPR, FIM") which they do not normally get to see.

It was suggested that these short shadowing opportunities could be built into training days (where available). The knowledge gained from each experience could then be shared with the team. The longer-term impact of these opportunities was felt to outweigh any short-term impacts on resourcing:

"By investing a few hours here or there... you could reduce workload just by going 'oh actually I've just gone and had a chat with [another department], we don't need to fill out that part of the form, it's useless, we'll be wasting time'." (Member of police staff)

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The benefit of having longer attachments where there was felt to be a lot of overlap between teams was also discussed; with participants suggesting that a mandatory rotation should potentially be introduced where departments work closely together:

"You'll have response in the middle, what departments will they overlap with the most... investigative teams, your CID, volume crime teams, firearms maybe a little bit, dogs a tiny little bit... the more overlap you've got, the more requirement there will be to have an awareness of the skills that they've got, and the skills that they've got will benefit you because you've got that overlap in your area of the business... So if it just shades over, a day or two... maybe even a morning... just so you've got an awareness of what their capabilities are, what their demand is. But then when it comes to a volume crime team and you all interview, you all build files... that'll be a two/three-month mandatory rotation if you like." (Constable/sergeant)

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However, it was felt there would need to be caution about how longer attachments could impact upon wellbeing if people are not comfortable moving teams. It was suggested that attachments should be limited to two months maximum if they were going to be mandatory.

## **Additions to pay based on obtaining qualifications**

While the topic of pay was not within the scope of the review, the enhancement of pay based on obtaining professional qualifications was questioned. There was concern that it could increase issues with the undesirability of the response officer role because they are less likely to have specialist professional qualifications:

"They seem to be going down the route of every single professional qualification you get in the future will then give you something along your pay... but the more you get the less chance you are they're going to be on frontline response." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was felt that those on response should be encouraged to build their skills and be supported to remain in the role by being paid and rewarded for their experience accordingly. This was considered important because response officers were said to be the people who can reduce demand further up the line, if they have the right experience and expertise to deal with a situation effectively at the time without it needing to be escalated. (See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles.*)

There was a concern that linking pay to qualifications could result in supervisors earning less than the people they are managing which could impact on line management dynamics.

## 4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression

### Clarity of career pathways

It was repeatedly mentioned that there is no clear career path for officers or police staff, with people feeling that they do not know where they could go or what opportunities are available:

"There's loads of different roles that you didn't know were there in the first place, so there's no career map that says you can do that."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Participants from one force did feel that had clarity of their opportunities and that these were advertised well, but they thought that could be due to the small size of their force.

Potential ways for helping people to identify different roles available within policing included: an annual careers fair; a force mentoring scheme; specific career advisors; and bringing back the 'Orders and Instructions' booklet which was said to have been similar to a directory of all the roles available.

### Opportunities for those not looking for promotion

There was a feeling that often people are pushed towards promotion:

"All we seem to do is, 'you're really good you are, have you thought about promotion?'... why should I have to think about promotion in order to be recognised for the quality of the work that I do?"  
(Constable/sergeant)

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There were calls for there to be a move away from being promotion-focused as an organisation and have alternative development opportunities available for those who are happy to stay where they are. For example, encouraging them to become 'force leads' in certain areas of policing (see also *4.2.1 Building skills and expertise in current role*) or creating a role for a senior police constable in recognition of the value they bring to the front line:

"You'll have that sergeant who's supposedly your leader, but then you'll have that PC on your shift who's got 16, 17, 18 years in, and he's the one that you follow. He's the one that you respect and listen to... And

there's no recognition of that role either. I think that could be something." (Constable/sergeant)

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Creating this alternative career path for a senior PC, with additional pay and recognition available for building expertise, was seen as an effective way of keeping more experience on the front line and potentially reducing some of the issues with the lack of experienced officers for probationers to learn from (See also *4.1.2 Initial training*).

One force was said to have created an alternative pathway for officers by introducing 'Investigate Now' which is a formal fast track programme for people looking to be an accredited detective, so they can develop directly into that role rather than having to go through the route of being a police constable first.

## Encouraging secondments and shadowing

The opportunities for secondments and shadowing were repeatedly discussed across the workshops. There was felt to be many benefits of secondments which forces were not always seen to recognise:

"This is the only carrot that we've got for our staff here... giving them some career aspirations and if you take that away... you're not going to keep them." (Inspector/superintendent).

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Benefits highlighted by participants included:

- gaining a broader experience can provide different perspectives
- new knowledge and skills that can be brought back to their team
- keeps up motivation and morale which can help with retention of officers and staff
- development for those not looking for promotion but may be interested in a lateral move
- provides an opportunity to experience different roles and see whether they enjoy them
- internal secondments to other departments can increase interdepartmental understanding of one another's roles (see also *4.2.1 Building skills and expertise in current role*)
- can help with the issue of 'bed-blocking' in senior ranks because someone can temporarily 'act up' into the seconded person's role

Forces varied in terms of their encouragement of secondments. 'Develop You' was spoken about by officers and police staff from forces which had implemented it. This programme was said to have created a more formalised structure for applying for attachments to different departments. It was not vacancy-driven, and every area has an opening available that people can apply for. To apply for an attachment, someone must

fill in an application which has to be recommended by their line manager, and then a committee decides whether to approve it. The lengths of attachments were said to normally be around two weeks and well-planned so there is not a major impact on resourcing. The system was said to be well-advertised and generally well-liked throughout the forces because it brings a fairness to the process. If someone's request is rejected, then there must be feedback why, so it is not as easy for them to be blocked without a valid reason.

However, there were also forces that were said to operate in an ad-hoc way and that placement comes down to 'who you know' with people easily able to block secondments:

"If you want to block it, it's very easy to block it, especially if you know it's a good officer and you know that that's it, you'll never see them again." (Inspector/superintendent)

The secondments that do take place are not always well-managed; with roles often not being back-filled which increases demand on their team, particularly if they are seconded for multiple months. Opportunities for secondments were said to sometimes be reduced because of these issues with backfilling roles.

Issues with abstraction for secondments were discussed. There was not seen to be an equal opportunity to go on secondments; it was said to depend on who your line manager is and whether they will release you:

"There are a lot of line managers that would block any secondments, whereas another line manager wouldn't, so people aren't getting equal opportunities in that respect." (Member of police staff)

Even if the force and senior management express support for people going on secondments and attachments, there were still issues identified with getting released to go. Comments from supervisors indicated that they would like to be able to offer their staff opportunities to go on short attachments because otherwise they will end up with a 'stagnated' workforce, but it is difficult with the resourcing issues:

"It's so difficult because you can't afford to release that individual, especially when it's departmentalised... if we're at minimum staffing levels you can't, there's no scope for them to move."  
(Constable/sergeant)

Organisational structures where specialisms no longer existed within each local area was found to make natural movement between roles more difficult. Having people working at the same location was said to increase opportunities for attachments to other departments:

"When I joined at [local area], there was a task force at [local area], there was a drug squad at [local area], there were all these other little departments were there that you could go into and get attachments with." (Constable/sergeant)

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(See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and roles.*)

The importance of keeping up communication with those seconded, particularly if externally, was mentioned. There was a feeling that people are forgotten about while on secondment and it can negatively impact their opportunities for promotion rather than aiding it due to the useful skills they will have gained:

"I was lining up to do the [promotion board] and I know that's not going to happen now as a result of it. I know I won't get supported, I won't be one of the faces that are tipped, so I'm better off staying where I am." (Inspector/superintendent).

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## National approach to career progression

There were calls for a national approach to career pathways so there is increased consistency between forces in the opportunities they provide. For example, it was questioned why in one force it is possible to move from being a uniform sergeant to a detective sergeant but in a neighbouring force this same development is not possible. Similarly, it was repeatedly felt there should be more cross-force recognition of training and qualifications; it was not felt to make sense that this is not currently the case, for example:

"You come into [force's name] and [they] will go well you've driven in [another force's name] for 20 years ... we don't recognise your qualification. So you're going to have to do something else to justify that you can drive." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was suggested that there should be more cross-force advertisement of jobs in one central place, similar to the Civil Service Jobs gateway:

"If the job's good enough you should have a sergeant in [name of city] want to go and work in London because the role is so specific and so good that you can work into it for years." (Inspector/superintendent)

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The idea of having national role profiles was discussed. Role profiles for police staff were only seen to be available when a job is being advertised and by that time it is often too late. It was suggested that it would be useful to know in advance what you might need to move into a different role, so you could then focus on getting the relevant experience or developing the skills:

"If you want to move into, let's say for example surveillance...I wouldn't know where to begin to get some experience in that field to enable me to apply for a position." (Member of police staff)

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Role profiles were also seen as a useful idea for helping managers to support their officers or police staff who are not looking for a promotion or to move roles because they could build a career plan around what skillset is needed to develop their expertise and progress within their role.

Having some kind of national training programme where everyone has a clear career pathway offered to them when they join the organisation was proposed. It was thought this may help with retention of officers and police staff but would also benefit them if they ever wanted to go elsewhere if a recognised certificate or accreditation is provided. The idea of Learning and Development departments putting new recruits on a course teaching them how to set their own personal goals towards the end of their probation was suggested. It was felt that this would give them the opportunity to gain more of an understanding, early in their career, of what careers pathways could be available to them:

"So then you can tell them exactly what the force has available to get them on to that ladder, that footpath that they want to follow. That's where your PDR then comes in." (Member of police staff).

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### 4.2.3 Barriers to development

#### Barriers officers face moving roles

Although the rank structure makes the promotion route clear for officers, there were barriers identified in the ability to progress up the ranks. For example, the need to be recommended by a manager, the interview process itself and the need to gather evidence showing capability in performing multiple roles. (These topics will be further discussed in section 3.3 *Promotion and leadership development*.)

There were also said to be difficulties with officers trying to move into specialisms, like firearms. Many assessments were said to be necessary for moving into specialist roles and a lot of time can be wasted if someone starts their training but later fails one of the assessments necessary to move into the role. It was suggested that there should be 'common sense' in how to approach specialisms and which assessments to carry out when. There should either be suitability assessments for everything you will need at the start of the application process (for example, firearms and advanced driving assessments in the case of the firearms specialism) or recognition that you do not need to have all the skills right away because you can go on a course to learn and develop these skills to the right level:

"Have a common sense approach about it and say right OK he's done his two days shooting assessment, so he can be taught things. He's got a five-year driving ticket. He's passed his standard course... Is he a good bet that he might pass his driving test?" (Constable/sergeant).

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There was reference to an amendment perceived to have made to the colour vision standards for becoming a firearms officer, advanced driver or receiving Taser training. There was felt to be no evidence-based reason for amending the standards and it was stated that forces abroad had not implemented the same restrictions. This amendment was said to limit opportunities for officers who are colour blind.

The ability to move roles was found to be an issue for those currently in positions where there were shortages. For example, there were said to have been job opportunities advertised which specifically stated that detectives were ineligible to apply due to the current shortage of detectives. Even if people can apply for a new role and are offered the job, there can be difficulties moving from their current role until someone else is available to fill their position. A regulation was cited as stating that if someone has been offered a role, and completed the necessary training to move, they should be posted within three months, but in reality, people were said to be waiting much longer, for example up to two years, which impacts on their morale. The fact that advertisements for training to develop into roles continues to happen even though those ready to move are unable to be posted was called into question:

"They've got these guys who have been waiting two years and yet still are putting adverts out for more guys to do it, or girls, to do that course, so why are you doing that? If you can't post the ones you've got, why are you advertising for more?" (Constable/sergeant).

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It was suggested there should be more 'bartering' at senior leadership level to ensure people can get released quickly to move into a different division once they have done the necessary courses to move.

## **Limited opportunities for part-time officers**

Part-time officers were not seen to get the same opportunities that full-time officers do in terms of accessing courses or getting promoted. There was a feeling that they are only seen from a business perspective as additional resource rather than an officer to be developed. It was considered to be a short-sighted approach because part-time officers could be planning to return full-time in the future but may re-evaluate if they feel their development has been held back. It was suggested that if middle management encouraged more flexibility in working hours then part-time workers could potentially increase the number of hours they work and face less of a disadvantage in their development:

"By encouraging people to work more hours, we as a police force are getting a better return on investment, they're getting paid more and the likelihood is that they'll be given more opportunities because they've got more hours." (Constable/sergeant)

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## **Difficulties progressing higher up the ranks**

The reduction in opportunities to progress as a person rises higher up in the force, due to policing cuts and the removal of certain ranks, was highlighted as a concern. It was felt to be particularly difficult to move into specialist roles when promoted. Encouraging those in senior ranks to partake in external secondments (discussed in more depth below) was considered as a potentially effective way of reducing some of these issues with 'bed-blocking' because it would create an opportunity for those beneath them to act up in their absence. There was also a call for a more structured development programme to be put in place for the chief superintendent rank because currently there was said to be nothing tailored for them like there is for superintendents (the Senior Leadership Programme) or assistant chief constables (the Strategic Command Course). This was felt to be of particular importance if people are going to remain in each rank for a longer period due to the increase in the retirement age.

## **Barriers to development of special constables**

There was discussion regarding the training and development of special constables. It was highlighted that they are not provided with the same amount of training as other police officers but are expected to perform the same role:

"They want a uniformed officer on the beat who's been given a quarter training compared to a regular cop, there or thereabouts, but don't actually further invest in that development." (Constable/sergeant).

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There was a feeling that there are many other skills that special constables can bring to policing but these are not being utilised:

"So many of our staff have like volunteer roles and different skills that they bring from outside policing. We don't record any of that." (Constable/sergeant).

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## **Lack of opportunities for police staff**

Career development was seen as being less structured for police staff than for officers with a general feeling that there is a lack of opportunities available:

"When you're a police officer you're working your way up through the ranks... You're pushed from all sides... Police staff come in, you've applied for a job... and you just get on with it." (Member of police staff)

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There can be difficulties with lateral development because roles can be quite specialised, for example:

"There's no way I could transfer into say forensics because I don't have the qualifications or knowledge to do that." (Member of police staff)

"My team... within the police we are very niche... it does create issues in terms of particularly for members of staff in my team in terms of thinking about career development or progression." (Member of police staff)

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A comment was made that this is similar to how things would be within the private sector with not much that can be done about it because there is no incentive for the organisation to upskill them for a new role. However, concern was raised that if opportunities are not available for police staff to develop their careers then they will leave:

"Having previously supervised PSIs, there was a lot of frustration that their career plan was very unclear, what was available to them was unclear and the longer term plan as to where they wanted to be in five, ten years' time... I think we were risking losing or demotivating by not having that structured plan available to them."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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It was suggested that forces should be looking more at 'workforce modernisation' and what additional roles could be opened up to police staff rather than only being available to warranted officers:

"I think police staff are very much overlooked sometimes in terms of well what opportunities could you have." (Member of police staff)

"It's like our procurement, we're changing to the whole regional system now and all the senior staff... are all inspectors and I thought I bet I could do that just as well. But you never get an opportunity to do those jobs." (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that one reason that police staff do not get offered these roles is because officers are too expensive to let go due to their pension entitlements. Even officers themselves felt that there are too many officers in 'back office' roles which should not be carried out warranted officers. (See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational*

*structures and 3.4.2 Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs.)*

Some good practice was cited of forces trying to increase the lateral development opportunities and career pathways available for police staff. For example, one force was said to have started enrolling new staff joining the force as call handlers onto a 12-month customer service course that teaches them multiple skills they can use in other roles. Multi-skilling of staff so they could perform each other's roles and gain wider experience was viewed positively (See also *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and roles.*) However, caution with this process was felt necessary because if people are not performing the role all the time, they begin to lose the skills they have learned.

In instances where new lateral development opportunities have been introduced they have not been advertised to everyone:

"Something like this brand spanking new team and it's not just with this team, there have been others in the past that have sprung out of somewhere, people are cherry-picked. There's no application."  
(Member of police staff)

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It was also stated that when development opportunities do come up staff are not easily supported or encouraged to take them:

"I've been asked about doing some lecturing at [university name] on their criminology course, on the policing degree course because I've been in public protection for 21 years but they won't release me to do it." (Member of police staff)

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Opportunities to develop into management positions were said to be reduced because retired officers are being 'earmarked' for these roles:

"You don't even get short listed. I stopped even applying for the jobs, because there's absolutely no point, because you just know that you're just not going to get it." (Member of police staff)

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It was recognised that from the force perspective, there are benefits to this if ex-officers have the experience and training to do the role already whereas police staff would require time to be trained. However, it was felt to limit opportunities for police staff to develop which can impact upon their morale and desire to remain within the organisation. It was also suggested that this approach can result in a lack of new ideas and approaches:

"When you look at things like innovation, what you really want is people coming in with fresh ideas from other places... that have seen things done in another way." (Member of police staff)

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(See also 3.4.2 *Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs.*)

The fact that all police staff jobs must be advertised externally was also felt to reduce the chances for promotion of current staff:

"You apply for it with every other man and his dog in your local community... most things are still advertised everywhere, in your local newspapers and online and everything." (Member of police staff)

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One potential solution suggested to this was to have the promotion opportunity itself only available for staff already within the organisation but advertise an entry-level vacancy externally to replace the promoted member of staff:

"I've seen it done in multiple organisations... they'd only allow the people who were qualified within the organisation for the next step up, but then there'd always be that entry level to come in." (Member of police staff)

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## Limited progression of Police Community Support Officers

The barriers to development of PCSOs was discussed. There was said to be very little upward or lateral progression for PCSOs as there is only one role that exists for them. The opportunity to develop from a PCSO into a police constable was said to have become increasingly difficult with the greater expectation for new officers to have degrees and compile portfolios, and the large 'pay cut' to move between the professions. There were examples given where additional opportunities were starting to arise for PCSOs. For example, a co-ordinator role was said to have been introduced in Swindon. However, in general the career pathway was seen to be limited. There were suggestions provided for how the role could be expanded:

- Expansion of the PCSO role itself
  - There was a call for an expansion of the PCSO role with additional training and responsibilities available to them.
  - There were mixed opinions on this suggestion. There were PCSOs who were in favour of expanding their role and responsibilities. However, it was highlighted that not all PCSOs would welcome this change and there would need to be considerations regarding safety, pay, powers and equipment. There was an opinion that if PCSOs wanted to do the work of PCs then they should change professions rather than trying to change the role.

- Senior PCSO or supervisor role
  - There was a call for the development of a senior PCSO role or supervisor role: "Why do we not have a leadership structure or rank structure almost within the PCSOs. So you could have a senior PCSO who manages other members of that PCSO team." (Member of police staff)
  - One force was said to have developed a supervisor role in a specific unit of PCSOs and it was considered to have been a positive step.
- PCSO to police constable route
  - There was a suggestion that there could be a structured way to develop mature PCSOs who have a lot of experience into police officers if they would like to move into that role:
 

"I think there should be some kind of competency-based learning and development for the PCSOs to develop into the police officer, rather than having to apply like a member of the public." (Member of police staff)

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  - There were mixed opinions on this suggestion. For those in favour there was an opinion that being a PCSO for a set period should be a requirement for being an officer. However, those not in favour were of the opinion that a PCSO and a police constable have quite different roles and responsibilities, so they may attract different people. It was felt that the skills learned as a PCSO may be useful as a PC, but that people should apply for the role they want rather than applying for one as a route into the other.
  - (See also 3.3.3 *Statutory and legislative requirements*.)

#### 4.2.4 The role of the Professional Development Review in supporting development

Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) were not happening in all forces and there were varying views on the effectiveness of the PDR processes that were in place. PDRs were seen as a valuable opportunity in theory for ensuring line managers meet with their officers and staff on a regular basis and have constructive discussions related to their performance and development. However, the process was not seen to be working effectively in reality.

There was a general feeling that the process has become a bureaucratic exercise with little value attached to it and not enough time given to completing it.

## Incentive to complete PDRs

There was not seen to be any incentive to engage with the PDR process. Managers described feeling reluctant to hold reviews because there are not enough training or lateral development opportunities available to offer to their staff:

"The opportunities are really scarce... you don't want to promise them too much... we just can't do it." (Inspector/superintendent)

Officers and police staff gave examples of requesting training multiple times but nothing happening as a result, for example:

"It took me four years... before I got the specialist child and vulnerable adult course, and I'd asked for it every year on PDR and it never went anywhere." (Constable/sergeant)

Similarly, no reward or recognition was said to be provided for performing well:

"I've done a PDR every year... I'm at the top of my grade, I perform outstandingly and so what? It doesn't matter." (Member of police staff)

The process was described as being just a tick box for the organisation rather than a genuine concern for the professional development of the workforce:

"They're not bothered about whether they develop you or not. What they're bothered about is you haven't done it." (Constable/sergeant)

Some participants felt that PDRs were rarely reviewed by line managers. Participants described submitting a blank PDR for the past three years or having copied and pasted the same PDR for multiple years with nothing happening as a result in either of these situations.

It was suggested that more should be done to give value to the PDR because people would be more likely to engage with the process if they could see the benefit of it:

"It means nothing. If it meant something then they would find the time... You've got to make people believe in it." (Member of police staff)

Specific suggestions for how this could be achieved included:

- having a monetary bonus or time off for meeting all the targets set:

"Even if they said OK, we can't link it to pay because we haven't got any money, but you're performed outstandingly this year so here's an extra day's holiday." (Constable/sergeant)

- giving each sergeant a training budget which they can allocate how they deem fit
- allowing people to request their top three choices for training or development on specific dates over the next 12 months of which one would be guaranteed:

"That would be your protected date for that learning on that course that year." (Constable/sergeant)

- allocating different tasks and training opportunities more effectively based on individual interests outlined in their PDR rather than just based on organisational need, as currently happens (See also *4.4.2 Accessing training*)

The perceived lack of value given to the PDR in the promotion process was raised. For example, a participant spoke about taking their PDR to a promotion interview and a superintendent interviewing being unaware of what it was and informing them that they would not be needing it. There was a call for an increase in emphasis on the role of the PDR in the promotion process because otherwise was said to feel pointless to have formally evidenced performance each year:

"It's all on what you say in an interview. Actually I've got 10 years' worth of outstanding in some areas, which I should be able to use for some kind of interview if I ever wanted to go for one. But I can't." (Member of police staff)

(See also *4.3.2 Effectiveness of current promotion process.*)

## **Time to engage in the PDR process**

Difficulties in finding time for PDRs were described. It is a time-consuming process which was seen to just be generating work for already stretched people. Line managers said they did not have time to engage in effective performance reviews with their officers or police staff and it was often a rushed job to get it done which made them question the value of the process:

"I don't have time to read 10 people's reviews. So ...what are they doing for anybody, I don't understand that." (Constable/sergeant)

This was particularly difficult for those responsible for multiple officers or police staff which was often the case due to the reduction in the number of supervisors for a team:

"Two or three years ago we had three supervisors looking after quite a large team, now there's one" (Member of police staff).

Individuals whose forces had moved to PDRs being completed by the anniversary date of when an individual joined rather than having a universal date for everyone to complete them by had mixed opinions on the effectiveness. There were people who felt

this had made the process easier to manage because it split the workload throughout the year. However, there were others who found it difficult to keep on top of knowing when each person's PDR was due:

"I've got 12 officers that I specifically line manage, so if you did it every March 31st it was like OK you knew that was PDR time. Now it's like well when did you start, when did you start, and you've got to chase, you know." (Constable/sergeant)

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There were calls for forces to recognise the need to give people time for the PDR process for it to have any value, otherwise all it will do is cause stress and leave people having to work on it at home in their own time which impacts upon their wellbeing.

## Tailoring of the PDR process

The PDR process was described as being inflexible with a 'one size fits all' approach rather than tailored to individual's goals and aspirations. Comments included the following.

- The force objectives said to be used are not considered relevant to the front line.
- Reference was also made to a 'Values and Competency Framework' which was viewed as too wordy and unclear.
- A member of police staff felt that the process was geared more towards officers.
- It was also said that the process is focused more on how you sell yourself rather than your actual performance which some people are uncomfortable with:

"I've never liked them... I'm not comfortable in the type of thing they're asking you to write down." (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that the process should be made more streamlined, informal and personal. Instead of a formal, annual review process the focus could be on holding more regular one-to-one 'development chats' between line managers and their staff, with only a brief record of conversation required. One force was said to have moved towards this approach of having a 'check-in system'. There were line managers who felt this approach would be preferable:

"I would probably rather, over a period of time, sit down with my staff periodically for not a long period of time and have a human face-to-face discussion that there may be a brief written record about for their confirmation as to what we've discussed." (Constable/sergeant)

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However, others were concerned that they would struggle to find the time to hold these regular conversations with each of those who they manage while keeping up with their other workload.

