



# The New Bill:

## Modernising the police workforce

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## About ippr

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## Executive summary

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why police performance is currently under such intense scrutiny and why a range of politicians, practitioners and commentators are calling for fundamental reform of the Police Service. Crime fell by 42 per cent between 1997 and 2007 and the criminal justice system brings more offenders to justice each year than ever before. Fear of crime has also decreased, and Police Community Support Officers appear to be increasingly effective in reassuring the public of their safety at a local level.

### **Challenges to today's Police Service**

The positives outlined above mask the emergence of genuine performance challenges in the Police Service. Decline in the number of crimes committed has flattened and 'high harm' crimes, such as gun crime, are more common now than in the past. Offenders Brought to Justice (OBTJ) targets are increasingly being met through punishment of minor offences, for example with cautions for the possession of cannabis. Those from disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected by crime – and this is the case now more than ever before.

While the police have increased their focus on reassuring the public, overall police productivity in terms of crime detection is flat: each warranted officer detected just 10 crimes per year in 2006, the same level as in 2001, and analysis carried out for this paper shows that each current detection costs more in real terms than a detection in 2001. Such productivity issues may in part be due to low levels of morale within the Police Service, as evidence suggests that many frontline workers are struggling to understand changes in their working environment and feel ill at ease with the current target-based performance management framework. Another explanation lies in the fact that the crime landscape itself is changing with increasing rapidity: new criminal techniques and technologies combine with a fast changing distribution of crime types, and shifting public and political priorities requiring an ever more responsive police system.

### **The