Such one-to-one conversations (when possible) could also provide an opportunity to check on an individual's wellbeing and address any issues they are facing. However, there was a concern about wellbeing issues being recorded on any formal documentation related to performance and development.

Those not looking for promotion, training or lateral moves felt that the PDR process was unnecessary for them:

"I'm not interested in promotion, I'm more than happy doing what I'm doing... It has no benefit to me." (Member of police staff)

It was suggested there should be an 'opt-out' of the formal PDR process. It was only seen necessary if there are issues with an individual's performance or they are looking for career progression:

"if you've got somebody that has got either severe performance issues... or you've got someone that is going for promotion then there should be some comprehensive documenting. But 90% of the PDRs that I do, my officers aren't interested in promotion. They're doing good or acceptable jobs. They're doing what I want them to do. And you still have to go through that whole form and fill in, like you say, every box with examples." (Constable/sergeant)

There were calls for the process to be more tailored to individuals with different options for those not looking for career progression:

"If you've got no career aspirations because there is none, because the lateral development isn't there... Then this should be structured for that, as opposed to those that are looking to progress... it should be on different levels." (Member of police staff)

One force was said to be introducing a new PDR system that will allow people to choose from different pathways related to their own career aspirations and therefore potentially achieve this more personalised approach to career development. The idea of national role profiles (see also *4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression*) was seen as potentially helpful for supporting those not looking for a lateral move or promotion if they set out what training and skills people need to develop themselves and their expertise further within their own role.

## **Miscellaneous issues related to PDR**

Other comments related to the PDR process included:

- having to input objectives with a certain timeframe but then the PDR systems change, or people move roles, so that the objectives and evidence input into the system no longer exists or is irrelevant by the time of the review
- encouragement of completing PDRs is cyclical; a senior leader will come in and promote it but then they will not follow it up and people will stop focusing on them until a new leader takes over and emphasises its importance again
- lack of interest in the process by police staff because their supervisors do not “take it seriously” and do not hold the discussions with their staff that they are meant to as part of the process

## 4.2.5 The line manager’s role in supporting development

### Time to focus on development of staff

Lack of time was repeatedly mentioned as an issue in line managers’ ability to provide as much ongoing support to each individual as they would like:

“The vast majority of people languish in their jobs with no-one taking much interest in them, no-one really spotting whether they’re talented... they don’t have time to do it.” (Inspector/superintendent)

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Leadership teams were said to come up with ideas but not think of the impact they will have on line managers who have to find the time to implement them. For example, talent mapping was seen to be a useful idea that had been introduced in some forces to help with the development of frontline officers but there is rarely enough time for line managers to do it. One member of police staff spoke about their concern around the lack of supervision culture within policing, having come from a social services background where they had policies in place to ensure everyone received supervision on a regular basis.

Line managers said they needed the time to be able to go out with their officers, so they can check in with them, talk about professional development and see how they are performing:

“How can you be a leader or a line manager-if you’re not witnessing how your staff work?” (Constable/sergeant)

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Similarly, police staff felt that it was important for supervisors to be working more closely with their staff, so they have a greater understanding of the difficulties people face within their work. This was seen as possible to arrange monthly if they are managing less than ten people but becomes increasingly difficult when the number they supervise increases:

"It's easy to do it over the month with eight of them, but when you're looking after 14 or you're looking after 30, well, then how can you, you can't give that time that warrants." (Constable/sergeant)

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Amending shift patterns or organisational structure was seen to be potentially helpful for providing line managers more time for managing professional development. For example, one force was said to have introduced a type of split shift system which has helped with covering the peak demand times and as a result provided more opportunities for line managers and their officers and staff to have one-to-one discussions. It was suggested that it would be useful to have admin days protected for supervisors, so they could spend time looking at the development of their staff including carrying out one-to-ones and addressing any disciplinary issues that have arisen.

Alternatively, it was suggested that responsibility for learning and development should not necessarily fall to line managers and supervisors but instead there should be a separate department that looks after an individual's development. Having someone independent from the line management chain responsible for development was seen as potentially more effective because they would have the time to focus on the individual, there would be fewer issues with the inconsistencies in line managers and it would move away from the 'who you know' aspect of professional development which is seen to impact upon opportunities (see also *4.3.3 Fairness of current promotion process.*)

## Recognising potential within the workforce

Recognising potential within the people they manage was an area where line managers were sometimes found to be lacking. There was a feeling that line managers will support people if they set their own goals and ask for support but that no one will recognise an individual's skills and push them to develop. It was suggested that managers should be observing their staff, recognising their strengths and seeing how they can support them to develop further:

"Managers have got to talk to people... look for the people that are sitting there getting on with stuff, but not shouting about it... Talk to people and say you're very good at this, is there something, can we develop you further?" (Member of police staff)

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However, there were also multiple comments that there is a self-driven aspect to professional development and it should not be completely down to line managers to organise everything for their staff. There was not seen to be enough emphasis on individuals taking responsibility for furthering their career:

"Sometimes they sit at the end of it and are like right so are you going to arrange that then or...?" (Inspector/superintendent)

"People don't understand that actually on occasion you might need to rearrange your rest day." (Inspector/superintendent)

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## Showing an interest in professional development

A supportive line manager was seen to be an important factor in professional development. There was found to be a lack of consistency between managers in the amount of support they provide. For example, a participant spoke about how having a good supervisor who cared about their development had enabled them to get through the promotion process which had been difficult as they struggled with exams.

Conversely, another participant described a supervisor they previously had who showed very little interest in their development and had conducted their PDR by shouting across the office rather than having a one-to-one conversation.

It was felt that line managers should be trying to create some time, even if only a few minutes, to speak to their staff one-to-one and ask about their career aspirations:

"It's having the opportunity to speak with your line manager on a regular basis to discuss what opportunities are out there for you, and see what you're wanting really as a long-term plan." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was felt that if an individual has identified a career aspiration, then their line manager should be trying to help them to achieve it.

Having a supervisor willing to provide the time for their officers and police staff to engage in development activities was appreciated. There were supervisors who said that they had actively tried to create more opportunity for those they manage to get involved in different activities:

"I've had it in the past where my staff have been on rest days, or they've been on time due and things like that, and I've facilitated that and moved things round for them." (Constable/sergeant)

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However, there were also said to be a number of managers that will not release people because they are more concerned about the impact on their team's resilience than trying to develop each individual. There was a feeling that managers should be doing more to support development by providing their officers and police staff the time to work towards their goals. For example, a PCSO said that if they had been allowed to have a day out with a police officer it would have helped them with their police constable application by giving them the insight into different incidents that they would not have come across within their current role.

## Line manager's awareness of available opportunities

A line manager's awareness of what opportunities are available for the people they manage was considered to be important in their ability to support development because, as discussed in section 3.2.2, officers and police staff are often not aware of the career pathways available to them:

"You need your sergeant to say what are you interested in, well there is this route, there's that route, that route." (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that managers have a part to play in monitoring and sharing new opportunities that become available because people in certain roles are often too busy to check the different systems themselves for any career development opportunities:

"Response officers are so busy... it comes back to the line manager, who maybe then has to... monitor what's available and circulate that, communicate that with the team." (Member of police staff)

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## Having honest performance reviews

Managers should be prepared to have difficult conversations with their staff and talk to them honestly about what they need to work on rather than always just telling them what they want to hear.

It was suggested that something should be done to address this issue and encourage managers to have more honest conversations because it will be more helpful for the individual in the long run:

"People have had an honest conversation with me and said actually [name] you're not right yet to do this, you need to do x, y, z in order to fulfil that... probably not what I wanted to hear at the time, but it was really useful, because at least I went away knowing what I needed to do." (Inspector/superintendent)

"We have to take responsibilities as senior managers to say you're not the right person at this moment in time and, I tell you what, this is what I'm going to do about it for you to get you to that position."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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There was felt to be a negative connotation associated with development plans rather than them being viewed as a positive step in developing potential:

"When you mention development plan... most officers will turn around and go what have I done wrong? As opposed to no, this is a really

positive formal process of actually development."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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## 4.2.6 The force or organisational role in supporting development

### Encouraging a learning culture

There was not considered to be much of a training emphasis within policing. Any work on development and additional training generally needs to take place outside of work hours (unless an individual has a supportive line manager as mentioned above). There was not seen to be enough long-term planning in terms of developing staff, with calls for a change in ethos throughout the organisation in terms of promoting and investing in learning because it will benefit everyone:

"Training is vital and it is important and as much money needs to be put in training as other departments, because that's the basics for people to go out and do the job." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that there should be a way of incorporating training and development time into the shift rota (see also *4.4.2 Accessing training*).

It was felt that forces should be recognising the skills and talents they have and investing in individuals to build their expertise rather than looking to recruit externally when a new position becomes available. One force was said to have introduced 'talent grids' which have helped them to move towards this approach. It has allowed them to look within the force and see whether there is the potential for someone internally to fulfil the role if they were given some training to upskill themselves. Another force was seen to be doing something similar whereby the workforce can create an online 'portfolio' outlining their interests, skills, background and experiences which is then searchable by specialist units when they are looking for a new recruit. It was also suggested that forces should be doing more to recognise and utilise the digital and social media skills of the younger generation entering the force now as their perspective on improving the public image of policing could be very valuable:

"I think we should start asking people at recruitment, your 19, 20-year-olds, what do you think we can do better, how we can market ourselves, because we think we've got the big ideas, but actually they might have." (Inspector/superintendent)

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There was a call for policing as an organisation to move away from the 'traditional model' of relying on learning coming from training courses and instead consider encouraging more independent learning. If policing is moving towards being a graduate

profession, then they should try to embrace the graduate mode of learning more. A participant spoke about their previous profession where they were allowed to take a study day as long as they could justify how they were intending to use it:

"You could say look on this day I'm going to have a study day... I'm going to go to the library and look at X Y and Z. And as long as it was clear what your objectives were, and you could report back on how you'd used that time, there was that trust that you could use that day."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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## Creating a more uniform approach to professional development

Professional development opportunities were said to rely on individuals driving things rather than there being some structure implemented at force or national level:

"It's so ad hoc and so dependent on individuals driving things that if you haven't got someone who's really interested at a senior management level who is really driving stuff, it just doesn't happen."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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Although it was recognised that there should be a self-driven aspect to professional development, the need for having support further up the organisation was still considered important.

Forces were seen to be good at providing opportunities if they have leadership that inspires people to try new things and develop themselves:

"We've got an extremely proactive supportive superintendent, and if he feels that there's a business need for it... if it's going to benefit the staff and the area bang, let's do it, off we go." (Member of police staff)

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However, there was not seen to be a uniform approach to professional development across policing. For example, one officer spoke about how they had found a university degree they were interested in completing which some forces would support them to do but their own force would not.

There was a call for a more uniform approach to professional development across policing so that everyone receives the same support. For example, the creation of national role profiles, career pathways, and training schemes (see also *4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression*):

"Consistency, clarity and accountability. Across the board, recruitment, lateral development, other career moves, so that you know what the

process is before you start on it and the goalposts aren't moved halfway along or it's changed for the next time or they tweak it so that the application would suit a preferred candidate." (Member of police staff)

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## Positive action and promoting diversity

There was appreciation that there is a need for inclusivity and diversity in the workforce (see also *4.1.1 Recruitment*) but some participants felt that this can sometimes come at the expense of providing fair opportunities for everyone. There were comments that the only people pushed towards leadership development seem to be women which was said to be fair in some ways because they were felt to be under-represented but that those without diverse characteristics can feel 'in the way'. Those provided with additional opportunities due to their diversity characteristics do not always feel comfortable accepting them:

"I was invited to events where I was told what the sergeants' exam was and it didn't really sit well with me. I didn't want to do it, but I'd have been stupid not to..." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was felt that forces should be providing fair opportunities for everyone and promoting people based on who is best for the job rather than, as perceived by some participants, only progressing those who have specific characteristics because otherwise it creates further inequality:

"Our force seems to be obsessed with women being promoted... I don't dismiss that at all... I actually agree that it should be the best people for the job that should be promoted... why are men not being supported in the same way, just because there happens to be more of us."

(Constable/sergeant)

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## 4.3 Promotion and leadership development

This section will discuss promotion and leadership development of officers and police staff. This includes:

- identifying potential and readiness for promotion
- effectiveness of current promotion processes
- fairness of current promotion processes
- Direct Entry and fast tracking
- the training and development of supervisors and leaders

## 4.3.1 Identifying potential and readiness for promotion

### General comments

There were comments that leadership potential within the workforce is not often recognised or encouraged:

"With the exception of the high development programmes there is no real selection of potential managers or anything else."  
(Constable/sergeant).

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Leadership development was said to be focused on those already in management positions rather than recognising and developing individuals who appear to be natural leaders within a team:

"You'll always get one person that people will turn to for advice. Somebody who they value, they respect their judgement and their experience... those individuals never get the opportunity to develop."  
(Member of police staff).

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There was a suggestion that the police should be learning from good practice implemented in the Royal Navy whereby leadership potential is identified early in someone's career and they are provided with the appropriate training to help develop them into a leader. There was reference to the 'Talent Development Programme' in one force which appeared to be moving towards this approach of identifying and developing talented individuals within the workforce.

A suggestion was made for the PDR process to include a grade, like in the military, to identify an individual's potential for promotion:

"The IPR system used to be twofold, you used to have two grades... you had your trade grade, which could be one to ten or whatever it was, then you'd have your fit for promotion grade... if you got something like a 2B that meant this person is fit for promotion, he should be encouraged, recognised. Why don't we have that system in place?"  
(Constable/sergeant)

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### Length of service

It was thought that forces are promoting people too early in their service into first line supervisor positions. There was reference to new recruits already starting to look at development schemes before they have finished their probationary period:

"They've got ideas of going to promotion without even getting out the 10 weeks, never mind the two years." (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that supervisors should not be recommending people for promotion if they have not yet developed the right skills to be a leader and manage people:

"Everybody wants to be everything straightaway. Well, get some experience under your belt and prove your worth... first of all, because you might not be worthy, just because you handed in an application form." (Constable/sergeant)

"Are we expecting young supervisors to be doing too much? They're not that mature themselves, can they recognise vulnerable people?" (Constable/sergeant)

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However, there was also seen to be difficulty in getting the balance between promoting people too early and too late. There was general agreement that the longer you are in a role, the more experience you gain and the better equipped you are to deal with different situations. However, the downside of promoting later is that it results in people only getting to the senior ranks with a few years of service left which was not seen to be a good investment:

"I was speaking a chief inspector last week... And he said he's got three years left to work, he's going to go for his superintendent's board the beginning of next year. So the most he's going to do is two." (Member of police staff)

"You'll get someone who becomes a superintendent for six months and retires... who on that board would promote someone in the last year... that's a massive saving for the force there." (Member of police staff)

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(See also *5.2.2 Experience of the front line.*)

It was suggested that the reason officers are getting promoted earlier in their career is because their sergeants are using the development of their staff as evidence for their own promotion rather than considering whether the individual is really ready for promotion:

"That sergeant's going to go well if I can develop this officer who's so young in service to go for their sergeant's, I can use that when I go for my boards then." (Constable/sergeant)

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(See also *4.3.2 Effectiveness of promotion processes.*)

## Understanding of the role

It was considered important for people to understand the role they are going into, otherwise they may not have the skills or experience to perform it effectively. Having a least a background in the area they will be leading in was seen as a minimum requirement:

"If you're going to become a manager or a leader... you should have at least had a go at doing the job fully before moving on that one."  
(Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that a leader of a team should be able to do the job of everyone else beneath them so that they have the knowledge to answer any questions their officers and staff have:

"The golden rule of management is you never ask somebody to do a job that you can't or won't do yourself." (Constable/sergeant)

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However, there was also the view that it is unnecessary for a manager to understand every detail of the job below them, as long as they have a knowledge of the general framework surrounding any processes and have sufficient understanding to take responsibility for making any final decisions.

There were examples given of people being promoted and then posted into roles that they are completely unfamiliar with. The expectations and pressure this puts on the individual was not seen to be the best way to get the best out of people. There was a recognition that some people thrive in these situations, but others struggle to cope and may leave their post as a result. The idea of someone leading a team without any expertise in the area was not said to fit with the idea that the police is an organisation that puts victims first:

"You'd never put, the analogy you could say, you'd never put a brain surgeon in charge of paediatrics, would you? Well, we do it all the time in policing." (Constable/sergeant)

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Promoting people into unfamiliar roles was not something which participants felt should be completely discouraged as it would limit career progression. However, there needs to be support available for them to ensure that the team they are managing, and the public are not negatively impacted by their lack of expertise:

"If we identify that people are ready for promotion, that's great, and yes they should be able to move into other roles, it shouldn't just be for a specific role. However, I think if we are going to put people into a role

that they don't have any recent experience at, then that should be managed." (Inspector/superintendent)

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(See also 5.2.2 *Experience of the front line* and 5.3.5 *Need for specialists in non-core police roles*.)

## People skills

There was not felt to be enough of a focus on people management and leadership skills when assessing readiness for promotion. Promotion was seen to be linked more to evidencing specific actions - for example stats or incident results - than the relationship between leaders and their staff:

"They might know how to pass an exam... but they don't actually know how to manage a team, don't know how to motivate." (Member of police staff)

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It was commented upon that managers are promoted even if the staff survey results within their command are poor.

A need to identify those with the right people skills to be a leader was considered important because although someone can have training, there are certain aspects which were seen as natural and not able to be taught:

"I think a lot of our leaders are devoid of people skills... it's nothing that can be taught, it's nothing that you can have a degree in, it's people skills, and that's why we need leaders who are people-people." (Constable/sergeant)

"You've got to have those behavioural abilities to be able to know... when to give that understanding, to be able to look at a policy and go well do you know what the policy might say that, but actually if we flex it this way we can actually get a result." (Member of police staff)

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Having the emotional intelligence to support people and understand issues with things such as stress and sleep problems was seen as a vital skill for a leader within policing (See also 3.4.4 *Role of line managers/supervisors in wellbeing*).

One force was said to be moving towards a more personal, value-based interview as a way of assessing people management skills, rather than just operational capability in the promotion process.

## 4.3.2 Effectiveness of promotion processes

### Interviews

Some participants questioned whether the promotion process was effective at selecting the best leaders due to its focus on interview performance and exams (see below) rather than looking at the skills and experience of the applicant. The interview process was seen as being too academic and ‘buzzwordy’ rather than assessing how someone works on a day-to-day basis. There was a suggestion that forces should move towards the approach that the military was said to take and promote on merit and experience rather than via an exam or being able to answer questions in a specific way within an interview.

There were examples given of people who are very capable of performing a role and have proved that through their experience acting within a position but are unable to pass the promotion board because they struggle with interviews. Conversely, there were people who are able to pass the process because they can write up their evidence well but that was not said to make them a good leader). It was felt that some leaders had been promoted to their incompetence due to this focus on performance in the process rather than assessing their ability to perform the role.

Participants who said they struggle with interviews suggested that applicants could be made aware of the questions they were going to be asked in advance of an interview, so they could be better prepared. If everyone was given this preparation time, then it would be fair and a better way of assessing someone’s suitability for the role:

“We should be putting the best people into the right posts. But we’re not, we’re putting the people in jobs who are good at interviews.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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### Exams

The effectiveness of exams as a way of identifying readiness for promotion was called into question. As with interviews, there are people who perform well in their job but struggle with exams. Sergeants exams were described as having numerous trick questions and double negatives. They were not felt to be an effective test of knowledge with many of the questions not seeming relevant to day-to-day policing; for example,

"There’s one about wild animals, selling wild animals. Realistically when are we going to deal with that?" (Constable/sergeant)

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The preparation necessary for these exams was said to be lengthy and those who had been through them did not find the knowledge they had acquired to have helped them in their role once promoted:

"Since I've been a sergeant I've had to do nothing to do with my exam. It's hands-on, it's experience... it's about decision making, and it's about dealing with people. There's nothing on a written exam about that." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that passing an exam should not automatically be taken to mean that someone has the good, basic knowledge required to be ready for promotion:

"It's all very well passing the exam, but you should have a good knowledge of day-to-day policing so that you can be an effective manager." (Constable/sergeant)

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## Focus on acquiring evidence

The focus on acquiring evidence for a promotion board was not seen as effective in identifying potential:

"They're building their evidence as opposed to building their competence." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was not felt to be serving the public in the best way for the promotion process to work in this way.

The link between creating change and promotion was repeatedly questioned. It was not felt to lead to meaningful changes (see also 3.2.2 *Change management*). There was a comment that this need to evidence change encourages people to create issues so that they have evidence of managing something when they go to their promotion board:

"Bad things tend to happen to us when someone's going for promotion... they need a project to show that they can manage a situation, so a situation gets created so that they can manage that project and I'm talking fairly high up the chain." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that forces should move away from this focus of linking innovation with promotion so that changes are not made unnecessarily:

"Divorce change-making from promotion, because then people are making changes because they're in the best interest of their force and not because it's in their best interest of themselves."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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One force was thought to be an example of good practice in this area because they are moving away from having to evidence innovation for promotion and are instead focusing more on an individual's ability to manage a team and whether they are keeping up with things like PDRs and sickness management.

The need for officers to perform multiple roles in each rank in order to be promoted was also repeatedly discussed. The positive aspects identified with this approach is that it can increase an individual's understanding of the whole network of those beneath them when promoted. However, there were also multiple drawbacks of moving people around frequently:

- inconsistency in leadership and management for the teams they are responsible for which can impact on the wellbeing of officers and police staff:

"You've no continuity... one boss will come in with his own vision and view, be there for three months then be gone and someone else comes in."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- lack of accountability of leaders for the decisions they make because they are not in post long enough for them to have an impact:

"I've left those jobs, the decisions I've made have impacted on my successor, but usually not my successor but the person after them, because they take a few years to materialise." (Inspector/superintendent)

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- not enough time to learn the role:

"How can you be in a role for six months and think you know what you're doing, because I've been in for 10 years and I'm still learning every day."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- unfair for those who are unable to move into different teams to build their evidence due to shortages within their current department (see also *4.2.3 Barriers to development*)

It was suggested that there should be less of an emphasis on performing multiple roles and more of a focus on the individual's capability in terms of the skills and knowledge they can demonstrate:

"I think we need to change the culture, so undertaking one role in a rank is perfectly adequate to then go on and get promoted, so long as we can demonstrate transferable competencies."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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There was a general feeling that the promotion process should be slowed down so managers can spend longer in roles and take more ownership of problems. The idea of giving people a 'tenure' so they have to spend a minimum amount of time in a post or at least have to retain responsibility for any project they started until it is completed. It was

questioned how the current processes allow leaders to set any long-term vision or goals or achievable aims if they are only going to remain in post for a short period of time.

## Lack of value given to experience

Experience was not seen to be valued in the promotion process, with little consideration seeming to be given to the capability of the individual as a whole:

"It's just what you've done in the last six months really it seems to get promoted, not the broader individual." (Constable/sergeant)

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For example, a constable with seven years of experience described losing out for a job to someone who had no previous experience. It was questioned how that was a positive move for the force and how that individual will effectively perform the role when they had no understanding of it:

"The force is taking someone who's doing a perfectly fine job, and putting someone in that post who has no idea. What other industry in the world would do that?" (Constable/sergeant)

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(See also *4.3.1 Identifying potential and readiness for promotion.*)

It was felt that forces' focus on appearing open and fair means the best people are not getting through the process. Even when an individual has been acting up (that is, performing a role at the next rank or grade without being promoted substantively) for a substantial period with no performance issues, their permanent promotion is still determined based purely on their performance within the interview:

"How ridiculous is that, that they can't even promote somebody who is already doing a good job, who everybody thinks is really good, they can't even say we're going to give you a job as a sergeant. They've got to go through this process and nobody is sure whether they'll get through or not." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was questioned why someone would even need to have an interview if they have already proved themselves with the role:

"We trust you to do the job for eight years as a temporary; we should clearly be promoting you." (Inspector/superintendent)

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There was felt to be some danger with experience of acting up becoming the primary route to promotion because not everyone is given an equal opportunity to do so (see also *4.3.3 Fairness of the promotion process*). It was also suggested there would need to be a process in place, a work-based assessment for example, to ensure that only the ones performing well get promoted automatically.

A suggestion was made that there could be multiple routes to promotion as a way to more proactively develop the workforce and recognise the different skills bases that people have, as described below:

- Practical route: for those who have the practical skills necessary to perform the role but do not yet have the theoretical knowledge. If a line manager notices that someone on their team is a good candidate for promotion, then they could be put onto on a 'practical' development scheme. This scheme could allow them to be temporarily promoted and able to start working on a portfolio right away rather than having to go through a specific promotion board:

"If you succeed in 12 months' time, you don't need to do the board, we are going to substantiate you because you've done a portfolio for 12 months."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- Theoretical route: for the people who pass an interview and know all the theory of policing but are not necessarily able to put it into practice yet. They would have to do 12 months of practical work to show they can perform the job.
- High developer route: those who are considered highly capable, similar to the current fast-track scheme.

## Work-based assessments

Comments were made about the timing of work-based assessments. These were currently said to be carried out after an individual has already gone through the interview process and were still required to be completed even if they had been acting in the role for a period of time already.

It was suggested that these assessments would be more effective if they were used as a way of assessing someone's suitability and readiness for promotion rather than introducing them after they had passed the interview:

"It's better to prove yourself before you actually get the 'OK yeah you're definitely going to be a sergeant', than be 'OK yeah you're going to be a sergeant and then have to prove yourself after'. It just makes more sense." (Constable/sergeant)

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Calls for greater emphasis to be given to PDRs in the promotion process were also made because they provide a record of performance and experience (See also 4.2.4 *The role of the Professional Development Review in supporting development*). Examples of forces moving towards this approach were provided.

### 4.3.3 Fairness of promotion processes

#### Impact of profile within the organisation

There was seen to be a repeating cycle where the same type of people are getting to the senior ranks. It was felt that leaders tend to only promote others who are like themselves rather than recognising and encouraging the potential talents of those who have a different approach or perspective. There was a feeling that current leaders should actively be identifying those who challenge them and recognising this as showing their potential to be leaders rather than dismissing them as trouble-makers:

"The reason they might be challenging is because actually they're ready to be that person." (Constable/sergeant)

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There were those who felt the application process should move away from the need to be supported by a manager because they may deliberately block the application if they do not have a good relationship with the individual:

"You have to have an inspector to say yes I will support PC [name] for a sergeant if he's passed his exam. But if he doesn't like [name] he's not going to support him and there's no appeal process."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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A concern was also raised that an individual and their line manager could both be applying for the same job if the line manager is currently acting up in their position, which would likely result in the individual's application being blocked:

"That has happened where you've got two sergeants wanting to be promoted to be inspector, one happens to be in the... acting... role supervising the other sergeant... so what's he going to do, 'not recommended', and that is it." (Member of police staff)

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However, there were also concerns that removing the need for supervisors to recommend people for promotion, which has been done in some forces, does not necessarily lead to the best people being promoted because the decision is then made purely on how they perform in the interview or exam process (which as highlighted above, is not always effective):

"Some people who you'd sit next to in the office and think God, I couldn't stand you as a supervisor, you'd be useless. But because you do an exam and because you're good on paper you sort of slip through the net a little bit, because no-one has said they are not suitable."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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There was a call for even greater involvement of managers in the promotion process for this reason; because they know the reality of how the individual performs in their role. One force was said to be moving towards this approach; they have started to amend their promotion process by asking people to submit their PDR and a covering letter then a group of inspectors and a superintendent discuss their suitability.

Involving the opinions of additional people within the promotion process was suggested as a way to make the process fairer and challenge the behaviour of those who only promote people like themselves. For example, several forces were said to have introduced a 'people's panel' when they are doing a promotion board for superintendent, deputy chief constable or assistant chief constable ranks. These panels involve inviting people from different ranks, including constables, and police staff to listen to the candidates give a presentation and ask them questions. The opinions of the panel are then fed back to the selection board. Multiple benefits were identified with this process: it gives people an influence over the recruitment process, the opportunity to network with others around the force and build confidence in challenging people's responses. It was suggested these panels could be implemented in all forces and should potentially be introduced for sergeant's boards too.

The opinions of those currently being managed by the applicant should be taken into consideration:

"If you want the best leaders, come to the people they've managed, not how they perform in 10 minutes." (Constable/sergeant)

Providing an opportunity within the PDR for officers and staff to feedback on their line manager was proposed.

Having a fair personnel department responsible for the promotion process rather than the decisions being made by supervisors and leaders was suggested as a way to create equal opportunities for everyone (see also *4.2.5 The line managers role in supporting development*). This department could keep a record of every individual's skills which they could use to decide who is suitable for a role when an opportunity becomes available. However, it was advised that this department would need to understand policing, or at least the type of roles available, so they can do effective psychometric testing and build teams effectively.

## **Opportunities for acting up**

There were concerns that progression can be limited if a line manager only offers opportunities for acting up to one person rather than giving everyone they manage an equal chance for development. An example was provided of an officer who was said to have been overlooked for promotion and never offered the opportunity to act up despite

being qualified for nine years and being marked as outstanding in each of their appraisals. Similarly, another officer said they had been qualified to be an inspector for ten years but had only been given the opportunity to act up for one very short period which they assumed was because they were the type of person to speak out and potentially upset some people rather than due to any issues with their performance.

There was not seen to be a fairness to the process:

"I tend to find that it's not what you know, it's who you know in the organisation." (Constable/sergeant)

For example, one force was said to have recently offered an acting inspector's position to a sergeant who had not completed their inspector's exam, despite the fact that there were multiple other sergeants available who had passed their exam. It was felt that acting opportunities should go to those who have passed the exam and are looking to develop as they have already invested that time and proved their commitment.

One force was said to have introduced a mock sergeants board as a fair way of deciding who will next get the opportunity to act. How an individual scores in the interview will determine when they get the opportunity to act. This method would also give people exposure to the interview process.

## **Unfairness of acting up long-term and after failing to achieve promotion**

Examples were given of people left in acting positions for years. The fairness of this was questioned as people are not paid to take on this additional responsibility and are generally not given the training they would have if they were made permanent. (See also *4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders.*)

Encouraging people to act up if there are not permanent supervisory roles to offer was felt particularly wrong:

"It's a high-risk role... sometimes you have to make snap critical decisions... as a supervisor that your role, you sign up to that. But you've got these people who are aspiring to be supervisors who are just being used in that role and have been for years. It's just a constant carrot being dangled. That is bad feeling." (Member of police staff)

If someone has been trusted to act up for a long period of time but is unable to be made permanent because they have failed their promotion board then it was felt there should be more questions about the supervision the individual has received:

"If this person's been doing a job for x number of years and then suddenly they deem him not suitable for that role... you start saying well hold on but what's his supervisor been doing for the last x number of years." (Constable/sergeant)

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Asking people to continue acting even after they fail the promotion board was not felt to give them mixed messages about whether they are capable of performing the role or not:

"The thing is people will fail a board and then the next day, oh, you can still temp." (Inspector/superintendent)

"You clearly are telling him he's good enough because again you're making him act." (Constable/sergeant)

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The lack of feedback and support for these individuals after failing the board was questioned. There should be more done to develop them to ensure they can pass next time.

## Miscellaneous issues

Other issues identified with the fairness of the promotion process included:

- different promotion processes being in place in different forces:

"You'd be promoted to a sergeant or inspector in one force in one way and then move to another force and they go through a completely different process and why is that not the same, consistent across all the forces?" (Constable/sergeant)

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- a lack of consideration of the consequences for police staff when placing a police officer into a staff supervisor role (see also *4.2.3 Barriers to development*)
- a personal experience of a promotion application being blocked due to complaints about them that were found to be false. This was said to be not adhering to procedures around the acceptance of candidates who had been subject to false complaints.

### 4.3.4 Direct Entry and fast tracking

#### Pros and cons of bringing people in from outside of policing

There were mixed opinions about the Direct Entry programme which has provided an entry route for professionals from wider sectors to enter the police service at inspector or superintendent rank.

The need of Direct Entry leaders to understand the realities of policing was emphasised:

"We're dealing with 5,000 different calls at any one time and it's all got to be done immediately. And sometimes we're going to have to use force... sometimes we're going to have to back off and say no that's not ours... people coming in from other disciplines really need to know what it's like to be a police officer." (Constable/sergeant)

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There were concerns about the lack of experience and knowledge of direct entrants in comparison to those who have worked their way through the ranks, and about the respect they would be given. The length of time those on Direct Entry schemes are required to spend experiencing different ranks was called into question. Having only a few weeks as a police constable was not considered sufficient to give them a grounding or understanding of the role and create empathy for the officers they will be leading:

"They still need to understand the kind of decisions they're making and if they're a PC for four weeks, realistically what are they going to learn about the impact that they are going to make on people's lives: very little." (Constable/sergeant).

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However, there were also opinions that the amount of time spent on the front line does not impact on the ability to be a good leader (See also 5.2.2 *Experience of the front line*).

Benefits of Direct Entry programmes were also identified. For example, it can bring in people with the right expertise to be managers:

"I actually quite support this idea of bringing in bosses from other industries who are already qualified in management to a high level." (Constable/sergeant)

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It can also bring different perspectives and culture to the organisation that some people felt is needed:

"If we keep doing it the way we've always done it we're always going to get the same results and we're still always internalising, recruiting from our own cultures within and then we reinforce our own ideas." (Constable/sergeant).

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The appropriateness of Direct Entry schemes was seen to be dependent on the type of role they are expected to perform. For example, there were comments that Direct Entry superintendents are more acceptable than Direct Entry inspectors because their role is more about 'managing' rather than making strategic decisions which would require them to have a policing background:

“Other than having duties under PACE that only a certain rank can do, they are managing.” (Inspector/superintendent)

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There was also a view that direct entry should be limited to police staff roles, to take advantage of outside expertise, rather than used to recruit inspectors or superintendents:

"I don't mind Direct Entry bosses who've got a non-operational role to manage, because they can probably do it far better than somebody who is more operationally based, but the ones who are going to be involved in leading operationally based need to be able to do it otherwise they hide." (Member of police staff)

"We hear the scare stories about people coming in Direct Entry superintendent, and come in, oh I was head buyer for Asda, I'm now going to be a super. We worry they're going to be in charge of [a big football match]. But if they came in as a civilian, or even a superintendent wage wise to be head of procurement, because that's what they specialise in, brilliant." (Constable/sergeant)

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There were areas of policing, for example procurement, where bringing in experts from outside of policing was felt to be particularly beneficial, because senior leaders whose only background is within policing do not have the specialist skills necessary to perform these roles (See also 5.3.5 *Need for specialists in non-core police roles*).

## **Fairness of Direct Entry schemes on current officers and police staff**

Direct Entry schemes were described by some as being a 'kick in the teeth' for those who have been in the force for a long time and worked their way through the ranks:

"There's seven of us sitting there with our exams waiting to be put into a role, and yet they've had two people that have just been put into an inspector's role from outside. How do you think that feels for the people in the job who've worked and developed ourselves, and put ourselves out?" (Constable/sergeant)

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There was a perception that those already in the force have to wait for promotion boards to happen, but Direct Entry employees seem to be able to join at any time and take up opportunities before internal candidates have a chance to apply:

"Your inspector boards might be every year, but the direct entries seem to come in at any time they want to. So they seem to be filling the role while we're waiting for a board to come along." (Constable/sergeant)

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The fact that internal candidates are not able to apply to be a Direct Entry superintendent was seen as unfair:

"I agree totally, we do need to open our eyes and see more from the outside... But you've got to create an equal professional development system." (Constable/sergeant)

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People coming in on these schemes were seen to receive more opportunities for lateral development than current officers which was not considered right:

"In [force name] the only sergeants and the only inspectors that can move from a uniform into a detective role laterally are those on those schemes... Unless I drop back, go to main office CID, take two years' out and then come back up, I'll never get that; whereas somebody who's coming through a scheme will." (Constable/sergeant)

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## **Personal resilience of direct entrants**

Direct entrants were not seen to get the support they need. There was concern for the personal resilience of young Direct Entry level inspectors who have not been through the standard probation process:

"That entry level, on the beat cop where they get broken into it a bit."  
(Member of police staff)

"Just setting her up for mental health problems... and she hasn't the respect then from peers." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that there should be a programme to support direct entrants which includes at least two years' probation on the front line and additional work-based training:

"They're expected to come in and be supervisors of the future. They're given less training than anybody else and then chucked in to the neighbourhood police team without even going on to uniform... and then expected to come up with these massive ideas while they're learning the job. They're just set up for failure." (Constable/sergeant)

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## **Rank skipping and fast-track**

It was felt there should be more consideration of rank skipping for those within the force, so they can apply for a position a couple of levels above them if they feel they are ready:

"When they're advertising promotion for superintendent they'll say you have to be a chief inspector... I think the doors should be opened that little bit wider." (Inspector/superintendent)

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There was some confusion among participants about the eligibility requirements for internal fast track schemes (from constables to inspectors). One constable stated that they had been able to apply for a fast-track scheme despite only having GCSE level qualifications. However, there was a perception that the College of Policing guidelines require people to have higher academic qualifications to apply and that this was unnecessarily restrictive:

"These people are being chosen, not of their ability of policing, how they talk to people, how they engage with their colleagues, they're being chosen off the back of, well, could you pass an MBA, what use is an MBA in the police force I will never know, and what business plan can you bring to the police." (Constable/sergeant)

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### 4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders

#### Degrees and portfolios

There was reference to the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) where officers were said to have to spend a year writing essays on leadership to get a foundation degree when promoted. The academic style of learning and assessment of this system was not said to work for everyone:

"The style of studying is someone who's been to university... That's not my background and I really struggled with it." (Inspector/superintendent)

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The relevance and benefit of it was also questioned with officers feeling that the content is not applicable to their daily jobs and therefore will be forgotten once they have completed it.

These qualifications were said to have been brought in as a way to professionalise officers, but this was not felt to have happened. There was an opinion that certificates and qualifications are a 'gimmick' and that they should not be a requirement for officers to be respected as professionals. If the police are going to continue down this route of requiring qualifications, then it was suggested they should be treated like professionals and members of a chartered institute:

"We're the College of Policing and not the Royal College of Policing and they said that was because we wouldn't pay the money to be chartered and that's rubbish." (Constable/sergeant)

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If the NPPF system is to continue then the focus should be on teaching skills and knowledge that will be useful in their work:

"Frontline operational experience. So give them training modules on mental health, 136s, warrants, the things that we do, the things that we pick up daily, that's the type of training we need, not namby-pamby stuff." (Constable/sergeant)

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Having a national standard for how much protected study time officers are entitled to was seen as important because there is currently a lack of consistency between forces, and officers often have to complete it in their own time. Providing protected time for the assessors was also suggested because they are volunteers and if they do not have time those completing the NPPF will be unwilling to continue with it:

"I did about 50% and the person who was assessing me never looked at my portfolio in six months, so I abandoned it."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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## Timing of training for supervisors and leaders

Training of supervisors should be timely:

"They get put into a role and then they will get the course several months later when, to be honest, they've worked 80% of it out by themselves anyway." (Inspector/superintendent)

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Those who are acting or in temporary positions need to receive similar training to those who are permanent because they have to perform the same role but often with no input (see also 4.3.3 *Fairness of promotion processes*):

"The timescales aren't right. I've been acting two-and-a-half years and I've not had a sergeant's course yet." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that forces should follow the army's example and proactively train people for the next rank in advance of any promotion. However, there is a need to ensure people can put any training into practice relatively soon after receiving it so that the skills taught can continue to be developed:

"I was put on leadership courses when I first started... and it's great, you have all this training, you become quite excited about what you can do as a potential leader and then it all just goes down the swanny,

because you don't have the time to focus on it and actually put it into practice and carry on developing it." (Member of police staff)

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Reference was made to a 'baby sergeants' course' that constables used to go on before they were temporarily promoted so they had a chance to learn some of the basics needed to be a sergeant.

The importance of encouraging leadership at all levels was highlighted. One force was said to hold leadership development days run by a superintendent and chief superintendent which are open to officers and police staff of all ranks and roles, regardless of whether they are aiming for promotion. These are considered worthwhile attending and beneficial for the workforce, covering topics such as how teams should look after each other, and sometimes with guest speakers attending.

## **Content of training for supervisors and leaders**

There were mixed opinions on the leadership courses available in different forces. For example, those who had been provided with generic management training did not find it particularly effective because often the content did not seem relevant to policing:

"We were taught to just concentrate on the things we could have an effect on and leave everything else... that's not what being a police officer is about." (Constable/sergeant)

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Conversely, specifically designed courses, such as a Core Leadership programme in a named force covering four areas (HR polices, Health and Safety, Leadership and Professional Development, and Operational Leadership), were spoken about highly. This was said to be quite interactive and the scenarios included within it to be plausible. Also, the specialisms of students on the course were said to be mixed so different perspectives are shared depending on people's experiences. A video called 'Turning the Ship Around' was referred to as being particularly good for teaching leaders the importance of developing leadership skills in their staff:

"He talks about leadership by intent and what he, the push of it is that every leader's responsibility is to develop the next group of leaders, and the way you do that is by getting your staff to make their own decisions. And supporting them in those decisions." (Constable/sergeant)

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Leadership courses were felt by some to be too short. For example, inspectors used to have a course that lasted seven weeks which does not happen anymore. There are various training courses available, but this was not felt to match the experience of going away for a set period of time and focusing on development and learning without being distracted by daily duties.

The need for line managers to have more training on wellbeing and HR policies was repeatedly mentioned (see also *3.4.4 Role of line managers/supervisors in wellbeing*). There was a felt to be a significant number of people who would be uncomfortable learning about wellbeing but that the only way to get them comfortable with it is to expose them. Training on the terms and conditions of police staff employment was felt necessary for officers who manage police staff (See also *3.4.2 Culture between warranted officers and police staff including PCSOs*). An e-learning package on the police staff handbook for all supervisors of police staff was suggested. Alternatively, staff trade union representatives could input into sergeants training courses.

The need for regular refresher training on these topics was highlighted:

"Once you're a sergeant it's like you're expected to be a font of everything all the time forever and that can't be the case, but there's no repeat training... this is what we want you to understand about recruitment or this is what we want you to understand about how you can influence recruits as they join. There's nothing like that."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Increased training for supervisors in how to help manage professional development of their officers and staff so they feel more able to hold useful and honest performance reviews would be beneficial (see also *4.2.5 The line managers role in supporting development*). For example, having some kind of toolkit available so they know how to approach difficult conversations and can work with people to understand what development they are looking for.

It was suggested that having people in different roles speak to managers during leadership training to explain what their role is and what they expect from their managers could be beneficial in increasing understanding and improving people management skills:

"When you actually look at what they're supposed to be doing, they're supposed to be leading people who are delivering a service, and they probably know very little about those individuals delivering that service on a day-to-day basis and what they face out on the front line."  
(Member of police staff)

"Let's get some PCSOs to come in and tell you all about how they work, what they expect from you as a leader, because it doesn't work the other way round. You just get told what your leaders expect of you, you never have the opportunity to tell your leaders what you expect of them." (Member of police staff)

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## Specific content related to middle managers and senior leaders

Reference was made to a force bringing in performance psychologists which was seen to be particularly useful for those implementing change. It provided the opportunity to learn about approaches to tackling issues and thinking in new ways:

"It really made a difference for me... just sitting down with somebody who is used to teaching and coaching people for the Olympics and the Commonwealth competitions and that sort of thing, but to sit down and just when you talk, that's not a realistic aspiration, or to break down some of those barriers and challenge your thinking was really, really impactful." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was suggested that senior leaders should be given financial training, so they know how to manage budgets effectively. However, it was also felt that non-core policing roles like this should be carried out by experts instead. (See also 5.3.5 *Need for specialists in non-core police roles.*)

Certain people were said receive more training than others:

"We have a top 75 is the phrase, and that's the 75 leaders of our organisation. And they get input, they get open days, they get management days, whatever.... Middle management, which is myself, get nothing." (Member of police staff)

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It was felt that the availability of this training should be extended to everyone or those who have attended should, at least, be filtering what they have learned through the organisation.

## Consistency of training for supervisors and leaders

It would be useful if leadership training was standardised across the forces to ensure more consistency because there was currently felt to be too much disparity between one line manager and another. Having these courses run nationally rather than internally could be beneficial because it helps people to learn from each other and creates additional support networks for people to turn to if training cohorts are kept together:

"I think when you do go on a management course with other forces, that's when you start picking up oh that's a good idea, that's a poor idea." (Member of police staff)

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However, caution was felt necessary to ensure that the training is not so prescriptive that all managers end up being exactly the same:

"We don't actually train people for leadership or management... we train them to be a carbon copy of the last chief inspector."  
(Constable/sergeant)

"I think all of our chief officers are ... clones of each other. They all go on the same command team courses ... so they all speak the same language, which is far removed from day-to-day policing."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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## **Initial and continuous mentoring or coaching**

There was said to be insufficient coaching or mentoring when people start in a new role. It was felt there should be more mentoring across all ranks and roles to tie in with the leadership courses so that people learn to do everyday tasks to a good standard rather than being left to teach themselves. For example, it was suggested that having a formalised tutorship programme, for at least the first six months, could be beneficial for new sergeants as it would give them a single point of contact to turn to when they need advice.

Ensuring there is a handover period between new and departing supervisors could also help limit the impact upon those they are managing:

"How are you supposed to effectively manage those staff if you've not had a proper handover with the previous supervisor?"  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Opportunities for supervisors in lower ranks to have a mentor in a more senior role was suggested as a way of increasing their understanding of the force's aims so they can spread then the message more effectively to those they manage:

"I would like to... have access to ... a mentor who's in that slightly more senior role so I can get a bit more of an understanding to try and cross that bridge, really understand what the next, from a higher point of view what we are actually trying to achieve and then feed that back down."  
(Member of police staff)

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There should also be a mentoring process in place to ensure knowledge is not lost when people leave. An officer who had been in the police for many years had offered for someone to shadow them before they retired but were told that would not be possible because it would put the team over its formal headcount ('over establishment') in their

department. This was despite their manager questioning how they would ever be able to replace the specialist knowledge they had gained.

However, it was also commented upon that people are just expected to be mentors but there is no support or training available to them to build the skills necessary to effectively help others:

“There’s an assumption that people know how to coach or mentor when actually they’ve never been taught... you’re not just going to turn into that person.” (Member of police staff)

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Therefore, any formalised mentoring and tutoring schemes should consider this.

Having a structure in place for assessing someone during their first year in role is necessary to ensure people are performing effectively. This was said to be happening for officers now with a 12-month period of assessment before they are confirmed in rank. However, police staff were not said to be given the same structured programme of support and someone monitoring or assessing them in their probationary period.

It was felt there should be more ongoing support for supervisors to build them up to be leaders rather than seeing their management responsibilities as just an additional part of their role:

"There’s lots of good practice around now. But... supervisors, managers, leaders don’t get together to discuss those because there’s nothing for them... it’s like an add-on role... to your role that you’re performing on a day-to-day basis... one, two, three days a year ain’t really enough." (Constable/sergeant)

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## **Learning from best practice in leadership outside of policing**

Secondments of leaders to businesses outside of policing were seen to be very beneficial in terms of the skills and knowledge that they bring back. The benefits of secondments were not seen to be recognised enough within the organisation (see also *4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression*).

It was felt that policing should be doing more to learn from best practice externally, particularly when it comes to the business side of senior leadership:

"I think we could learn a lot more by placing our managers with ... other successful businesses, or bringing those people with that expertise in. Because I think policing has for a long time assumed that it had all the answers and it doesn’t... policing is still primarily providing a service to the public, but because of the budgetary constraints and all the rest of it

you have got to have a business head on as well when you're a senior leader." (Member of police staff)

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(See also *5.3.5 Need for specialists in non-core police roles.*)

Having a short secondment to an outside business would be helpful for new leaders as it could increase understanding of this business-side of leadership. Not all of the practices externally would be positive or relevant to policing, but it could be a useful and interesting experience to gain a wider understanding. It was felt senior leaders need to be open to change and new ways of working that are suggested from these learning experiences.

It was also considered potentially helpful for there to be more attachments to partner agencies because they face similar challenges to policing. There was recognition that these agencies are not perfect but that they could still have some useful leadership practices that policing could learn from. There would also be the potential added benefit of improving interactions with these agencies (see also *3.3.1 External demand and the relationship with partner agencies*).

## 4.4 Quality and methods of training, and ability to access it

This section will cover overarching issues with training that have not been covered in depth elsewhere in this chapter, including:

- methods of training
- accessing training
- quality of training and trainers

### 4.4.1 Methods of training

#### E-learning

There was much discussion of e-learning packages (commonly referred to as NCALT which is an acronym for the widely-used previous e-learning delivery platform; National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies). This method was generally disliked and criticised, sometimes in strong terms". Many various specific reasons for these negative views were provided.

- It is viewed as a tick box exercise to cover the organisation in the event of accusation or investigation of mistakes or misconduct, in that it can be demonstrated that a worker has received training in a particular topic:

"It is purely a tick box for the organisational requirement rather than for the needs of the actual officer." (Constable/sergeant)

"It tends to be a stick to beat people with to say you haven't done it, rather than something which will develop officers." (Constable/sergeant)

"If anything happens, well that officer's unlucky, he did that NCALT training on the 27th July 2016, so that's totally our responsibility absolved." (Constable/sergeant)

"It's a tick box and if you've ticked it and then... fall foul of it it's... there's the force policy, there's your NCALT, you've done it, there's your misconduct papers." (Constable/sergeant)

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- It is overused and not suitable for vital policing topics:

"It's gone beyond what it was originally intended for. It's become the go to tool for forces to train their officers, and it really shouldn't be." (Constable/sergeant)

"This is stuff that you're going to be using tomorrow when the Mental Health Act comes in and you're watching a video and PowerPoint about it." (Constable/sergeant)

"I watched an NCALT package, a mandatory NCALT package just a couple of months ago relating to child sexual exploitation. For goodness sake, we shouldn't be teaching that by computer." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Multiple choice questions are not effective for assessing understanding of complex topics:

"I could pick A or B and give you a reason why I'm picking A or B, because that's policing, you can almost fit that answer either way to that question they've just asked you." (Constable/sergeant)

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- It does not consider different learning preferences and needs:

"I'm just reading it, I'm never going to absorb it. I have to be shown and then do it. And that's what the old training used to be." (Constable/sergeant)

"I'm very badly dyslexic and I'm dyscalculia too... one of my worst things is my short-term memory... I have to write everything out, because I haven't got a hard copy to refer back to." (Member of police staff)

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- Emails asking to complete the training are framed negatively:
 

"You suddenly get this email saying you have not done, it's all very negative, not oh please could you do the wellbeing one."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- People are not given time to complete it so have to juggle it with keeping on top of their usual tasks and other distractions during work time:
 

"You're sat listening to your radio, the phone's going, people are coming in asking and meanwhile you're trying to learn this package."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- The software packages sometimes do not work:
 

"Whenever they put a circulation out to say do this NCALT, it's usually followed by a trail of comments: I can't log in, I can't do this, or this is not working." (Member of police staff)

"It sometimes doesn't support software or packages you've developed in-house." (Member of police staff)

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- People do not always have the necessary equipment to complete the training (for example computers that run the package, headphones to listen to the videos):
 

"We've got Wise Boxes. NCALT and most of its packages don't run on a Wise Box, so we have to go and find another computer somewhere in the building that will run a training programme." (Member of police staff)

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- There is no opportunity to ask questions or learn from peers:
 

"How many times have we... sat in a room and... being in a group you've actually walked out with a far better understanding of the subject simply because somebody's asked the right question."  
(Constable/sergeant)

"Having someone to engage with and interact with and doing it with peers is so much more useful for personal development and professional development than just sitting in front a screen reading a handout basically." (Member of police staff)

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It was suggested that the training programmes used should be made more user friendly and interactive. One force was said to have done some work on this and developed an alternative online training package that is less 'sterile' than other packages used (this was not expanded on further).

There were comments that e-learning has a place in professional development because it provides a basic level of information and could therefore be used appropriately as part of a wider training package, for teaching minor and/or brief subjects, or for refresher training. A short piece of training on data protection was given as an example of a package considered suitable for e-learning, and potentially even preferred by some:

“I would much rather have to sit there in front of a computer for 20 minutes than have to sit in some boring face-to-face training.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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The suitability was thought to depend on whether the training would result in questions or if it is just teaching a process that will be the same each time.

There was an understanding that it would difficult to avoid this method of training completely considering the logistics of delivering face-to-face training to the whole workforce within a tight deadline, such as when new legislation is brought in. The time and cost implications of in-person training were also commented upon:

“It’s not just about the hour or two, or the day in the training room. It’s all the preparation before, and it’s all the feedback and everything afterwards. It can take weeks before you can get that one day’s course. And if you’ve got 2,500 staff that need to have that training, it’s an absolute nightmare.” (Member of police staff)

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If training via e-learning is to continue it was emphasised that people need to be given the time, space and equipment to focus on it rather than trying to fit learning in at their desks in between their other duties.

Suggestions regarding how current e-learning methods could be improved upon to maintain the lower costs of delivery (in comparison to face-to-face training) while also providing the opportunity for people to ask questions included:

- amalgamating all the short e-learning packages so they could be delivered in an ‘awareness day’ led by a trainer every six months
- having team supervisors present the e-learning packages to the whole team so they could go through the training together
- delivering training courses via video conference and recording it so those unable to join are able to view it at a later time

## **In-person training days**

A range of experiences was shared with regard to training days (sometimes referred to as Teams In Action or Professional Development Days) with inconsistencies across forces and departments in whether, or how, these days are implemented. For example,

a participant who had moved between departments described being shocked when they realised that their new department did not make use of their training days like their previous role had:

"There's so much stuff that we needed to know" (Constable/sergeant).

Training days were not always considered to be used effectively. There were some positive experiences but also comments that it was often unengaging, and the topics covered were common sense to the front line:

"You don't have to... tell me how to be a police officer and how to deal with victims, because we all know. We are all good at it."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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It was seen as ineffective to make people do training if they already have the skills and knowledge or if they will never need them in their role. There was consideration of having optional modules rather than giving everyone the same training:

"So if somebody had been in for, say, three years and they wanted to go to a particular module because it was relevant to their experience, somebody like me wouldn't have to go to the same module, because I'd already been doing it day in day out." (Constable/sergeant)

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A member of police staff spoke about how their training days used to be more specific to the role that they were in and so the information they were provided with during the training was targeted and direct.

Other suggestions for how training days could be more effective included replacing some of the days not used for training that *is* valuable like Officer Safety Training, with other activities such as the following.

- Team-building or wellbeing days for people to decompress and socialise with each other and work on their team-building skills (See also 3.2.5 *Opportunity for day-to-day decompression, socialising, team support networks and maintaining physical health*).

- Teams could, for example, be allowed to pick from a list of team-building, structured activities:

"Why not use that, say right that's your team day... do what you think your team needs... something to acknowledge that for those 10 weeks you've been run ragged." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Time could be spent on encouraging communication and knowledge sharing amongst peers (see also 4.2.1 *Building skills and expertise in current role*):

“Allowing them to just have like an open door session, what’s their issues, what’s the biggest, the top three things that are worrying them at any one time.” (Member of police staff)

“First hour of every training day could be, there could be genuine fallouts among the team that you could just iron out, because it’s a bit of confusion that they’ve not ironed out.” (Constable/sergeant)

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- Short shadowing opportunities in other departments to increase collaboration and understanding of what other teams do (see also *4.2.1 Building skills and expertise in current role*):
  - Every employee could nominate an area that they would like to go and experience. The opportunity would help to increase awareness of the breadth of work across the organisation and potentially help individuals identify an interest in a career in that area. It could also increase performance in their own role if the experience increases their understanding of how the quality of their work impacts on the work of others:

“It helps you in your own job. If you understand the impact of what you do on other people.” (Member of police staff)

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- The system for organising these opportunities would need to be managed carefully to ensure people can justify why they are interested in a certain department and the day can be planned effectively so everyone involved can make the most of it.
- An opportunity to catch up on mandatory training packages, ideally as a team with a trainer available (similar to the idea of an “awareness day” as mentioned above):

“You do all your NCALTs together, but it’s not NCALT sat in front of a computer, it’s a proper trainer teaching you these three things that are mandatory.” (Constable/sergeant)

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It was also suggested that there should be some leniency with regard to people completing their full hours on a training day if the scheduled training has been completed. There was reference to how training days used to finish about midday and officers were then given the opportunity to work on their fitness for the rest of the day.

## 4.4.2 Accessing training

### Abstraction issues

Throughout the workshops issues with abstraction and workload were repeatedly mentioned as limitations to accessing training opportunities with training often getting cancelled last minute due to staffing issues:

"We've definitely got an issue on attendance at training... operational priorities take precedent." (Member of police staff)

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There was a feeling that forces should look at the long-term benefits of individuals attending training and developing themselves rather than having a short-term focus on losing them for a short period of time:

"When that person comes back they will have influenced the front line view, or they'll come back as an advanced driver or with X skill or this skill." (Member of police staff)

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The following suggestions were made to reduce some of the issues with abstraction:

- It was suggested that training days should be incorporated into everyone's shift patterns, not just those whose patterns create 'spare hours' to fill. Everyone should have a structured, mandatory amount of time allocated to accessing training and it is known in advance who will be unavailable:

"When I was in Civil Service many, many, many years ago we used to not open until 10 o'clock on a Wednesday... that was your training hour and a half... And they could extend if they needed to or they could add other things in." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Bring trainers to the workforce rather than having officers and police staff travel to headquarters.
- Have shorter continuing professional development sessions, like one force was said to have started doing, rather than day long training.
  - This was also felt to have the potential additional benefit of increasing engagement in the training:

"I'm sure everybody around the table sit death by PowerPoint for a day... Whereas the two-hour punchy sort of training I think is definitely more effective without a doubt." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Have individuals in the team be champions for different things and feedback the knowledge they have learned on courses or secondments relevant to that topic during morning team briefings.

## Availability, advertisement, timing and location of training courses

The availability of different training courses was found to be an issue. Access to driving training courses was repeatedly mentioned as being problematic. An example was given of a response policing team which currently only has two drivers due to the lack of courses available. Similarly, access to specialised training courses (such as for family liaison officers or training liaison officers) was said to be difficult because they are either not offered frequently enough or the courses are considered to be too expensive. There were concerns raised by those in specialised roles who were meant to be experts in their role had not received the training they needed to accredit them:

“What’s going to happen when I go to court? So what qualifications have you got officer? Well, I’ve got none. Well, how do you know all of this then? I don’t know, just kind of picked it up, just muddled through, learnt a bit here, learnt a bit there.” (Constable/sergeant)

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One force was given as an example of good practice in this area because they had introduced CPD days for different skills that individuals have, to ensure that they are not losing their professional competency.

The advertisement, time and location of training opportunities was also found to be an issue for some.

- There were comments that training was often held at headquarters and therefore not necessarily attracting the frontline officers that could benefit from the training.
- Holding the training days away from stations was considered a good way of ensuring people can focus on the training rather than getting distracted by their usual work. There was an understanding that this would cost money but having budgets available should be considered.
- An example was given of training always being advertised on Monday mornings which was not considered fair for those working different shifts.
- Similarly, the timing of the training itself is not always considered accessible to everyone but to only suit those who work ‘eight/fours’ Monday to Friday. Those organising training should be taking into account that people are working various shift patterns and ensuring everyone has equal opportunity to accessing it:

*"Maybe they should be doing three of these sessions across that week to pick up everybody that are working the shifts, because we do six on and four off." (Constable/sergeant)*

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- Participants spoke of being unaware of what training courses and development opportunities were available. It was suggested there should be a central place for courses to be advertised either on the intranet or cascaded to supervisors to identify people that may be suitable or benefit from the training.

Training rollout should be planned more effectively (see also *4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders*). Training for IT systems, for example, should not be given months before people are able to interact with it:

"We had one-day training on it but it didn't kick in for 12 months... so you'd forgotten everything that you'd been told." (Member of police staff)

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## **Allocation of training courses**

Training was said to be allocated based upon who is available rather than who is best for the job or who is willing because it often left too late to plan effectively:

"They don't identify it early and go hang on, right OK, this needs to happen, let's speak to people, see who wants to do it, see who's the best placed to do it." (Member of police staff)

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Workload management was seen to be an issue because there is often not time for managers to keep on top of all the upcoming training. It was felt there should be a more proactive approach taken to decide who is most suitable. For example, looking at interests which people have identified in their PDR (See also *4.2.4 The role of the Professional Development Review in supporting development*).

Officers and police staff should not be attending training just to add to their training record; they should apply the skills they have been taught:

"You see officers in particular going on courses... crime prevention courses, wildlife officer courses, dealing with police alarms, those type of things. They're more than happy to go on the courses, but then when you want to utilise their skills they're too busy. Couldn't possibly do it, I'm too busy. So they've kind of got their own hidden agendas, because it ticks a box for them for their career development opportunities." (Member of police staff)

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Allocation of training was a particular concern for those who had been involved in force mergers. It was said to have become increasingly difficult for people to access training because the leadership are looking across all forces involved to see where the gaps in development are rather than considering the development of the individual. There are fewer opportunities to specialise which stunts people's ambitions and ability to grow:

"In [force name] we were all trained, we were all developed, we were all nurtured, we were all given the encouragement to better ourselves. Under the big corporate they're now saying well you don't need to be fire trained because there's somebody in [another force name] that's fire trained... So straightaway you've got a load of staff thinking well that's it now, I'm just stuck, I'm stagnant, I'm not going anywhere, I'm not doing anything." (Member of police staff)

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### 4.4.3 Quality of training and trainers

There were repeated comments that the quality of training provided to officers and police staff was inadequate. Training was said to be often out of date which can potentially put people in situations where they are no longer acting lawfully when there have been legislative changes which impact their role. Specific reference was made to disclosure training being very poor. Similarly, safety training was felt to be ineffective because the package is not relevant to what happens on the street. There was a comment referring to safety training happening by PowerPoint with no physical contact anymore.

Suggestions made for improving the quality of training included:

- building in time to update course material
- better tailoring of training to individual needs and prior understanding
- making it more interactive rather than just reading documents:

"A training course that came out recently on that was all around safer care of detainees, safer detention. And the training package consisted of, I think, four or five policy documents which you were expected to read. Well, that wasn't training anyone." (Inspector/superintendent)

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- have more scenario-based training for critical incidents which includes other emergency services and all ranks:

"The ranks shouldn't be immune. We all see some of the rank go to the job... We can see them fall apart, and no-one tells them you did a really rubbish job there, no-one says oh you've got to do this, you've got to do that. They just all crack on and they still think they're amazing, but

they're not. They need briefing up. Someone needs to tell them when they've done a bad job." (Constable/sergeant)

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- giving examples of good practice rather than just explaining what has gone wrong in the past:

"They tell us that safeguarding is a massive issue and that we've not reported how vulnerable people are, but then they don't actually tell us how to help these vulnerable people." (Constable/sergeant)

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- not try to fit too much training into a short space of time:

"[They] will say give us some really good training on how to fill in a RIPA form... You've got a day to do it. So in that day you've got about three breaks, half an hour for travelling... an hour or 45 minutes for lunch, depends whether cops or police staff. So you've virtually got like three and a half hours to do something that is at least a week's worth of training." (Member of police staff)

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There was also felt to be a need for external training courses to be available for people in certain roles and specialisms because there are not always the skills within the force to deliver effective training on the topic area. One force was said to have started working with an external training provider which was considered a positive step forward. However, there was concern that using a third-party training company can be a limitation if they are the sole resource available for delivering training because the force can incur large costs if they have a contract for a certain amount of training but then require additional courses to be arranged:

"It's not like we can put a couple of extra members in the training department to run some more courses. We'd have to pay lots of money, because it's a private company and it's in a set contract to do so many courses per year." (Member of police staff)

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Trainers themselves were not always seen to be particularly engaged or engaging and do not necessarily have the skills to mentor or coach others (See also *4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders*):

"You've got instructors there at training school that clearly didn't want to be there when I was there." (Constable/sergeant)

"There's an old cliché, isn't there, those that can do, those that can't train, and I think in our training department we've got those that can't in there." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was felt that some trainers are out of touch with the realities of frontline policing because they have not been on the street for a long time and are therefore not able to prepare people for how things will differ between the training room and 'real-life' (see also 4.1.2 *Initial training*).

There were calls for forces to bringing in experts in their field to deliver high-quality, face-to-face training:

"Some of the best training I've had is to have an expert in that field for an hour, get everyone together and just have someone who is really knowledgeable talk for a short duration in that area."

(Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested this could open up opportunities for training to be offered to other agencies too:

"If you've got social services that also work in that field, they can go and partake in the same course." (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that to improve the quality of internal trainers, the force could select people to be trainers rather than ask for applications because those who apply are not always doing it for the right reason:

"It may be a case of telling people they're going there as opposed to putting an advert out saying we want some trainers, and everyone who doesn't want to be on the street anymore because they can't do it then applies." (Constable/sergeant)

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Allowing volunteers in each team to be upskilled to become trainers was also suggested. They can deliver training on the area that they have expertise in rather than having someone unfamiliar with the role come in. Certain departments in one force were said to be doing this.

Another force was said to have a good solution for improving the quality of trainers by making training and leadership key to promotion. They were said to have taken 'the best and brightest' of the force and got them qualified to be adult education trainers, so they had skills to make learning useful and relevant for new recruits.

# 5 Leadership

In this chapter we report on the front line's views about their leaders, both within their forces, from first line supervisors up to Chief Constables and other chief officers including senior non-warranted police staff, and in government. It includes the following topics:

- expectations of qualities and behaviours force leaders should demonstrate (Section 5.1)
- senior leaders' understanding of the front line (5.2)
- setting direction and the purpose of policing (5.3)
- public support for the front line by police leaders and government (5.4)

To reiterate, please note that as explained in the Introduction, all the findings reported are the participants' experiences, opinions and suggestions, not the ONS authors' or the police service's views. The factual accuracy of participants' perceptions has not been assessed by ONS.

## 5.1 Expectations of qualities and behaviours force leaders should demonstrate

In this section we report on:

- general views on police leadership
- expected qualities and behaviours

### 5.1.1 General views on police leadership

Good leadership was considered to be important to the workforce, at all ranks and management levels from sergeants and other first line supervisors up to chief officer level (including senior non-warranted staff). The importance of leaders valuing, listening to and treating their staff well was made clear; examples were cited of some of the largest, top-performing private sector companies which do so (such as Apple, Google and Virgin). 'Soft skills' were seen as key to effective, and more fulfilled, leadership. Good leadership has a positive impact on staff wellbeing, motivation and performance; the converse is also true.

There were varied views of the quality of leadership across policing. Positive opinions and experiences were expressed about specific Chief Constables and senior leadership

teams. Among inspectors/superintendents there were views that the quality of leaders was higher than 10-20 years ago, and that leadership culture has improved. More critical views were also given, including those as reported in other chapters.

Defining 'leadership' was not straightforward. Different people look for different things in their leaders, there was said to be no 'blueprint'. Given this, it was questioned how best to get the right blend of qualities in leaders. (see 5.3.3 *Leadership versus management cultures and rank structure* for further discussion).

It was thought that with there being 43 separate forces, leadership style within each force is strongly influenced by the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). All of them should be clear about underpinning leadership competencies and values. Reference was made to the value of the College of Policing's Competency and Values Framework and Code of Ethics, which leaders should put into practice.

There was a view that Chief Constables are not answerable to anyone in the sense of having a Professional Development Review. PCCs have responsibility for holding them to account but are not officers. There was a view that no-one in a force has the authority to evaluate the Chief Constable, for example to say their leadership or people skills need development, and to guide them, and that this should be looked at by Government.

Stability and consistency in management/leadership over time was thought important, improving accountability (see also 3.2.2 *Change management*).

## 5.1.2 Expected qualities and behaviours

Various specific qualities, competencies and behaviours that the front line expect their leaders to exhibit were identified, as follow.

### **Care for the workforce, be mindful of wellbeing**

The need for leaders to show care for the wellbeing of the workforce, and the variety of the workforce's opinions and experiences in this regard, have been reported in the Wellbeing chapter. In summary, there were varied views as to whether leaders and managers have the emotional intelligence to support teams. Regarding senior leaders' performance, views varied from considering their forces to be doing good work in providing for wellbeing, through to having leaders who do not look after their people, do not understand wellbeing, work-life balance and the requirements of modern policing. The need for training in people management including wellbeing was identified but it was thought that to some degree leadership or good people skills are natural and cannot be learned.

## Be inspirational and motivational

Inspirational leaders were thought to have a significant impact, motivating people to give their best. But it was said people can only lead when they have time to – they are expected to manage lots of other things (see also *5.3.3 Leadership versus management cultures and rank structure*).

A Chief Constable was described as inspirational because he shows he supports officers, speaks their language, makes himself available, and is supported by them in return.

Conversely, it was thought a lot of leaders, including sergeants and inspectors, are not 'people people' and do not know how to manage and motivate their teams.

## Be part of the team and support staff

The importance of leaders being part of their team, not aloof from it, was mentioned. This included backing them when things get difficult, showing support for them upwards to their own managers: "You need to know your supervisor's got your back." There were people who felt their leaders did not do this.

It was thought the leader should be there for the team, not the team for the leader, but that this was not always so:

"A lot of managers don't realise that their staff aren't there for them, they are there for their staff ... It's a sergeant's job to enable the PCs and the PCSOs to do their job. It's the inspector's job to enable the sergeant to do his job, but they get it the other way round."

(Constable/sergeant)

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The leader should stand up for them, including, when necessary, showing support in public even if they need to rebuke or criticise in private, provided their staff are honest with them.

Leaders will not become part of the team unless they accept upwards feedback or advice. A suggestion was made for 360-degree feedback to be provided; there was an example of this happening.

Managers are responsible for all members of the team and only as good as the lowest performing member of team.

## Recognise good work and reward people

It was felt that senior ranks do not always recognise and reward the front line's work and should show officers they are valued. A view among participants was of feeling less

valued now than ever, over a long career. Leaders should show appreciation for good work, not only for particular incidents or pieces of work but that carried out day-to-day. They should give constructive feedback rather than criticism, should not tell people off and make them feel small, and congratulate as well as discipline:

“Quite often ... leadership [will] discipline a lot, but won’t necessarily, even just as you’re walking through the office, [say] oh, I saw you did that job, well done, nice one.” (Constable/sergeant)

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Examples were given of leaders or managers who did recognise good work, by, for example, emails to individuals (such as from an inspector or divisional commander), giving certificates, being mentioned in the Chief Constable's blog (sergeants feed up the line to recommend inclusion), and officers being given tokens of appreciation such as chocolates or Christmas hampers. These made a difference to recipients. A suggestion was made to send an appreciative email to people after, for example, involvement in a large operation.

“We are very simple creatures. My team, all they wanted was a couple of boxes of Quality Street at Christmas from the SMT, to come down and say do you know what, we know it’s been a really tough year, and we know you feel really down. There’s not a lot I can do for you in the current climate, but here you go, thanks very much.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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A suggestion was made among inspectors/superintendents for awards to be given to boost morale. It was thought that signs and symbols matter: people would appreciate badges such as 'Firearms Commander' or 'Public Order Commander' and the ‘power’ of medals was stated. However, there was also view that such things would not have the same impact on all people and may not be entirely desirable.

## **Show trust, empower, enable**

It was said a leader should be an enabler, giving people permission to take decisions themselves - unless there is a legislative bar in the way - so they do not always have to go to their senior rank. People should be allowed to learn from mistakes.

More senior leaders should provide the right environment for leaders at lower levels, not micro-manage them. There was a view that first line managers could be more effective by being allowed to get on with their job by their inspector; they can feel constrained by office culture or politics, for example:

“I know what kind of supervisor or leader I want to be, but do I feel constrained by the organisation, sometimes, because sometimes the

way I want to be doesn't fit in with the way the organisation wants me to be, which is frustrating." (Sergeant)

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(See also 3.4.1 *Culture of risk aversion and blame.*)

## **Role model and behave ethically**

Leaders were expected to set examples of professional conduct. Participants mentioned people who were good role models, including:

- a Chief Constable who engages with staff and whose attitude is reflected by inspectors and chief inspectors also meeting their staff regularly
- a 'fantastic' sergeant who gets out with their team and would not ask them to do anything they personally would not

Alternative views were given of leaders or managers not setting a good example, including:

- supervisors claiming to be busy but spending time chatting, or taking breaks that add up considerably over the day, yet would tell staff off for lateness or not being able to account for some time
- leaders who are self-centred, take credit from their staff, and pick work or roles that will help their career. An example was given of a leader who met local residents following a particular incident in their area, was there to 'strut' and did not give credit to local PCSOs who did the work on the ground.

A view was expressed that leaders should not be aloof or have preferential treatment; a perception was held of senior officers parking their expensive cars, for which they get an allowance, in reserved spaces, while the workforce is told overtime is not affordable and there is an inadequate vehicle fleet.

## **Make decisions and think ahead**

Leadership was said to include making decisions, particularly hard ones, not asking others to make them (although their input can be sought). Leaders should be able to see what an issue is and make a decision at the time based on the information available. They should not hide behind policies, procedures or protocols. However, a view was expressed that the ability to make a good decision, and consistency in decision making by different people, can sometimes be hindered by the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice being over-complicated and not making it clear what the right action should be ("what good looks like").

It was thought people need to know why decisions have been made by their leaders, even if those decisions have a negative impact on them, so they understand and know they have been listened to.

A good leader should think ahead and understand the implications of their decisions. An example was given of a decision by a high-ranking officer on a division that was perceived not to have taken into consideration the direct impact on PCSOs. The PCSOs were not informed of the change in advance of its implementation and were angered when they found out.

## **Be honest, acknowledge issues, admit mistakes**

There was a desire for leaders to be honest, both up and down the hierarchy. Examples were given of leaders not admitting to the existence of problems, or to their mistakes, and of lack of accountability. There were views that messages going up to the Chief Constable get progressively more positive.

## **Listen genuinely, take feedback**

Leaders should listen genuinely to the front line – about the issues they face, their ideas, what works best, their local knowledge – not be insincere about feedback exercises. They should understand the workforce might be critical or express objections for the right reasons. An example was given of staff feedback being sought about a change but perceived to have been ignored, and subsequently the decision being reversed:

"We'll ask you, but we're not going to actually listen to you, we've already made the decision, thanks very much."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

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There was a view that the workforce is becoming less motivated to take part in workshops, focus groups and surveys because they see no positive outcome arising and nothing ever changes.

## **Treat people equally and consistently**

It was thought leaders should be equal in their treatment of people, and consistent over time. An example was given of differences in how people are treated by the same supervisor, some getting one to one contact time, others not (and so do not know how well they are performing).

## **Deal with poor performance**

Leaders should deal with poor performers or people not thought to be working to their full capability. This was thought not always to be the case, which can create resentment

among their colleagues. There was a view that some leaders are frightened to challenge poor performance. An example was given of sergeants in a particular force area perceived to not receive feedback from inspectors about poor performance.

An example was given of a Chief Constable perceived to have dealt effectively with a number of officers in office roles not performing to full capacity and seen to be avoiding frontline duties. Individual cases were reviewed, and many officers were returned to the front line, including some threatened with performance proceedings. Appreciation was expressed that someone had dealt with people performing below expected standard and not sharing equally the workload of their frontline colleagues. The decision had a positive impact on the morale of other officers.

## **5.2 Senior leaders' understanding of the front line**

There were widespread views that police leaders, especially chief officers and superintendents, need to have a good understanding of the work and conditions of those on the front line, in order to make the best decisions. In this section we report findings related to:

- visibility and engagement with the front line
- experience of the front line

### **5.2.1 Visibility and engagement with the front line**

The importance of leaders spending time with the workforce, and being approachable - having an open door, breaking down barriers - was a recurring discussion point. As people become more senior they were thought to become progressively detached from the day to day business. They need to see the impact of their decisions, be part of the culture they are trying to drive, to see the difficulties the workforce faces daily - the demand, the bureaucracy, the systems - and meet the public. They should lead from the front.

Varied experiences were recounted of senior and middle ranking leaders being visible and engaging frontline officers and staff, or the opposite.

There were experiences of not seeing a Chief Constable for years or their being rarely seen, unless something is wrong. Repeated views were expressed that Chief Constables should regularly visit police stations and offices around their forces and engage with the workforce, for example, to aim to attend each station once a year. Senior leaders who do engage in the way frontline staff want them to are respected. Examples were given of Chief Constables, and other members of senior leadership,

who engage locally, attend staff meetings and hold annual road shows and leadership days.

As with other activities we have reported on (such as training and wellbeing events) there were said to sometimes be difficulties in people being abstracted from their duties to attend leaders' visits.

There was some recognition that leaders at command level and above have limited time to be visible and engage:

“In the defence of the leaders where are they getting the time to do that, because they're bogged down with the paperwork and strategic and all this stuff, budgets, whatever.” (Member of police staff)

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There was understanding that keeping in contact personally with everyone in a large force or visiting remote locations might not be possible. As well as physical engagement, examples were given of Chief Constables being contactable by email, open to questions via online communication forums such as 'Ask the Chief' and having social media presence. Suggestions were made that technology such as Skype could be used.

It was felt the 'rank and file' should be included in various working groups and committees, so senior officers are aware of their views and ideas and do not make decisions without understanding implications for the workforce and the communities they serve (see also *6.2 Consultation and user testing*). Examples were given of forces holding, for example, 'culture boards' at which rank is not pulled (see also *6.1.2 Sharing of good practice within forces*.)

There were widespread views that leaders above inspector should spend time on the front line with the people doing the work; for example, go out with response teams, including being in the van, or sit in call handling/control rooms. They should spend time in the less high-profile departments such as custody. They should do the things the front line has to, and never expect someone to do something they would not do themselves. Examples were given of leaders who do so:

- Chief Constable, described as “absolutely superb”, who goes out with every shift in every district, as one of the crew, gets involved and deals with the same jobs
- other Chief Constables, chief officers, superintendents and inspectors who go out on patrol, sit and chat with officers and staff or spend time in the control room

Examples were also given of leaders who do not spend time out on the front line, including those who state their intention to but then do not fulfil it.

There was a proposal that Chief Constables must have mandated time to spend on the front line; for example a minimum of forty hours per month. In engaging in these ways, it was thought leaders would better understand the day to day pressures of staff. Examples were given of leaders having revelations about the reality when they did spend time on the front line: for example, one who spent time with the control room became concerned how they cope with pressure, knowing a mistake could cost someone's life, and being under scrutiny.

When spending time on the front line and being visible to the workforce, it was felt leaders should engage in an authentic way. They should not pick unrepresentative times and teams to visit. They should do a night shift or visit during a busy period. They should spend a whole shift, rather than leave halfway, and perform all tasks such as the administration relating to any arrest they made.

Examples of perceived inauthenticity were given, including people being hand-picked to meet the visitor, leaders visiting only because they think they have to, visiting only in the aftermath of a high-profile incident and being accompanied by a photographer for publicity purposes. It was felt visits should be unannounced, so they see things as they really are; an example was given of an office thought to have been redecorated prior to a visit. It was thought Chief Constables can be surrounded on their visits by an entourage of management or protection officers, who shield them from the reality and prevent the workforce making contact.

On a more day-to-day basis, the importance of leaders being approachable, engaging and not dismissive was mentioned. There were examples given of leaders not exhibiting those behaviours: a manager not talking to their team for days; supervisors having to be told to say hello to their staff; police staff not being able to contact their officer managers, who say they are busy and do not come to see them or avoid staff knowing their whereabouts; and an inspector not having been seen by some staff for six months with the effect of them feel isolated and disempowered.

There was acceptance of the rank structure but also said that it should not mean people being fearful of, for example, their borough commander or superintendent. They should be able to approach them, and leaders should know who their staff are by name.

With reference to increasing agile working and leaders working at home, it was not considered good leadership if there is no officer leader readily available to support their workers.

The view was expressed that the offices of chief officers should not be physically distant from frontline staff in the same building, for example on the top floor, as that creates or exacerbates the sense of lack of engagement.

## 5.2.2 Experience of the front line

Recurring views were expressed of the importance of leaders having progressed their way up from the lower ranks and having wide experience of frontline roles, so they can understand the challenges and identify with their workforce. One view was that they need grounding at all levels, of at least a year. If they come in at higher level they should spend time experiencing a variety of roles, not just knowing how something is meant to be done on paper. People did not want to be led by people who have done little operational police work but have become 'academic leaders.'

It was thought leaders should know and understand their own force, and the dynamics of their county or metropolitan area and its particular problems. New Chief Constables, it was said, can cause problems by wanting to change things, have a shake up, or do things the way they did in a previous force. Positive views were expressed about current chief officers who had worked up through the ranks, in their force, rather than being 'parachuted' in.

It was felt that people looking to advance their career can move too quickly from role to role to build their portfolio, without developing a real understanding of each area, which had impact on their staff. It was suggested there should be a minimum time spent in a post (see also 3.2.2 *Change management*). Leaders need to have knowledge or experience of the area they lead. Otherwise problems can arise; examples were given of people being placed in areas about which they have inadequate understanding. An example was of a superintendent moved from operational traffic to dealing with sexual offences, with no knowledge of the appropriate interviewing protocol required. Other examples were given of supervisors considered to have less knowledge than their staff, resulting in a disconnect between leaders and the led.

However, some risks associated with the above views were identified, of leaders not being open to new ideas and their understanding being based on outdated experiences. A belief was repeatedly mentioned that there are chief officers and divisional commanders with extensive experience – for example 25, 30 or more years' service - but that conditions were very different when they were on the front line, so they are out of touch with modern policing.

Even when someone does not know a role well, it was felt they can still be a leader by taking responsibility but involving their team in decision making and respecting their knowledge and skills. It was thought this would provide evidence of their ability to manage staff, without need to provide evidence of doing a diversity of roles. An example was given of a Direct Entry superintendent seen as a 'breath of fresh air' having brought in outside experience of managing people (see also 4.3.4 *Direct Entry and fast tracking*).

There were thought to be problems related to people with little experience being promoted. But it was also thought there can be young leaders who rise quickly to senior levels and provide longevity. It was said that years on the ground do not necessarily make a good leader. This was seen as a conundrum difficult to resolve, as the following exchange illustrates:

“We’re getting these three year, four year sergeants who have got no experience, we’re getting these four years, five years inspectors...”

“... but ... when I think back all the bosses were old men and they were, they were in their 60s. Now look at what we’ve got, we’ve got vibrant, fairly young people who are in command and a good mix of men and women as well and so the flip side is that you’ve got to get promoted early if you want to achieve that, because people were getting to be Chief Constables with about three or four years to go. So now we’re getting Chief Constables who’ll give us 10 years’ service, you’re getting chief supers who’ll give you good longevity. ... It’s a difficult circle to square really ... do we promote people so they can climb the ladder or do we say no you’ve got to have 10 or 15 years in the job before we’ll consider you – which means now they’re going to be retiring before they make [senior levels].” (Constable/sergeant)

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## 5.3 Setting direction and the purpose of policing

In this section we report on the front line’s thoughts about the direction that their leaders set, and what they think the purpose of policing should be. It encompasses discussions about:

- force policies and priorities
- effectiveness of forces’ methods of communication with the front line
- leadership versus management cultures and rank structure
- business versus public service models
- need for specialists in non-core police roles

### 5.3.1 Force policies and priorities

There were various views that the police service as a whole or individual forces were unclear about the fundamental purpose of policing, what direction should be followed and what the priorities were.

It was said leaders are required to make difficult choices about policies and priorities due to resource issues. It was not thought possible to respond to all the demand. Forces were said to differ in their policies and priorities about the demand they can respond to and how they assess calls around threat, risk and harm. For example, whether all burglaries are attended to in person or only some. An example was given of force leaders thought not to give clear direction and not be pragmatic, saying in public that the force is going to deal with everything, including new types of crime, and be 'world class', when the front line cannot deal with everything and has to decide on the priorities. The workforce was thought to need clarity in what are the priorities and how demand is managed so they can allocate resource more effectively. It was thought they do not get consistent messages from leaders.

Examples were given of forces who were perceived to provide clarity of direction. One force's executive team was appreciatively spoken of as being clear to the workforce about what they expect: a code of ethics is at the forefront; the 'control strategy' has moved from counting (for example number of burglaries, detections) to being about the 'key purpose' of protecting people. Officers and staff were thought to be clear about objectives and the expectations of them. Another example was of a chief superintendent chairing a six-monthly divisional leadership team meeting at which he sets out his expectations of them.

There were participants who considered the police not to be concentrating on the things that matter to the public, their day to day experience of crime such as burglary or car crime. There were views that the police are not responding fast enough to changing crime trends or patterns, such as the growth of online crime. On the other hand, the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice guidance was said to grow, in response to new crimes (such as stalking on social media), more things being classed as crimes and more actions being required, such as safeguarding risk assessments, which all add to demand overload. There was a view that there has been a loss of common sense. For example, a particular incident between two primary school children was thought to have been treated as a crime unnecessarily (see also *3.3.4 Targets and performance measures.*)

There were views that leaders should give lower priority to some of the demands for the police to deal with certain types of crime. Rather the police should focus on major crime based on threat, risk and harm. It was thought leaders want to please but should be honest about resource and say the focus must be on the most important issues:

"Chief officers [are] very determined to be cuddly and be yes people to quite vocal outside agencies or lobby groups at the expense of the officers who they actually lead and I think that there's a certain level of honesty and pragmatism that needs to come in from chief officers to

say that's great, but we simply cannot because our focus will be on this, because this is where we see the greater threat, harm, risk and our officers will be empowered to do that." (Constable/sergeant)

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There was a perception that not being able to provide the service they should, or to deal with the things that matter most to the public, does not reflect well on police. By not tackling certain crimes, some criminals are not facing appropriate justice.

It was said that members of the workforce feel they cannot be fully honest with the public, for example to say they do not have enough people working in a particular area, so reducing the deterrent effect. Consequently, the public continue to demand an officer attends their incident. An example was given of a control room said to have been told to promise callers who want to see an officer that they will, when in reality that might not be possible. It was felt the police need to explain carefully what is possible to the public, for whom any crime they experience is important. The public needs to feel supported. The connection between police and public needs to be kept. Various calls were made for a return to more community policing and a closer relationship with the public.

There were opinions that the focus of policing had become lost, replaced by, for example, a focus on targets and performance and politics:

"I don't know who I'm working for in reality now, because I used to know that I was working for the community. I don't actually know whether I am working now to feed their machine just to make sure that their statistics are all right, am I working for the PCC to make sure that he gets re-elected." (Constable/sergeant)

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A lack of long-term strategy or planning was identified related to the cycle of change and turnover, as reported previously (see 3.2.2 *Change management*). There was a view that policing was wasting money for short-term solutions that in a few years are replaced by something else. It was thought there should be a stronger commitment from leadership to see initiatives through, reflect and review their efficiency and to improve continually.

A need for greater national clarity and consistency was identified. It was said messages get interpreted or applied in different ways by forces. Some forces were thought arrogant and to think their way is best. It was thought the public should expect to receive the same service regardless of geography. Calls were made for the Government to provide clarity so that all forces have a common vision and purpose.

"There needs to be discussion at the very highest echelons of government, what are the police, what are we here for, and have that

remit defined and protected, because at the moment we're a Jack of all trades, master of none and struggling." (Constable/sergeant)

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The importance of the workforce being clear about direction and priorities, and having faith that those were authentic and meaningful, was made clear. The workforce was said to lose confidence in the leadership when what they say, such as wanting to be a better service, does not match what they do, such as reducing frontline numbers and not providing adequate tools.

It was thought important that leaders are honest and upfront about expectations, and stick to their word; for example:

"If those justifications are real they won't just evaporate next week when you've changed your mind." (Constable/sergeant)

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Dislike was expressed of slogans that exhort the workforce or set out a mission such as to be one team or put community first, when the ability to put them into practice is hard due to financial restrictions, operational changes and structural reorganisation: there was a view of them as 'myths'.

How much difference a force's policies and priorities make to how the front line work in practice was questioned. There was a view some things do not need to be stated because they are fundamental to the job, such as caring for the vulnerable or working with others. It was said that officers do not 'govern' their work based on these priorities. People just do the job, rather than actively thinking, for example, that they have helped meet a force priority because they have safeguarded a domestic abuse victim. A control centre worker said that the member of the public being dealt with at a particular time is their focus no matter what the declared priorities are.

There were views that the front line should be involved in setting priorities, rather than them being imposed from the senior levels. Examples were given of forces where staff can feed into strategy, or who have given some discretion back to officers to 'cull' policies that are not thought fit for purpose.

### 5.3.2 Effectiveness of forces' methods of communication with the front line

In this section we report on the effectiveness of communication of information, policies, priorities and changes between leaders and the workforce, via verbal and written channels.

## General comments about communication

There were recurring views that messaging from force leaders does not always reach its intended audience or does not 'permeate'. There was thought to be an expectation that people will read or hear all the messaging, but they do not. Officers were said to face 'information saturation', for example through their morning briefing on operational matters and other corporate messages, plus various written channels. It was said everything is a priority, that important messages can be missed among irrelevant content and some communications fall on 'deaf ears'.

"People get sick of just reading emails or e-learning or being bombarded on the intranet." (Member of police staff)

Such views applied to messages and information at both the everyday level and higher strategy and policy level. It was said to take years for a Chief Constable's vision or mission to become 'embedded' among staff - by which time there is probably a new person or a new message. It was thought short summaries of the key messages that everyone should know should be provided by force leaders:

"The art of senior leadership is turning an enormously complex and cluttered landscape into some small digestible messages for your staff to take away and I don't think it would be beyond the wit of Chief Constables to create a plan on a page for each force, there it is, that's what I want every person in my force to know, on one side of A4."  
(Inspector/superintendent)

There were views that forces communicate priorities quite well, due to having various channels available, but that leaders need to gauge the workforce's understanding and whether messages are put into practice. A need for clarity was identified as to how the workforce should achieve strategic aims or action a change; not just what it is but what the expected standards are. Otherwise it can be left to individuals' or managers' discretion. An example related to National Crime Recording Standards, whereby more things have to be recorded as crime, but it is not clear how to cope with extra workload:

"You can't then tell something and then not provide for it, because it will fail." (Member of police staff)

Challenges were seen in cascading messages, with regard to consistency and tailoring, especially from inspector downwards. There were views that consistent messages could be given to supervisors as a group at, for example, their development days, rather than them individually receiving messages as interpreted by the person giving them. However, there was also a view that messages need to be tailored to individuals.

There were opinions that messages are filtered or blocked, both up and down lines of communication. Examples given included:

- a Chief Constable's messages become diluted, adjusted to a local agenda and are subject to interpretation and to 'Chinese whispers' as they filter down through ranks
- middle management who block messages, do not cascade them down, change them or do not act on them
- middle management who do not let bad news about conditions on the front line filter up to chief officers, who are left unaware

It was thought that leaders need to listen as well as speak: communication is a 'two-way street'. It was thought staff should have the opportunity to ask questions to chief officers, for example, at question and answer sessions at roadshows with the workforce or by direct email, so they are not protected from unwelcome messages by people in between. Some forces have 'culture boards', at which a Chief Constable meets members of the workforce to hear their views, which were thought to be a good means of the front line at any level meeting the senior level and hearing reasons for decisions. (See also *5.2.1 Visibility and engagement with the front line*; *6.1.1 Innovation and idea sharing schemes within forces*.)

## Examples of good and bad communication practices

Examples of good communication practice that participants mentioned included:

- ensuring that everyone relevant is informed, but not overloaded; for example, providing personal briefings and short summaries
- being transparent and honest, such as saying they do not know an answer, not giving platitudes and stating intentions that do not happen
- being open to responses, such as to being told by members of the workforce that some things cannot be done
- promoting messages widely and via different media so everyone knows them; an appreciative example was given of a force whose values and priorities being promoted at events, public engagements and on its website: "The control strategy is everywhere."
- a Chief Constable who tours stations, setting out the priorities and aims which are then cascaded by superintendents and chief inspectors down through first line supervisors to the front line, who feel they know the priorities and what is expected of them

Examples of unsatisfactory communication practices cited by participants included:

- unclear or contradictory communications that create doubt

- messages not being communicated at all, or necessary information not fed down. For example, it was said officers can appear to the public to be unprofessional if they are not aware of something that the public knows (such as a change in policy), which is ‘embarrassing’
- messages communicated via the wrong platform
- change not being heard about until long after it has been introduced
- management not telling staff about potential changes, allowing rumours to circulate that unsettle people; an example was given of possible changes to staff hours and shifts. It was felt such things should either be kept completely quiet until in a state to be communicated or communicated openly and honestly from an early stage

Some comments were made about communication of messages that have negative impacts on the workforce. It was thought bad news should be given, not concealed, so that at least people know what is going on. It should be communicated quickly. If possible, some ‘mitigation’ around the news should be provided (not further specified). It should come directly from leaders, face to face. An example was given of staff being unhappy about closure of certain services but being understanding when the reasons and difficult nature of the decision were directly explained to the workforce by the Chief Constable.

## Comments on specific communication channels/media

Miscellaneous comments about specific communication channels included the following.

Email:

- Participants widely commented on there being too many emails and not always having time to read them (see also 3.2.4 *Detachment from work, ‘24/7’ culture and switching off*).
- Their use was inconsistent: people might or might not get a direct email about something, and perhaps have to ask someone else for the information, such as their sergeant.
- Some face to face briefings have been replaced by emails.
- Email can be used to avoid talking directly, for example when communicating difficult messages.
- Good use of email included examples of a weekly summary of key points, being sent to all or to sergeants, as relevant.
- Personalised email makes the recipient feel valued and included.

#### Face to face:

- Leaders should have regular meetings with their team or 'strand', for example monthly, at which they can take time to give people appropriate information and filter what comes down from senior leaders to be relevant to the staff concerned.
- More face to face communication would lessen the likelihood of hearing things only indirectly and help people to understand the implications.
- It is better to be visible and communicate in person, not rely on conference calls and email. However, it can be hard to maintain face to face contact when teams are geographically dispersed.
- Participants mentioned some issues with meetings: being invited to them without knowing the purpose, the agenda or if they needed to prepare, and meetings being cancelled without explanation and not rescheduled.

#### Intranets:

- There was a view that too much information about changes is placed on forces' intranets; it becomes overwhelming.
- It is individuals' responsibility to read the intranet, but it must be user friendly and important things easily found.
- A need for training to be provided in how to use the intranet and where to find things was identified.
- A suggestion was made for messages about, for example, changes to policy or procedure to be communicated via a pop-up when someone logs on to their force intranet, to increase the likelihood of their being seen.

#### Posters/noticeboards:

- Information placed on posters and noticeboards is helpful, such as about wellbeing services.
- However, there was a complaint about some notices or posters being used to push the party line further specified).

#### Social media/blogs:

- A comment was made about a force, as an organisation, being fearful of social media.
- An example was given of officers being 'shy' or 'wooden' when creating videos to put on social media. It was suggested that use should be made of younger recruits who are skilled at using it.

- Social media should not be used instead of more traditional methods; the apparent preference of one force's leadership team for the front line to communicate with it via Twitter was perceived negatively.
- A view was held, disapprovingly, that some chief inspectors and above use social media to congratulate each other.
- Various examples were given of Chief Constables and other leaders writing blogs, with mixed views of them. Some were said to reveal misunderstanding of frontline work.

### 5.3.3 Leadership versus management cultures and rank structure

There were varied views as to whether forces had leadership or management cultures. Discussions ranged across whether senior officers and staff, and lower level line managers/supervisors, are, should or can be both leaders or managers. Views were related to police officers' rank structure and to forces being treated or viewed as businesses (see 5.3.4 *Business versus public service models*) and subject to outside influences.

#### Leadership or management cultures

As reported above there were positive views about the quality of leadership in some forces. However, views were expressed that leadership has been de-emphasised or even 'almost eradicated' from the police service, replaced by management, particularly from middle ranks upwards. Reasons for such thinking included the following.

- It was repeatedly said that true leaders, who inspire and set a good example, are uncommon in the police. Rather there are people who manage systems, finance, numbers, and targets:

"We don't have leaders we have managers." (Constable/sergeant)

"They're not leaders anymore really, are they, they're just managers."  
(Constable/sergeant)

"I've never seen any proper leaders in the police. I've seen managers, people that write shift patterns and manage budgets, but I think in 17 years I've met three bosses that I'd follow into a riot."  
(Constable/sergeant)

"Chief inspector and above certainly doesn't practice policing."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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- People were said to be moved around to fill gaps in teams, especially into roles they do not want or like or that do not match an individual's skillset. This was considered to be merely management, whereas good leaders should build teams with a mix of complementary skills, recognising what people are good at and that not everyone wants to do everything (see also 3.2.1 *Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles*).
- There was a view that once in middle ranks people forget where they have come from and do not really care for the staff. They are confused, have lost sense of purpose and 'do not know 'what good looks like'. They do not need to be officers. The frontline sergeants and constables are the leaders.
- It was felt some of those described as leaders are not really providing leadership. For example, one force's Chief Constable was said to be more a 'figurehead' than actually in control of force, with some deputy chief constables being more in control. Another example given was of a participant attending a Strategic Leadership Board and considering that it did not discuss core policing matters but was concerned with what was considered less relevant content such as psychometric leadership tools.
- Some forces were said to have a 'senior management team'. A comment was made about a force's management team changing its name to 'senior leadership group' but that it needed to do more than just change name to change reality.

Leaders and managers were thought to require different skillsets; a distinction was made between managers having a 'democratic' approach while a leader is somebody you follow. An individual can have both types of attributes, and that is desirable:

"A really good leader will have both of those sets of skills."

... "So that's what we need then, we need somebody with both sets of skills." (Constables/sergeants)

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However, it was thought not everyone can demonstrate both kinds. There was also a view that true leaders will not get promoted when interviewed by managers.

Comparisons were made with the armed forces leadership model. It was thought the police could learn from their approach which was perceived to emphasise personality, leadership skills and life experience over qualifications.

Some transfer of management responsibility was thought to have occurred from operational areas to central management. An example was given of a force's HR department deciding to move people between teams. Consequently, it was felt inspectors had lost their role in facilitating moves or deciding who should be taken from

their team, with no ability to challenge decisions made and that while they are expected to do the rest of the role, managing the team is not their responsibility any more.

There was a view that the police service needs good managers outside the front line, who do not necessarily need frontline experience, but fails to get them. (See also 5.3.5 *Need for specialists in non-core police roles*; 4.3.4 *Direct Entry and fast tracking*.)

## **Ranks structure and hierarchies**

It was said that force cultures and individuals differ in how rank is incorporated into their leadership. Some have a military style, with people relying on their rank to give them authority, as opposed to their qualities, abilities, decision making and trust in their staff. It was felt there are sergeants/inspectors who are not 'people people' and do not know how to lead or motivate a team. For example, a comparison was made between two inspectors: one is 'down to earth', approachable and values their team, while the other has a more disciplinary manner. The participant who made the comparison would 'go the extra mile' for the former, but actively avoid working for the other, even at the expense of a longer commute.

There were repeated views that leadership is not about rank but whether you are best person to lead the work in a particular area. Staff at any level were thought to have potential to be leaders. Some managers were said to discount the opinions of officers of certain ranks, even when those people are experienced: comments included them having a mentality of "you're just a PC" or "I've got three pips I know best". It was felt that should not be the case; people in senior positions could be led by a subordinate who has better qualities, knowledge, skills or experience, or who is in a specialist role, and need to be able accept that. An example was given of a reduction in a specific type of crime in an area due to a constable understanding the situation better than more senior officers who allowed him to lead them.

While it was acknowledged some responsibilities have to sit with certain ranks, it was thought that for everything else, provided everyone knows what it is intended to achieve, the workforce should be given permission to make their own decisions and learn from mistakes, so they become leaders too, not just 'robots'. People should be encouraged to believe they have the skills, ability or knowledge to be a leader. Some people were thought to have more natural leadership quality than others, but training can enhance leadership (see also 4.3.5 *Training and development of supervisors and leaders*). There was a view of some new, younger leaders being more inclusive, empowering and less authoritarian.

There was a view that police staff can be subject to a similar hierarchical culture. Examples were given of police staff supervisors seen to look down on the people working for them and of them deflecting tasks that they see as someone else's

responsibility but which they could do themselves. It was said that a leader knows how to do their own job and that of the people below and above them. However, it was added, there are supervisors who do not know how to do the role of the people below them, would not be able to cover for them, and who staff members cannot ask for help with a problem.

There was a view that police staff need a rank structure, to improve the weight that their leaders carry and increase staff representation at the chief officer level. It was thought a culture change would be needed.

## Potential changes to hierarchy/command structures

There were repeated views that force hierarchies and command structures could be flatter and various ranks reduced in size. Some forces were thought to be doing this, and examples given. Consequently, frontline officer or police staff numbers could be boosted.

It was thought there are too many rank layers and senior officers and not enough officers and police staff at operational levels; there should be more 'do-ers than thinkers'. This contributed to the frequent changes of managers and cycle of change (see also 3.2.2 *Change management*, 4.3.2 *Effectiveness of promotion processes*). It was said people can achieve a meteoric rise (for example from detective sergeant to superintendent in four years); while some individuals deserve it, some are just in the right place at the right time.

One perception was of there being too many sergeants and inspectors in stations managing what were described as 'desktop departments', some of which have conflicting agendas. Various of these roles were considered to be redundant and not core policing work:

"I just don't know what they do, they certainly aren't police officers."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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Rather, it was felt, their responsibilities should be for police staff and a flatter structure would be more effective.

There was a view that the real leaders in policing are sergeants and inspectors, and that either the chief inspector or superintendent rank could be removed, with examples given of forces that had done so. If that were done, it was proposed that inspector, sergeant and constable roles could be enhanced:

"Bump up the inspector, give them more responsibility, bump up the sergeant, pay them more and then have a super PC like a senior PC."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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While the idea of senior sergeants appeared to contradict the proposal to reduce layers, a distinction was made between frontline and non-frontline roles:

"I know that what I'm saying there is adding more layers of leadership, but it's adding more frontline layers." (Constable/sergeant)

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There was a proposal that chief officer ranks be reduced. There were sceptical comments about promotions to senior ranks, including acting, being made when officers are close to retirement, especially between chief superintendent, assistant chief constable and deputy chief constable, relating to benefitting from increased pensions.

Another proposal was made to reduce the numbers of officers at senior ranks by combining commands. An example was given of a force said to have reduced from having several divisions in an area, each led by a chief superintendent, to one district led at the same rank. It was thought a single chief superintendent can run things and implement policy. Rank-related legislation, such as authorisations with regard to PACE, searches, terrorism and FIC (Firearms Incident Commander) would need to be looked at.

### 5.3.4 Business versus public service models

Repeated comments were made about policing being treated as a business, or forces describing themselves as such, rather than as a public service. Views were largely critical, including that it has had a detrimental effect on the service:

"There's a lot of business speak leaking into our organisation and the police service will never be a business and that's the problem, people treating it as a business and that's why it's got to the state it is."

(Constable/sergeant)

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It was thought that approaching police work as if it is a business, with customers or clients, does not work. Business was said to be about profit and saving money, and the police service risked a race to the bottom that will damage its reputation. A perceived example of a force thinking like a business was in developing an IT system that it could sell to other forces.

It was felt if the service *were* a business it would be bankrupt without the good will of staff to 'go the extra mile' and to 'sacrifice' a part of life. There was a view that policing should not be treated as a business if staff are not given the associated rights and entitlements.

It was thought policing should remain focused on fundamental principles of looking after the community and victims. There was a view that people who run the police service have lost sight of that. Private sector techniques were thought not to work in public

sector: it should be service driven, victim led, not focused on performance indicators and achieving targets which are 'diametrically opposed'. It was thought good work can be hard to quantify with regard to value for money; for example, people walking the beat prevent crime to an unknown extent. Reference was made to 'business managers' making what were perceived to be 'hideous' operational decisions. The rigidity of following a business model was said to lead, for example, to response officers being told only to respond to calls, otherwise they are not doing their job, and to not do other things they could do as well such as patrolling, stop and search and talking to the public.

It was thought that a difference between policing and business is that due to the rank structure, ultimately a higher rank can give an order that might not make business sense. Rank should be respected, it was said; do not, for example, call the duty inspector the 'duty manager'.

There was a view that to be a senior leader in the police, someone needs to have a business head as well as providing public service. Having to run the force like a business was given as a reason for senior officers having difficulty or lacking time to be leaders. (See also *4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders* and *6.1.4 Learning from organisations outside of policing* for discussions regarding the need to learn from good practice in businesses outside of policing.)

Some aspects of managing a force were thought possible to be dealt with like a business, such as procurement of IT, uniforms and stationery. It was thought specialists should be employed to manage these (see also *5.3.5 Need for specialists in non-core police roles*).

### 5.3.5 Need for specialists in non-core police roles

A recurring theme was the need for specialists to perform various non-core policing functions, to ensure money is well spent, make savings and relieve burden on senior officers. It was seen as a failing to expect senior officers to be, for example, accountants, IT managers, procurement experts, human resource managers, project managers, and for individuals to have to perform a variety of roles. The police's perceived 'fixation' with rank was said to mean senior managers are put in charge of jobs they are not suited to. Such responsibilities, it was said, are given on top of other duties, to those who are already stretched.

Various examples of what were considered poor practice were cited, such as the following:

- procurement of IT systems by people not sufficiently expert in either IT or procurement, including spending money in a rush, resulting in systems that were not efficient or user friendly
- time and money wasted on considering a new computer aided dispatch command and control system, that many said would not work, was outdated and was subsequently rejected
- buying vehicles that appeared to be the best deal but were not good police cars
- procurement of new uniform trousers that though cheaper than others were not best value for money
- not being able to find a manufacturer to meet the need for mobile device keyboards that light up, so they can be used in the dark, and not demanding bespoke design
- a recruitment exercise considered not to have been conducted successfully by a senior officer in the role of personnel manager

Officers were said to be given multi-million pounds budgets with no CEO or shareholders to answer to. They may do their best, but not be as good as an expert. Their training and qualification to manage and spend the budgets they are responsible for was queried.

"Just because he might be a chief superintendent or an assistant chief constable, who may be an excellent police officer, why does that make him suddenly immensely qualified in the area of procurement?"  
(Constable/sergeant)

"Just because you're a superintendent doesn't mean you know how to manage millions of pounds worth of a budget without some sort of investment in training." (Member of police staff)

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It was thought that some leaders are reluctant to admit their lack of expertise, including some seen to be 'empire building':

"The last thing that these people will ever say is I don't know, unfortunately, because they'll make it sound like they know what they're talking about." (Constable/sergeant)

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Openness in accounting and accountability was called for. It was thought staff should be informed what budgets are spent on. There were views that people should not be rewarded for failure with promotion; a perceived example was given of this happening following introduction of a new command and control system that was not fit for purpose.

Procurement processes were heavily criticised among participants. It was said consultants lobby to get awarded business, resulting in poor solutions. The private sector was thought to take advantage of the lack of expertise.

“Private companies hoodwink people in public services because they don’t know what they’re buying.” (Member of police staff)

The view was expressed that business development, procurement and other non-police roles such as wellbeing services should be the task of specialist employees or consultants. A call was made for police staff to have the opportunity to take roles that do not require police powers:

“Why are a great big handful of coppers doing all the jobs which is to do with this business development rather than being out policing.”  
(Member of police staff)

However, it was thought that attracting specialists from business will be difficult due to differences in pay.

There were widespread discussions of the benefits of increasing joined-up working across forces, including procurement strategy at regional or national level, to address the need for expertise and to obtain value for money by taking advantage of economies of scale.

“It would come from national or a more joined-up approach and I say this, the Scottish merger hasn’t gone well in some respects, but what it has done is brought an efficiency, so you had eight forces, now you’ve got one, so you’ve got one force that’s tendering for cars, one force that’s tendering for uniforms, one force that’s tendering for HR services and welfare services.” (Constable/sergeant)

Examples were given of small groups or pairs of forces said to merge procurement and share services (such as air support and dogs) with varying success. One view was that smaller forces can lose out to larger ones, which take priority.

(See also *6.3 More collaborative approaches to policing.*)

## **5.4 Public support for the front line by police leaders and government**

In this section we report on the front line’s views about:

- police leaders’ public support for the front line

- government support for the front line

### 5.4.1 Police leaders' public support for the front line

Opinions were expressed that forces' leaders do not speak up enough for the workforce in public. A need was identified for leaders to stand up for police and give its side of the story. A view was held that the front line, including public-facing members of police staff, bear the brunt of negative attitudes expressed by members of the public toward police. There was a view that the NPCC could be stronger at supporting the rank and file. The effects on the workforce of leaders not standing up were thought to include risk of external criticism becoming overwhelming and people leaving the service.

It was felt officers need protection and support for their decisions. There was a view that new officers fear physical contact with members of the public in case they are subject to complaint. It was thought that if, for example, the police shoot someone the officer concerned is usually considered to have done wrong; the IOPC investigates and the officer is not appreciated for protecting others, which is the opposite of how things should be. A view was expressed that the public should trust the police to take the right professional decisions and that the police should robustly defend the difficult decisions it has to make, saying:

“this is our job, if it was easy... there wouldn't be this discussion because we'd get it right every time ... Just say we've done it because we know best. I know that sounds like quite an arrogant point of view, but you don't go to a hospital and ... tell a surgeon how you want him to operate. You're going to him because you trust that he knows what he's doing ... It's peculiar with police, everyone thinks they know how to do it, but they don't.” (Constable/sergeant)

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It was thought that positive comments received from the public should be highlighted to counter some of the negative publicity, for example, the fact that all disciplinary cases must be made public.

There was a view that poor operational decisions can be made due to concern about the public reaction; for example, a Chief Constable was said to have decided against procuring a certain make of car for the force, commonly associated with being expensive, despite it being the most cost-effective offer, because it was thought public would object. It was thought this was 'mad' and that bravery should have been shown by purchasing the right cars and explaining the reasons to the media and public.

It was felt police leaders should be honest with the public and media about the problems faced by the service and what it can do in the current financial climate. There was a view the public do not know they are being failed but are told that crime has decreased

despite there being fewer staff. There was thought to be a 'fundamental honesty issue' within senior ranks. Leaders should give clear explanations in language the public understand, it was felt; for example, they should say a problem is related to resources, not use 'spin' or talk about 'demand' and percentages. It was said that some Chief Constables have started to do this; for example, one was cited as having told a local media outlet that changes in policing due to financial restrictions will result in "human tragedy ..., because we won't get to a job quick enough" (Member of police staff).

The view was held that the police service should publicise its policies and priorities, and be open about what changes it has made and their relevance to today's society and crimes. It should generate realistic expectations of, for example, the presence on the street, response times and how people's calls will be dealt with. It was suggested that use be made of the media, such as partnerships with TV soap operas, with realistic storylines, including to raise awareness of calling 101.

A counter view was that being more candid about problems might result in loss of confidence, so perhaps it was better not to. There was also a view that members of the public expect good service but do not respect the police or care about cuts to it.

Some participants felt that Chief Constables could be more vocal about their concerns while in post, for example about resources. There was a view that some force leaders were like politicians: they do not directly answer questions – both within force and outside. It was thought a degree of politics is unavoidable but there is a culture of fence-sitting and not wanting to raise issues in public:

"You're going to have to have a certain level of diplomacy and political nous, but they remain police officers who make decisions that are really impactful on all the work-streams and all the areas of business we have, and there is a very risk averse and conflict averse model in leadership in my opinion." (Constable/sergeant)

There was a perception of Chief Constables being influenced by political pressures. Some participants felt that their chief officers should be more robust with government and should better articulate the pressures the service was under:

"I want them to be honest and say it how it is. I'm fed up with our chief officers being politicians. They're not paid to be a politician, they're paid to be a police officer and represent the community and put out what's happening in policing. We don't have the resources. They need to say I don't have the resources." (Constable/sergeant)

There were views that the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) has politicised the police, that Chief Constables can be constrained by PCCs and the

relationship not always work effectively. However, there was also a more positive view about PCCs; for example, it was said that one force's PCC is fully behind the police, sets direction, and is supportive of the workforce.

Another view was that the leadership have to try to please too many people. They are caught between being popular with their staff by looking after them and achieving the aims of those above them, and are constrained in being able to please both.

Chief Constables were thought to have the threat of dismissal hanging over them. There was a view that appointment power should be given to a force's staff, to whom they should be accountable.

## 5.4.2 Government support for the front line

Desires were expressed repeatedly for the government and politicians in general to stand up for the police, show public appreciation of the very good job the front line felt they do, and to stop criticising. Doing so, it was felt, would improve the morale and productivity of the workforce.

Calls were made for ministers to put what was described as the 'political agenda' to one side. It was felt they should be more open about the pressure of demands and the constraints of resources.

Views were expressed that government should judge the police service less and impose fewer changes on it. It was acknowledged there is always potential for improvement, but felt that the service is viewed favourably by other countries:

"It's considered the best in the world and yet these people that are put in power ... continually want to criticise and tinker with the system. We need to move on, we need to improve, lessons need to be learnt every time and we need to be governed, but do we really need the level of scrutiny and change that is forced constantly on us."

(Constable/sergeant)

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It was thought people's passion for working in the police, despite the pay and conditions, should not be taken for granted or taken advantage of.

Among participants there was some criticism of sentencing guidelines relating to assault of a police officer, and a perception that police officers are sometimes treated unacceptably in law.

The scope of the Front Line Review did not include resource or pay. However, among the participants in the workshops there were widespread views that a need for greater resources underpinned many of the issues discussed in the four themes.

The workforce thought budget cuts could not be ignored. As reported in previous chapters, insufficient staff numbers, equipment and training, as a consequence of reductions in funding, were said to have caused problems with capacity to meet demand and had a significant impact on increased workload. It was said that cuts have gone too far, while demand has increased. It was said repeatedly that it is too much to expect the police service to be able meet that demand and that it was time to increase budgets and reinvest. For example:

"The bottom line is unless you are prepared to put significantly more resources into policing then all you are doing is moving the deckchairs around the Titanic ... You cannot have a situation where numbers go down, demand goes significantly up and expect nothing to change."

There was also a view that increasing police numbers is not always the solution (as many of the suggested solutions and examples of good practice throughout this report would support), but "fewer police is definitely the problem".

(See also *3.3.1 External demand and the relationship with partner agencies* for discussion of what the government could do to reduce external demand).

## 6 Innovation

In this chapter we present findings related to innovation within policing. Discussions covered various topics including:

- innovation and sharing good practice (6.1)
- consultation and user testing (6.2)
- more collaborative approaches to policing (6.3)

As previously noted, all the findings reported are the participants' experiences, opinions and suggestions, not the ONS authors' or the police service's views. The accuracy of participants' perceptions has not been assessed by ONS.

### 6.1 Innovation and sharing good practice

This section will discuss:

- ideas sharing schemes within forces
- sharing of good practice within forces
- sharing of good practice between forces
- learning from organisations outside of policing

#### 6.1.1 Innovation and idea sharing schemes within forces

Many different schemes for encouraging innovation and gathering ideas in various forces were mentioned by participants (for example, 100 Little Things, Innovate, Idea Drop) with most forces appearing to have somewhere available for putting ideas forward. However, there were varied views on the effectiveness of these platforms in terms of how they are managed and how positively they are engaged with.

Having a public way of expressing ideas and concerns and then seeing changes happen as a result was said to have a positive impact on morale.

#### Method of platforms

The various methods for ideas sharing platforms included online forums, Dragon's Den style schemes, culture boards, public whiteboards and specific innovation departments. Benefits and potential drawbacks or considerations necessary for each of these methods were discussed.

- Online forums within each force
  - The positive aspects of online forums (for example, Yammer) identified were that they can be an effective way of engaging with the whole workforce and give people the opportunity to make their own suggestions as well as comment on or add to suggestions that they agree or disagree with. This feature can make it easier for senior leaders to identify particular ideas or issues of concern that are important to the front line.
  - However, the drawbacks of open forums were that they can lead to personal, negative comments if there is not proper moderation of the forum (which in one example was said to have happened). Therefore, it was said, if online forums are to be used then there needs to be consideration of how they would be managed.
  - It was also commented upon that the timing of any real-time online engagement activities (for example, 'Grape Vine' where members of the 'exec' or HR are online for an hour and can be asked questions directly) needs to be considered to ensure that the officers and police staff of interest have an opportunity to be involved:

"The last one they did was aimed at the police officers primarily... And it was done at a time of day when they were all out and... away from the ability to actually engage in that process." (Member of police staff)

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- 'Dragon's Den'
  - Schemes where people had the opportunity to come and pitch their own idea to 'key decision makers' (not specified further) were spoken about positively by those whose forces had used them.
  - Examples were given where ideas pitched in these Dragon's Den type schemes had been implemented and were considered useful. One such example was the social media desk in one force created as a way of reducing the number of 101 calls. Two social media operators were introduced for each shift and are responsible for sending out updates of any known issues in the area, such as highway disruptions, in addition to responding to any social media or direct messaging from the public.
  - The process preceding the pitch itself, involving coaching and working with other departments to get the idea together into a business case, was also considered to be a good development opportunity for the individual.
  - It was suggested that holding events of this kind regularly (for example, every couple of months) could be very beneficial for both the workforce and the organisation.

- Public Whiteboards
  - There were comments that even something as simple as having a public whiteboard available for the workforce to leave comments or suggestions for improvements was useful.
  - However, it was suggested that this type of platform may only be suitable for raising perhaps minor ideas or issues which are nonetheless important to the workforce rather than for in-depth discussions of innovative ideas:
 

"They tend to write things like another radiator in the men's locker room... it's not really things that are going to impact on your area of research and work." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Specific innovation departments
  - There was reference to having a specific innovation department for feeding ideas into. That department is then responsible for picking up and developing an innovative solution which can be implemented.
  - The benefits identified with this type of platform were that the department have the time and budget to 'run with' ideas, which is something which the front line themselves do not often have, and therefore can lead to significant improvements within a force.
  - However, there were warnings not to rely solely on this department for driving innovation but to see it instead as an addition to other channels. There was reference to innovation being restricted only to this channel which meant that good ideas which officers and police staff had identified and developed themselves were getting missed:
 

"We had a problem with property went missing and we spoke to the property department and they were like we've got this idea... but when we put it forward we've been told it's got to come from [name of innovation department]." (Constable/sergeant)

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- Face-to-face forums
  - Participants spoke about the benefits of face-to-face forums where the workforce can engage directly with senior officers to discuss force issues and cut out the 'filter' between the top and the front line. They make people at lower ranks feel like they are being listened to and gives them the opportunity to hear explanations about why a decision has been made. Divisional and force-level culture boards were given as an example of such forums.
  - However, it was stated that there have been times when people have been 'coached' by senior officers as to what they will and will not say in these situations which reduces the effectiveness of the forums.

An overarching theme identified was that any system used for sharing ideas should be made as simple and accessible as possible. For example, it was felt that there should be avoidance of a 'bureaucratically overcomplicated' system that requires a separate password to log into because it may limit people's willingness to engage with it and therefore stifle innovation.

## Encouraging innovation from the whole workforce

It was highlighted that some forces encourage people to share their ideas regardless of their rank or role whereas others were seen to be rank-focused with those in lower ranks (constables, sergeants and police staff equivalents) not feeling listened to.

There was reference to innovation falling mainly to those who are looking for a promotion and need evidence that they have created change. It was suggested that there should be more emphasis on encouraging all practitioners to drive innovation based on their experiences because they all have the potential to provide valuable contributions and the knowledge to understand what might lead to effective long-term improvements:

"There are some very good ideas out there that people have and they are for the good of the organisation, not about promotion, not about feathering their own nest, but it's just getting them through."  
(Constable/sergeant)

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The importance of police staff in innovation was mentioned. For example, there were comments that forces should make sure that police staff are engaged with as well as officers. There was a perception that ideas from police staff are not given the same value that officers ideas are and that their contributions can be dismissed:

"I see a big difference between if a police staff has an idea and a police officer or sergeant has an idea." (Member of police staff)

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## Feedback about implementation of ideas

The need for people to know that their ideas result in change or to receive feedback as to why changes cannot be made was repeatedly mentioned. Otherwise the schemes are just seen as 'tokenism'.

There were forces cited as showing good practice in the way they provide feedback and implement ideas generated by the front line. For example, one force was said to hold a staff forum every month after which staff can provide ideas for improvements via email or ideas boxes put in each station. These ideas are discussed at the next meeting and someone is given ownership of assessing the feasibility and/or implementing the idea and reports back the following month on the progress they had made.

However, there was a feeling amongst those in other forces that there was no point in them raising issues or providing ideas for improvement because nothing is ever implemented as a result:

"We've been told no so much that we don't even bother asking anymore." (Member of police staff)

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The need for succession planning in the management of ideas sharing platforms was mentioned. It was suggested that there should be a clarity as to where in the organisation (individuals or area), responsibility for managing innovation lies to ensure the success of any scheme would continue even if individuals moved on:

"I think there's lots of champions out there in various places... but then inevitably those champions move on, and there doesn't seem to be any consistency across our organisation around 'you will do this'... 'your SLT will do this'." (Inspector/superintendent)

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There was some concern about ensuring there is the right process in place for deciding whether a particular idea should be implemented. For example, there was a feeling from middle managers that they should be given the power to make decisions on the implementation of ideas where they would be the ones who would have to drive the change in practice:

"We're the doers, we're the ones that are going to make a difference." (Inspector/superintendent)

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It was felt that there should be a process in place to ensure that ideas are diverted to the relevant rank or department and give them the power to decide whether the request is feasible. There was an example given where an idea had suggested to a particular department and they had responded by provided an explanation of why it was not possible to act upon it, but the individual had not accepted this first answer and gone higher up to request the same thing. It was felt that there should be a process in place to ensure that ideas are diverted to the relevant rank or department and give them the power to decide whether the request is feasible.

## **Reward and recognition for ideas**

There were references to rewards being given in response to members of the front line providing an idea. It was felt that having some reward for providing a good idea is appreciated.

A financial reward or other form of recognition was thought justified in cases where the implementation of the idea lead to cost-saving.

## 6.1.2 Sharing of good practice within forces

There were suggestions that forces should be doing more to encourage communication and sharing of good practice across divisions this rather than relying on individuals having 'chance meetings' with the right people which is what was said to be the only way good practice is currently shared in some forces.

Specific suggestions of how this good practice could be shared included things like:

- A monthly newsletter: However, there was recognition that it could be difficult for someone to have the time to put something like this together. There were also comments that it would need to be relevant to people and that it should not be produced too often otherwise people will not read it.
- A 'this worked well for us' section on the Intranet
- Locally based inspections: there was reference to a small team in one force who sometimes do locally based inspections which was felt to be useful for sharing good practice because it can be difficult for supervisors themselves to find the time to talk to their counterparts and share what they have been doing.

As with the ideas sharing schemes, it was highlighted that there is a need to make sure that someone is going to take responsibility for advertising and managing any system for sharing good practice across the force. There needs to be someone, or a group of people, responsible for championing it in order for it to be effective.

## 6.1.3 Sharing of good practice between forces

Good practice was perceived to be not shared enough between forces, resulting in inconsistencies in approaches and unnecessary repetition of work. It was questioned why good practice when identified in one force is not adopted as the national model.

"I'm amazed that knowledge isn't shared or best practice isn't shared between forces... if [one force said to another], now how is it that you do your resource management, and they said oh well we've got this system, they think ah that's fantastic, has it worked, yeah, well we'll do that then. But that doesn't happen. Every force wants to reinvent the wheel at each stage." (Constable/sergeant)

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In the absence of a suitable national platform for sharing good practice, there were examples given of individuals creating national WhatsApp groups of their own accord so that they could share good practice among themselves. However, it was felt that this encouragement of sharing should be coming from the top.

Some of the suggestions for how to encourage more sharing of good practice across forces included:

- Re-defining the role of chief officers: There was a suggestion that chief officers should be the professional leads for certain areas of policing (for example, Wellbeing or Professional Development). They would each be responsible for identifying and defining good practice in that area and then implementing it across all forces.
- More involvement of the front line in existing national forums: National forums were generally seen to include only those of Chief Inspector rank and above (for example, the National Police Chiefs Council). There was a call for more frontline practitioners to be involved in these national forums because they have a first-hand understanding of the realities and issues facing frontline policing and therefore provide a useful insight into what they have found to be good practice.
- Regional workshops for discussing good practice: It was suggested that there could be regular regional groups or workshops where frontline officers and staff could come together from different forces to discuss innovation and good practice happening in their forces. These individuals could then feedback the ideas shared within the sessions to the rest of their force.
- Online national sharing platforms: It was suggested that any online national platform implemented for sharing innovation and good practice should be simple and easily accessible to all. There was some awareness of the Police OnLine Knowledge Area (POLKA) but it was not considered to be well advertised with many unaware of its existence. It was also viewed as 'clunky' and 'outdated' with the need to have a password to enter it being considered an unnecessary barrier.

There was an overarching theme that any platforms for sharing innovation and good practice should be well-advertised and managed to ensure that they are being used effectively.

There was a view that policing in England and Wales should also be learning from good practice implemented within forces in other countries:

"Is anyone looking at technology used by other countries as well, because I know that in France in their cars they scan passports. So if you get stopped as a foreign driver they'll scan your passport in their car." (Constable/sergeant)

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There was reference to the 'International Police Association' which is where it was felt good practice, at least in terms of technology, should be discussed.

## 6.1.4 Learning from organisations outside of policing

There were comments throughout the workshops related to learning from businesses outside of policing. Although it was recognised that policing is quite different from other organisations, there was a view that there may be some aspects where it could be beneficial to look at their approaches. For example, in terms of leadership and management skills (see also *4.3.5 Training and development of supervisors and leaders*).

Other specific suggestions raised by the front line with regard to learning from outside of policing included:

- The need to approach academics or research other businesses (for example, banks) to increase understanding of what needs to be considered when designing a fully integrated police IT system.
- Looking to other users of vehicle fleets for ideas of which cars to procure as they have similar requirements to consider.
- Seeing how other organisations encourage innovation and feedback.
  - For example, a participant shared an experience of an organisation they previously worked in which held regular focus groups to discuss any issues or ideas that had been raised in the various feedback forums available to the staff (such as monthly team meetings). This type of environment was considered very effective for innovation and something the participant felt the police could model itself on.
- Increasing sharing and open communication with other organisations (for example local authorities) who may have strategies and services which can aid policing.

One force was said to be already collaborating with other agencies and businesses. This force was said to be working with an online corporation to look at predictive policing and how processes can be streamlined to be more efficient. They were also said to be looking at how best to collaborate with the fire and ambulance services, so common issues and solutions could be discussed. This recognition by the force that there are times when bringing in external expertise is necessary was seen to be a positive step.

## 6.2 Consultation and user testing

This section will cover:

- consultation
- user testing

## 6.2.1 Consultation

There was an overarching theme across the workforce in relation to user consultation. There were feelings that the workforce is generally not consulted about proposed changes even though they are able to contribute opinions on what they considered to have been good practice in the past and whether changes may be beneficial or not. Examples have been given of this previously, including in sections *3.2.1 Changes to organisational structures, operating models and individual roles*; *3.2.2 Change management*; *3.3.5 IT systems/equipment, uniforms, vehicles, other equipment and services*; and *5.2.1 Visibility and engagement with the front line*.

Views from the front line were that their opinions are sometimes ignored because they are not of a high enough rank:

"There are some parts of the organisation where it's that, you're just a PC mentality, that feeds into other stuff about innovation, because you haven't got an opinion because you're just a PC." (Constable/sergeant)

They felt senior leaders should be doing more to engage with the front line and involve the relevant people in decisions that will impact them, regardless of their rank, because they will have the expertise to know what could work:

"They have no knowledge of what I do, they have no knowledge of what the decisions they're making impact my job. If they just involved me in that process it would be a lot more productive." (Constable/sergeant)

Specifically, there were comments that frontline officers should be involved with decisions made about different IT systems because they are the ones using it on a day to day basis and understand what a policing system needs to do. Whereas it was felt that the senior leadership are no longer really aware of how things work on the front line and therefore should not be making decisions without full consultation with those 'on the shop floor':

"Stop thinking that your chief superintendents or superintendents and chief inspectors and the equivalent actually have the answers. Because whilst they may know some of it, they don't know all of it." (Member of police staff)

There was an example given where working groups had been set up within a force prior to the implementation of a new policing model so those on the front line could discuss the proposed changes and provide their feedback on what aspects would or would not work in each of their local policing teams. However, the working groups were later

cancelled, and the change was made without any consultation with the front line which resulted in a model that was not felt to be working.

In contrast to the above example, good practice was identified in one force which was said to have heavily engaged the workforce when designing their new policing model. The front line was informed about what the plans were for the model and focus groups were held for providing feedback on the proposal. There was recognition that although the model is not perfect, the feedback from the front line on what aspects would not work or needed consideration did lead to changes in the design of the final model.

It was emphasised that if consultations do happen then forces should listen to, and act upon, feedback given by the front line. There were examples given where officers and police staff were dismissed as being negative for highlighting concerns rather than careful consideration being given to their feedback:

"I could give you examples of, where hundreds of thousands of pounds have been wasted, and you're sat there going... I know you were warned about these three particular areas." (Member of police staff)

## 6.3 More collaborative approaches to policing

A theme raised repeatedly by participants throughout the workshops was that the current structure of 43 different forces with their own leaders, approaches, resources and systems was not an effective way of running a police service. It was commented upon that the model is outdated, for example:

"We need to have radical modernisation of policing, because we're not in the 1850s or whenever it is, we're actually in the 21st century and actually the model doesn't fit as it did then." (Inspector/superintendent)

Having a more collaborative approach to policing was suggested as a solution to a number of issues raised. Participants suggestions for how to achieve this included:

- unifying approaches within the current force structure
- force collaborations and mergers
- a national police force

### 6.3.1 User testing

There were comments from the front line that new systems and changes are often brought in without being tested properly by the people who are going to be using them.

It was suggested that forces should be getting users, particularly those who are not technically minded, from each area of the force to test things like software and systems and provide feedback on the experience before there are commitments to buying the product and changes become more difficult:

“Listen to your officers that are doing that work, listen to the officers that need to put crimes on, what are the difficulties that you’re faced with, the officers that are doing those remand files, what difficulties are you faced with doing that.” (Constable/sergeant)

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It was suggested that changes should be introduced more slowly with the effectiveness of changes being assessed throughout the process rather than trying to implement a massive change all in one go as has been done in the past:

"It's not exciting to have things happen slowly one after the other, it has to happen all at once, but because of that it goes wrong and we do it over and over and over." (Constable/sergeant)

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A 'Vehicle User Group' which involved the front line in consultation and testing of new vehicles and was considered an example of good practice. Members of the group tested various cars and provided feedback on performance, which was reviewed, and a decision made as to the best option. The group was said to be very effective, however it was said to have been taken away 'overnight' without any explanation.

It was felt that groups like the Vehicle User Group should be encouraged rather than taken away. They should be advertised to the whole workforce so that anyone who has an interest in generating improvements can get involved. There was a lack of awareness of how to get involved with groups like this currently with a uniform committee given as an example of such a group:

“In 12 years I've never ever met anyone that sits on this fictitious uniform committee; other than I know it's chaired by the ACC.”  
(Constable/sergeant)

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### 6.3.2 Unifying approaches within the current force structure

There was a general feeling that there needs to be a more unified approach to policing:

"We need to stop acting as 43 separate completely independent bodies... this is a national organisation." (Constable/sergeant)

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In this section we collate some of the issues that have been identified across other sections of the report.

## Standardisation of equipment and procedures

A theme which came up consistently throughout the groups was about the lack of standardisation across forces in things like equipment, uniform, vehicles, software, stationery and computer systems (see *3.3.5 IT systems/equipment, uniforms, vehicles, other equipment and services*).

There were also examples given for when national standards had been introduced but each force had developed their own procedure for meeting that standard which appeared to be a waste of resource and budget. It was suggested that if an operating procedure is required nationally then it should be standardised across the 43 forces rather than each one developing its own procedure. There was recognition that some differences will inevitably arise because forces will adapt to what they think works best for their area, but the overarching standards and procedures should be largely the same.

## Sharing intelligence

There was felt to be a lack of intelligence sharing nationally; when one force requests specific information from another force that would help them to deal with a crime there can be a reluctance to share that information across the 'imaginary line' between forces. It was suggested that more open communication between forces should be encouraged, particularly in the 'outlying stations' where force borders are close to one another. Having all forces on one IT system was considered as way to help with this issue as intelligence could potentially be shared more easily.

## Sharing of services and facilities

The need for sharing of services and facilities between forces was identified. For example:

- There were some frustrations amongst participants with the inefficiencies of having to take a suspect to a custody suite within their own force when there might be another geographically closer but belonging to another force.
- If all forces were working on the same IT system participants felt it would encourage more inter-force working and sharing of these facilities (see also *3.3.5 IT systems/equipment, uniforms, vehicles, other equipment and services*).
- Being able to share services like wellbeing support across forces was suggested as beneficial as it could mean that people could use the service which is geographically closest to where they live (see also *3.5.5 Reactive services*).
- The benefit of sharing translation services was also discussed. One force was said to have access to a teleconferencing facility which they can dial into when interviewing someone who required translation services. There were calls for

services like this to be available to any member of the workforce regardless of which force they belong to.

## **Economies of scale in procurement of goods and services**

There was a widespread feeling that national procurement could lead to considerable financial savings. It was suggested that a national approach would be more likely to lead to procurement of products that meet specific requirements of policing because companies would be more willing and able to design bespoke products if they had a large enough contract. This had been found to be the case in terms of vehicle manufacturers when a participant had researched this issue previously:

“I spoke to three of the major manufacturers in this country and all three of them said if we had the national police bid for vehicles of class patrol vehicles, we would retool our production line to produce you to a specialist police patrol version of the Astra or the whatever for three months.” (Constable/sergeant)

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However, there were also some concerns about the potential drawbacks of national procurement if it were focused on getting the cheapest product rather than considering the best value for money. One such example was from a force who had a contract with a local tyre supplier who would replace a tyre at any time of day if a police vehicle suffered a puncture. A decision was made to change this contract to a national supplier which provided cheaper tyres, but at the expense of a convenient service and therefore did not result in the best value for money because cars were out of service for longer periods.

A suggestion was made to outsource procurement to experts rather than trying to do things ‘in-house’ (see also discussion of employing specialists in non-core police roles rather than officers in *5.3.5 Need for specialists in non-core police roles*).

## **Cross-force recognition of roles, skills and qualifications**

There were comments throughout the workshops that there is a lack of consistency nationally in training and that training completed in one force is not necessarily recognised in another.

It was suggested that there should either be cross-force recognition of qualifications and skills or a national course that everyone follows. If there was increased collaboration nationally in terms of role profiles and training, then there would be more opportunities for police officers and staff to transfer between forces and develop their career. There was a suggestion that this recognition of skills and qualifications could be extended to the whole of the public sector, to facilitate movement between the police and other services.

Holding training across forces could have benefits because people can share experiences and good practice from their own force that those from other forces can learn from. It can also create a networking opportunity so that people can make connections with those in other forces.

(See also *4.2.2 Lateral development and career progression* and *4.2.6 The force or organisational role in supporting development*).

There were calls for national standardisation of PCSO and other police staff roles (see *3.3.3 Statutory and legislative requirements*).

### 6.3.3 Force collaborations and mergers

Going beyond more unified approaches were calls for regionalisation, for example into six or seven forces, across England and Wales. It was suggested that the resulting reduction in the number of Chief Constables would create greater interoperability, efficiency and streamlining. However, there were concerns raised that it would be difficult for one Chief Constable to manage a whole region because forces currently within the same region may face varying challenges and demands.

There were also participants whose forces had already entered into collaborations, or had attempted to, and who did not consider it to have been a positive step. Challenges they highlighted with the force collaborations included:

- The processes that work for one force may not work for all forces (for example, shift patterns).
- Innovation and good practices already implemented successfully within a force can be lost within a collaboration:

"We had some really good processes, really good ideas... And then what happens is you have to follow another force, because senior management are from that other force." (Member of police staff)

- Getting agreement within the new force on decisions as seemingly simple as a common uniform may be difficult for reasons such as differences in funding available in each area.
- There can be a loss of force identity and 'tight knit' team spirit which can impact upon an individual's wellbeing.
  - An example of this was a collaboration of forensic teams with other forces which resulted in staff feeling a loss of control and being less willing to 'go the extra mile' for their team and now-distant boss.
- Creation of barriers due to an area not having, for example, its own dog handler or firearms unit on hand.

It was highlighted that if force collaborations are going to happen then they need to be well-defined and managed otherwise they will not work effectively, for example:

"We ended up with three different systems for managing HR, three different policies for three different forces." (Constable/sergeant)

It was believed that some PCCs object to the idea of force collaborations and mergers; some collaboration projects were said to have broken down. There was a view that even if a force's own PCC is supportive of such things other PCCs might criticise them for talking about national issues or those relating to another force.

There were also comments that senior police leaders would be likely to object to a move away from the current structure because it would reduce their authority and impact on their opportunities for promotion.

### 6.3.4 A national police force

A more radical position was a recurring suggestion to create a national force in England and Wales, like Police Scotland. It was felt that having a single voice for policing would enable the organisation to work more effectively, consistently and efficiently. For example, having a national approach to external demand so a clear message can be conveyed to partner agencies regarding the responsibilities of the police (see also 3.3.1 *External demand and the relationship with partner agencies*).

However, there were different views among participants in whether creating a national police service would be effective in practice, with a perception that the Scottish merger has not been wholly positive. The move towards a Police England and Wales force was considered unlikely to happen in the near future because it would be a very large undertaking to merge 43 different forces, with considerations of the many impacts necessary.

# 7 Appendices

## A. Promotional email and invitation literature

### A[i] Email and promotional document sent to forces

**From:** Front Line Review

**Sent:** 18 October 2018 17:44

**Subject:** FOR ISSUE: Front Line Review Engagement Workshops

Good Evening,

We wrote previously to share plans for the Home Office [Front Line Review](#). Sponsored by the Policing Minister, the review has been collecting data throughout summer 2018, with a view to using this evidence to inform policy development to bolster existing frontline support, welfare and development provisions. We'd like to thank you for your support in promoting the review – this helped to guarantee high levels of engagement and the generation of a vast evidence base.

We'll shortly be holding a series of regional, face-to-face workshops to test the headline themes identified throughout the summer. Moderated and delivered in partnership with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), workshops will bring together police officers and staff from across each region to discuss next steps, with a view to identifying solutions to some of the challenges raised. Chief Constables have been briefed on these plans at the most recent National Police Chiefs' Council as have staff associations and **we're writing today to request your support to promote the workshops.**

Attached is a promotional pack we wrote to share with forces, which summarises the dates and locations of all 28 workshops, taking place across 13 regional locations. You may want to use this to support you in socialising the review, as the host force is identified, as are those that are invited to provide representation. **We'd appreciate your support to promote these opportunities among your membership to encourage frontline officers and staff to put their names forward to attend the workshop appropriate to their location and home force.**

To participate, individuals must complete the attached questionnaire and return to [DCM@ons.gov.uk](mailto:DCM@ons.gov.uk) as soon as possible (and no later than 7 days before their workshop). The ONS will then screen applicants, contacting all candidates to confirm whether they have been selected to participate or not. Please note, to ensure the participant sample is representative, the majority of workshops will only be open to constables (including specials), sergeants and staff equivalents, with only a small minority reserved for inspecting and superintending ranks. As such, we'd encourage inspecting and superintending officers (and staff equivalents) to express their interest as soon as possible, so they can be matched up with available regional workshops appropriate to their ranks.

**Please share the attached leaflet and questionnaire with your members to encourage them to participate in the Front Line Review engagement workshops. For this exercise to be effective, it's essential that the maximum amount of police officers and staff are given the opportunity to contribute to policing transformation.**

Many thanks,

**Front Line Review Team**

Police Workforce and Professionalism Unit

**Home Office**



# The Front Line Review: Promoting the Engagement Workshops

October 2018

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# Home Office

## Introduction

Earlier this year, the Policing Minister launched the Front Line Review, a Home Office initiative to collect feedback and ideas from frontline staff and officers about their lived experience of operational policing. We wrote to force communications teams in July 2018 to request support in promoting our digital engagement activity, taking place at force level and across social media channels. We'd like to thank you for your support in making this a success - the digital activity returned a vast amount of data which is now being analysed, with a view to influencing subsequent policy development.

The next stage of the review's engagement activities will commence shortly, composed of a series of regional face-to-face workshops, designed to bring colleagues from different forces together to discuss next steps and remedial actions to address issues and challenges identified during our digital activity, **and we are writing today to request your support in promoting the workshops locally, with a view to enhancing participation.**

From w/c 5<sup>th</sup> November, we'll be hosting a series of 28 workshops in 13 different locations – many forces will already be familiar with the concept, having kindly volunteered meeting spaces to facilitate these sessions. We've commissioned the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to facilitate these workshops on our behalf. The ONS are the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics, as well as the UK's recognised national statistical institute and, as such, will ensure data is captured and processed in a fair and objective way. Once workshop data has been analysed, it will be securely returned to the Home Office to influence ongoing policy decisions.

**We would encourage all forces to use the material in this communications pack to promote the workshops taking place in your region – maximising engagement will help to ensure the findings and resulting policy conclusions accurately reflect frontline needs.** Earlier this month we shared our proposals with Chief Constables at Chief Council, seeking their blessing to enlist your support to promote the review in this way.

A short history to the review and its ambitions has been provided at the back of this pack for clarity.



## FLR Face-to-Face Workshops

The face-to-face workshops will be held from November 2018 through to early January 2019. 28 workshops will be held across England and Wales, with participation invited from all 43 police forces. Up to 10 volunteers can take part in each event, which will last for approximately 90 minutes.

Workshops will bring together similar ranks to create a safe environment for participants to comfortably discuss their views and voice their opinions, with a view to identifying next steps to address issues and challenges raised during the initial phase of engagement. We will also look to identify local best practises which would benefit from discussion at a national level.

Front Line Review Face-to-Face workshops will take place on the following dates and in the following locations:

Workshop Dates	Hosting Force	Attending Forces	
06/11/2018	Met	Met	City of London
07/11/2018	Met	Met	City of London
12/11/2018	Thames Valley	Thames Valley Hertfordshire	Bedfordshire Northamptonshire
13/11/2018	Kent	Kent Surrey	Sussex Hampshire
20/11/2018	Suffolk	Norfolk Suffolk	Cambridgeshire Essex
21/11/2018	Lincolnshire	Leicestershire Derbyshire	Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire
27/11/2018	Devon & Cornwall	Devon & Cornwall Wiltshire	Avon & Somerset Dorset
28/11/2018	Gwent	South Wales Gloucestershire	Gwent
04/12/2018	Staffordshire	Staffordshire Warwickshire	West Mids
05/12/2018	North Wales	North Wales West Mercia	Dyfed-Powys
11/12/2018	West Yorks	North Yorks South Yorks	West Yorks Humberside
12/12/2018	Lancashire	Lancashire Merseyside	GMP Cheshire
08/01/2019	Cleveland	Cleveland Northumbria	Durham Cumbria

Please see next page for instructions on how to participate in workshops



## Home Office

### Promoting and Participating in Workshops

If an officer or member of police staff would like to put themselves forward for a review workshop, they will need to complete the ONS questionnaire attached to the same email as this communications pack and return to the **stated email address**. The ONS will then contact successful candidates.

We'd like your support to promote the workshops, to maximise the number of individuals that put themselves forward and therefore the number of officers and staff that have the opportunity to share their views.

You may want to use the following brief to promote the workshops in a staff newsletter, e-bulletin, intranet article or equivalent:

*The Home Office wants to hear from you! The Front Line Review, sponsored by the Policing Minister, has been collecting your feedback all summer, with a view to using your views to inform ongoing policy development. From November 2018, the Home Office will be hosting a series of regional workshops, bringing together staff and officers to share ideas and discuss next steps for implementing findings. Workshops will be taking place in our area on **DATE**, held in **NAME** force. Please complete and return the attached/linked questionnaire to [DCM@ons.gov.uk](mailto:DCM@ons.gov.uk) to put yourself forward to take part.*

*You may have already engaged with the review this summer, using Twitter, POLKA or force-based channels. However, if you haven't heard about the review, follow the link to the [FLR Gov.uk website](#) to find out more details.*

Should you require any further assistance or advice in promoting and communicating the review, write to [FLR@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:FLR@homeoffice.gov.uk) and a member of the review team will get back to you.



## Background

The Home Secretary commissioned the Front Line Review to give frontline officers and staff an opportunity to share their ideas on how policing can be improved at a national level, focussing specifically on how frontline support and development services can be improved, to better support colleagues in carrying out their duties. The Review seeks views under four themes – wellbeing, professional development, leadership, and innovation.

The Review will look to formally engage frontline officers and staff from all 43 forces in England and Wales. Officers and staff must occupy operational, public-facing roles to be eligible to contribute (i.e. in everyday contact with the public and/or in roles where they directly intervene to keep the public safe and enforce the law such as call handlers/responders, neighbourhood teams, PCSOs, crime investigation departments, custody and local commanders.)

## A[ii] Workshop leaflet



### **Have your say in the Home Office Front Line Review**

The Home Office has partnered with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to deliver a series of regional face-to-face workshops taking place across England and Wales from November 2018 to January 2019. The workshops are being moderated by the ONS as part of the Home Office review of front-line policing ([click here for more information about the review](#)). They follow on from the digital engagement that has recently taken place and will give police officers and staff the opportunity to share ideas for change and improvement in policing.

Each workshop will bring together about 8-10 people and will cover topics related to wellbeing, leadership, professional development and change and innovation. The discussion will last around 90 minutes (please allow 2.5hrs to take part) and will give participants a chance to talk about their experiences and discuss suggestions they have for how things can be improved.

We want to hear views from a wide range of operational frontline officers and staff, up to and including Chief Superintending officers and staff equivalents. Whatever your rank or length of service, your ideas matter and we want to hear from you. Our scope includes everyone from response officers, PCSOs, scene guards, call handlers, neighbourhood officers to specials.

ONS is an independent government department. All personal information provided by participants, and views discussed in the focus groups, will be treated strictly confidentially. It will not be shared with the Home Office or your police force, and we will store it securely. A report will be produced on the findings of these workshops but it won't include any information which could identify a participant personally. We will safely delete everything you've shared with us once we have written our conclusions. See the privacy notice included in [here](#).

#### **Interested?**

If you would like to take part then please fill in the questionnaire and email it to the Data Collection Methodology team at the Office for National Statistics:

[DCM@ons.gov.uk](mailto:DCM@ons.gov.uk)

Please put 'FLR' and your force's name in the subject line.

We will then process all the expressions of interest and reply to you.

*We would request that you indicate your interest at your earliest convenience, but no later than 7 working days before the workshop to be considered eligible to participate further.*

## A[iii] Screening questions

### The Front Line Review - Workshop Questionnaire

We are aiming to speak to people of differing characteristics so that we get wide ranging views of the issues being explored. In light of that, it would be helpful if you would answer the following questions. (Type in the text boxes or click the check boxes, as appropriate). Please complete this questionnaire electronically and return to [DCM@ons.gov.uk](mailto:DCM@ons.gov.uk) to put your name forward to participate in the workshop in your region.

1. What is your name?

2. Which police force do you work for? (Please click on 'Choose an item', then click the arrow and select your force from the list)

Choose an item.

3. What is your rank or role?

- Constable
- Sergeant
- Inspector
- Chief Inspector
- Superintendent
- Chief Superintendent
- Special Constable
- Police Community Support Officer
- Police staff
- Other, please write in

4. Over the past 3 months, which best describes the area you've spent most of your time?

- Response
- Neighbourhood
- Investigation
- Public Protection
- Custody
- Intelligence
- Command and control
- Specialist
- Other, please write in

**5. How long have you been working within the police?**

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 years or longer

**6. Do you identify as...**

- Male
- Female
- In another way

**7. What is your age?**

- 25 years or under
- 26-40 years
- 41-54 years
- 55 years or over

**8. What is your ethnic background?**

- White
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- Asian/Asian British
- Black/Black British
- Other ethnic group, please write in

**9. Do you have a physical or mental health condition or disability that is long standing or limits your day-to-day activities?**

- Yes                      ➡ Q10
- No                         ➡ Q11

**10. Please tell us the type of health condition or disability you have**

**11. Please provide a contact number, preferably mobile (for us to contact you on the day if necessary)**

## B. Achieved sample

- Number of applications: approximately 600
- Number of participants: 244 (workshop size range: four to 12 participants)
- Achieved sample characteristics:

Workshop subgroups	Number of workshops	Number of participants	% of total	% of rank/role within group (approx.)	Ratio men to women	% black and minority ethnic	% with health condition/disability
Constables and sergeants (including special constables)	13	106	43	Constables 60%; Sergeants 40%	7:3	9	18
Inspectors and superintendents	4	33	14	(Withheld for disclosure control reasons)	6:4	6	12
Police staff including PCSOs	13	105	43	Non-PCSO 70%; PCSO 30%	5:5	9	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>6:4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>

- Comparisons of achieved sample with workforce:
  - Gender: roughly equivalent for constable/sergeant; slightly higher proportion of women in inspector and superintendent groups; higher proportion of men in staff groups
  - Ethnicity: higher proportion of BME officers than in workforce (7% nationally); ditto staff (6%); varied distribution across regions (0% to >35%)
  - Health condition/disability: comparison with workforce not known
- Forces:
  - 42 of 43 forces represented
  - Constable/sergeant: Representation per force: range one to six (excluding pilot). None from four forces. Some special constables took part.
  - Staff: Representation per force: range one to eight. None from nine forces
  - Inspector and superintendent: Representation from 10 forces

- Units/roles:
  - All main types represented, plus various 'other' (including some Unison and Police Federation representatives).
  - 45% of total from response and neighbourhood teams (60% of constable/sergeant)
- Experience:
  - Two thirds 11+ years; approx. 10% in each of the other three bands (roughly equivalent to workforce officers)
- Age:
  - Up to 25: 5% of total, compared with 8% of workforce (higher for staff - 9%; none in inspectors/superintendents)
  - 26-40: 33% compared with 40% of workforce (higher for constable/sergeant: 41%)
  - 41-54: 50% compared with 42% of workforce (higher for inspector/superintendent: 82%)
  - 55+: 11% compared with 8% of workforce (higher for staff: 20%)

# C. Workshop materials

## C[i] Topic guide

### Police FLR Workshops – topic guide

#### 1 Introduction

[10 mins total]

##### 1.1 Hello and Introductions of HO/FLR and ONS staff present

##### 1.2 Home Office/FLR team: Background to the FLR project:

Earlier this year, the Policing Minister launched the Front Line Review, a Home Office initiative to collect feedback and ideas from frontline staff and officers about their lived experience of operational policing today. Throughout the summer, we sought your input across a range of digital channels, using social media, POLKA and force-based channels that were already familiar to you locally. Our digital engagement returned a vast amount of data for analysis by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This data has been used to set the direction of today's session, allowing ONS to focus on collecting your ideas for addressing or remedying some of the issues and challenges that have been identified through this project.

The Front Line Review will not address officer pay and resourcing. Work is already ongoing to address these challenges independently, led by the National Police Chiefs Council and its partners. The review gives the frontline the opportunity to share their lived experiences from the frontline, and their ideas for improving support and development provisions.

Introduce Policing Minister's video.

We're going to leave the room now, and hand over to [ONS]. We'll be available afterwards to discuss any FLR questions you might have. You can also contact us on the FLR mailbox [address].

##### 1.3 ONS moderator: Who we are:

ONS is an independent government department and the UK's national statistical institute. We are the UK's largest producer of official statistics, on many areas of society and the economy in the UK today. We conduct the Census, and lots of surveys. You may hear about statistics we produce such as the rate of inflation, employment figures, GDP, and most importantly of all, baby names!

##### Our part in the FLR Project:

[Name] and I work in a team of methodologists conducting qualitative research, including focus groups. We are working with the Home Office to run these workshops for the Front Line Review.

We're conducting 28 workshops around England and Wales. They will include front line officers and police staff in a range of ranks and roles.

##### What you can expect from today's workshop: (Show slide 2)

This is the agenda. We have a number of topics to cover, on the 4 pillars of the front line review – wellbeing, professional development, leadership and innovation. We'll show you some

highlevel findings from the digital engagement on each pillar in turn. These are based on our - ONS's – analysis of the digital engagement data, it's not Home Office or FLR team's analysis. We'll ask you some open questions focusing on what can and should be done to address the issues that have been identified. The workshop is scheduled to go on for about two hours but this will depend on how the discussions go. We will need to keep to the timetable: even if the discussion on one subject could go on, we need to move to the next so they all get covered. Wellbeing has typically needed most time so a little extra is given to it.

Today, we'd like to request that you put rank and role aside, because every voice in this room is of equal importance; we need you to think about what improvements you think would improve frontline policing no matter how big or small.

You might have the same or different views to other people– we want to hear them all.

I'd ask you to maintain the confidentiality within the group - that what is said today stays between the participants.

Please don't talk at the same time as someone else, so we can hear all the views.

We come without policing backgrounds so we might ask you questions where necessary to clarify our understanding.

As you can see, we want to record the group. It makes our analysis much easier and of better quality than if we had to take notes of everything said. We will have the recording transcribed by a transcription company. But it will only be available to my small research team. We'll analyse the data collected during both the digital engagement activities and these face-to-face workshops. We'll provide HO with a report of the findings of common themes and challenges, as well as the suggestions you make for solutions.

Everything will be kept confidential - the report won't include any information which could identify you. After the project the recording will be deleted. Is that ok with everyone?

The Home Office will use the report to inform policy recommendations. The ONS will not be responsible for making decisions with policy implications as a result of today's discussion.

So please share your thoughts openly today. This is your opportunity to influence frontline policing on a national scale with the impact felt in every force in England and Wales.

Any questions before we start? *(Refer to FAQs on next page as necessary)*

## FAQs:

What will the review do to address pay and resourcing?

- The Front Line Review will not address officer pay and resourcing. Work is already ongoing to address these challenges independently, led by the National Police Chiefs Council and its partners. The review gives the frontline the opportunity to share their lived experiences from the frontline, and their ideas for improving support and development provisions.

What will you do with my personal information?

- We will handle all personal information securely in line with GDPR regulations.

Will my line manager or other senior officials in my force be informed of my views?

- No, everything you say here today is treated in the strictest confidence. We will only record ideas/feedback not the individual who put them forward. Contributions will be used to make national level commitments/recommendations and will not have direct implications on your local line management chain or process.

How will what we say today be used?

- Feedback/ideas will be recorded and combined with data obtained from the other workshops across England and Wales. We, the ONS, will analyse the data set and draw out common themes. The Home Office will then use this information to develop a series of recommendations to inform government policy decisions.

What makes this different from any other change project we see in force?

- This is the first time the government have engaged directly with frontline officers and staff to develop a series of recommendations that would implement changes on a national scale to improve operational felt experience of the frontline.

How can this project influence change across all forces?

- The Home Office are working closely with key stakeholders that will be vital in delivering these recommendations and will be engaging with forces to ensure this isn't a paper exercise and that tangible results are delivered.

## 2 Introductions

[5 minutes]

To start with, please can we go around the room for introductions. Please just say your first name, and a little about yourself – which force you work for, what your rank or position is, and a bit about what you do in your day to day role.

*Moderator and assistant moderator to (re-)introduce selves just by name (for benefit of transcribers), then proceed in a clockwise direction (going in order rather than randomly makes it easier for the transcriber to identify individuals). If two participants have the same name – find some way to distinguish them.*

## 3 Pillar 1: Wellbeing

[35 minutes]

### 3.1 Summary findings from the digital engagement:

- The first topic, or 'pillar' we want to look at is Wellbeing. Wellbeing relates to the welfare of officers/staff and support for them in performing their day to day duties.
- This is a high-level summary - lots of detailed experiences and opinions were shared.

*Present themes relating to wellbeing identified in the digital engagement – for 3 slides and brief talk through:*

Factors relating to wellbeing:

- Slide 3: Positive factors
  - Doing a valuable job, making a difference
  - Getting good outcomes, serving victims
  - Teamworking and supportive environment
  - Supervisors who look after staff welfare
  - Leadership that breeds confidence and trust
- Slide 4: Negative factors
  - Overload, difficulty meeting demand and performing well
    - Hours, shifts, breaks, days off, work encroaching on life outside, need for rest and recuperation
    - Administration, bureaucracy, performance targets, equipment/facilities
    - Doing work of other agencies/professions
    - Being hindered in the job you joined to do and desire to benefit the public
  - Lack of time/space at work to debrief, decompress, socialize, maintain physical health
  - Safety concerns/vulnerability
  - Inadequate support for wellbeing by line managers and leadership
- Slide 5: Negative effects on wellbeing: worry, stress, mental ill health, physical ill health, impact on family/relationships

### 3.2 Probes: Identification of issues

- Is there anything anyone would like to add to this summary of the findings from the digital engagement? Any key things that aren't covered by what we've shown?
- Is there anything anyone disagrees with?
- *[If necessary – e.g. if these probes lead to lots of discussion, debates, fine details, examples – remind group that focus of workshops is not on identifying the issues and collecting lots of detailed examples, but in working on solutions to them]*

### 3.3 Probes: Solutions and barriers

- Preamble: Let's move on to looking at what can be done to address these issues. Let's think about how negative impacts on wellbeing can be prevented in the first place. And about how to manage the effects of things that can't be prevented/once they've arisen. We're interested in hearing your ideas and about examples of how things are done well in your force or workplace, that others could learn from.
- Show Slide 7: These are the questions we'd like you to consider. *(Talk through them)*
- *Allow participants to lead, identify the things that are most important to them. Prompt as necessary for coverage of all the themes above as far as time allows. If group includes line managers ask them to consider from a personal perspective and as a manager. Consider both physical and mental wellbeing*

#### *Prevention*

- What could your force do to build a more open and inclusive wellbeing culture?
- How could your force be more proactive in managing staff wellbeing?
- What can line managers do to help prevent the issues with wellbeing that have been identified?
- What could line managers do to tackle wellbeing concerns in the team before they escalate?

#### *Treatment of wellbeing problems*

- How could line managers better support wellbeing when issues arise?
  - What training, if any, would make your line manager better at dealing with wellbeing issues? (prompts if necessary: emotional intelligence, supervision and management, threat prevention)
- What additional wellbeing services does your force or area need, if any?
  - How could your force better communicate available wellbeing services?
  - What would encourage you to engage with available wellbeing services?

#### *Cross cutting probes*

- Are there any examples of good practice, effective solutions, from your forces that others could learn from?
- What are the barriers to putting these ideas into effect?

- How can these barriers be overcome?
- What can be done within existing resources? How to be more effective/efficient?
- What are the priorities?

*[Consider need for particular probing of perspectives of PCSOs, staff, inspectors/supts (other issues, different takes on the issues)]*

*When 5 minutes is left for this pillar check if any probes have not been covered at all and prompt them*

## 4 Pillar 2: Professional development

[20 minutes]

### 4.1 Summary findings from the digital engagement:

- The second topic, or 'pillar' we want to look at is Professional development. Professional development relates to performance and development activities and career aspirations, and how these can be supported.
- This is a high-level summary of the feedback on the digital engagement in relation to professional development.
- There was a great deal of discussion on this topic and a real mix of experiences shared.

*Present themes relating to professional development identified in the digital engagement – for 2 slides and brief talk through:*

- Slide 8: Factors relating to access to development
  - Level of support and opportunities received depends on:
    - Rank
    - Role
    - Line manager
    - Who you know
    - Force priorities
- Slide 9: Support for development and training opportunities
  - Professional development tends to be self-driven
  - Lateral development is not well supported
  - Lack of awareness of opportunities available
  - Coaching and career advice lacking
  - Reviews of development needs not always conducted or effective
  - Access to training courses is limited
    - Selection for training not always relevant
    - Challenges taking people away from core functions
    - Lower ranks/those not on development programmes lose out
  - E-learning (e.g. NCALT) is not very effective

### 4.2 Probes: Identification of issues

- Is there anything anyone would like to add to this summary of the findings from the digital engagement? Any key things that aren't covered by what we've shown?
- Is there anything anyone disagrees with?
- *[If necessary – e.g. if these probes lead to lots of discussion, debates, fine details, examples – remind group that focus of workshops is not on identifying the issues and collecting lots of detailed examples, but in working on solutions to them]*

### 4.3 Probes: Solutions and barriers

- Preamble: Let's discuss what can be done to improve upon professional development support and training provisions available. Again, we're interested in hearing your ideas and about examples of how things are done well in your force or workplace, that others could learn from.
- Show Slide 9: These are the questions we'd like you to consider. *(Talk through them)*
- *[Allow participants to lead, identify the things that are most important to them. Prompt as necessary for coverage of all the themes above as far as time allows. If group includes line managers ask them to consider from a personal perspective and as a manager. Keep slide 5 up as a prompt.]*
- How could professional development be better supported? (By line manager? By force?)
  - How could lateral development be better supported? (By line manager? By force?)
  - How could career aspirations be better supported? (By line manager? By force?)
  - How could the existence of development opportunities be better communicated?
  - How could training opportunities be allocated more effectively?
  - How could the method of training provisions (e.g. NCALT) be improved?
  - What would encourage you to put yourself forward for specialist training or career development opportunities?

*If performance reviews/Professional Development Reviews are mentioned:*

- What would make your experience of performance reviews/PDRs more favourable?
- What would make the PDR a more useful tool for your development?

*Cross cutting probes*

- Are there any examples of good practice, effective solutions, from your force that others could learn from?
- What are the barriers to putting themes ideas into effect?
- How can these barriers be overcome?
- What can be done within existing resources? How to be more effective/efficient?
- What are the priorities?

*[Consider need for particular probing of perspectives of PCSOs, staff, inspectors/supts (other issues, different takes on the issues)]*

*When 5 minutes is left for this pillar check if any probes have not been covered at all and prompt them*

## 5 Pillar 3: Leadership

[20 minutes]

### 5.1 Summary findings from the digital engagement:

- The next topic, or 'pillar' we want to look at is Leadership. Leadership relates to the setting of direction, goals and priorities within forces, and how these are communicated to the frontline. In particular, relating to leadership by Chief Officers (Chief, Deputy and Assistants).

*Present themes relating to leadership identified in the digital engagement – for one slide (number 10) and brief talk through:*

- Summary findings from the digital engagement on Leadership
- Very varied positive and negative experiences and opinions of leaders and managers
  - Themes identified relating to leadership:
    - Personal qualities required
    - Leadership style
    - Culture and environment
    - Selection and development of leaders, succession planning

### 5.2 Probes: Solutions and barriers

- Preamble: Let's think about what effective leadership is and what you think the approach and culture in policing should look like. Once again, we're interested in hearing your ideas and about examples of how things are done well in your force or workplace, that others could learn from.
- Show Slide 11: These are the questions we'd like you to consider. *(Talk through them)*

*Allow participants to lead, identify the things that are most important to them.*

- What would make your leaders more effective?
- What ideas do you have for how the leadership approach and culture in policing could be improved?
  - What training would support leadership development?
  - How could we learn from our best leaders?
    - Do you have a leadership coaching/mentoring system that you think the wider policing community would benefit from?
  - How could policing better learn from existing best practise in leadership development?
  - How could we breed progressive leadership approaches in the policing system?
- How could your force better communicate its priorities to the frontline?

*Cross cutting probes*

- Are there any examples of good practice, effective solutions, from your forces that others could learn from?

- What are the barriers to putting these ideas into effect?
- How can these barriers be overcome?
- What can be done within existing resources? How to be more effective/efficient?
- What are the priorities?

*When 5 minutes is left for this pillar check if any probes have not been covered at all and prompt them*

## 6 Pillar 4 innovation

[20 minutes]

- Preamble: the fourth and final pillar of the FLR is innovation. Innovation relates to ideas for improving frontline operational experience - how and where officers and staff can get their ideas heard and be supported in this respect, to enable meaningful change.
- In this last part of the discussion we'd like to hear ideas for how to reduce the [internal demand] and make policing more streamlined, in addition to any that you've raised so far. As before we're interested in hearing your ideas and about examples of how things are done well in your force or workplace, that others could learn from. [No findings to present.]
- Show Slide 12: These are the questions we'd like you to consider. *(Talk through them)*

### 6.1 Probes

- What ideas do you have for how internal demand – the admin tasks, processes, systems, bureaucracy related to your core work - could be reduced in policing?
- What would make policing processes more streamlined?
- What does your force do to encourage generation of ideas for improving the job or the organization?
- What could be done to allow you to be more innovative in the workplace?
- What should be done by forces to act on the ideas generated by staff?
- What would encourage better sharing of innovation and good practice across policing?
- How is innovation and good practice shared in your force? How could this be used more nationally?

*When 5 minutes is left for this pillar check if any probes have not been covered at all and prompt them*

## 7 Close

[5 minutes]

That's the end of the topics we wanted to discuss with you.

Is there anything anyone wants to add – things you don't think have been covered but should be? Or additional things that have occurred to you about the topics we have discussed?

Just before we close, we'd like each of you to tell us briefly the one thing you would most like to be changed – however big or small, and whether you've already mentioned it or not. *(Ask each participant to provide one, if possible)*

Any further questions?

Thank everyone for their valuable input. Remind of HO/FLR reps availability afterwards and the FLR inbox, and to write to the DCM mailbox if they want.

## 8 PILOT only

[5 minutes]

- Today's workshops are the first we're conducting so we'd just like to finish by asking how you have found the event.
- What do you think of the format of the workshop?
- Do you feel you've had an opportunity to talk about the front line issues that matter to you?
- That you've been able to talk about them in as much detail as you'd like?
- What are your views on the slides we used to present the summary of the digital engagement responses?
- What can we do to improve the workshops?

## C[ii] Workshop slides



### Police Front Line Review Workshops

#### Agenda

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- Introduction 10 mins
- Wellbeing 35 mins
- Professional Development 20 mins
- *Break* 10 mins
- Leadership 20 mins
- Innovation 20 mins
- Wrap up 5 mins

## **Negative factors relating to wellbeing**

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- Overload, difficulty meeting demand and performing well
  - Hours, shifts, breaks, days off, work encroaching on life outside, need for rest and recuperation
  - Administration, bureaucracy, performance targets, equipment/facilities
  - Doing work of other agencies/professions
  - Being hindered in the job you joined to do and desire to benefit the public
- Lack of time/space at work to debrief, decompress, socialise, maintain physical health
- Safety concerns/vulnerability
- Inadequate support for wellbeing by line managers and leadership

## **Positive factors relating to wellbeing**

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- Doing a valuable job, making a difference
- Getting good outcomes, serving victims
- Teamworking and supportive environment
- Supervisors who look after staff welfare
- Leadership that breeds confidence and trust

## **Negative effects on wellbeing**

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- Worry
- Stress
- Mental ill health
- Physical ill health
- Impact on family/relationships

## **Wellbeing - solutions?**

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- How should forces and line managers support staff wellbeing?
  - How to prevent negative impacts from arising?
  - How to manage impacts once they arise?
- What additional wellbeing services are needed?
- What training is required?
- How to communicate wellbeing services and encourage engagement with them?

## **Professional development**

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- Level of support and opportunities received depends on:
  - Rank
  - Role
  - Line manager
  - Who you know
  - Force priorities

## **Support for development and training opportunities**

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- Professional development tends to be self-driven
- Lateral development is not well supported
- Lack of awareness of opportunities available
- Coaching and career advice lacking
- Reviews of development needs not always conducted or effective
- Access to training courses is limited
  - Selection for training not always relevant
  - Challenges taking people away from core functions
  - Lower ranks/those not on development programmes lose out
- E-learning (e.g. NCALT) is not very effective

## **Professional development - solutions?**

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- How should forces and line managers better support professional development?
  - Lateral development
  - Career aspirations
- How to communicate available opportunities?
- How to encourage take up?
  - Allocation of development opportunities
- How could training methods be improved?

## **Leadership**

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- Very varied positive and negative experiences and opinions of leaders and managers
- Themes identified relating to leadership:
  - Personal qualities required
  - Leadership style
  - Culture and environment
  - Selection and development of leaders, succession planning

## **Leadership – solutions?**

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- How can your leaders be more effective?
- How can leadership culture be improved?
  - What training would support leadership development?
  - How to learn from policing's best leaders?
  - How to learn from best practice externally?
  - How to breed progressive leadership approaches?
- How could your force better communicate its priorities to the frontline?

## **Innovation - solutions?**

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- How can admin processes, systems, bureaucracy be improved or streamlined?
- How does your force encourage your ideas for improvement?
  - What would allow you to be more innovative?
  - How should forces act on the ideas generated by staff?
- What would encourage better sharing of innovation & good practice across policing?
- How is innovation and good practice shared in your force? How could this be used more nationally?

# Contact

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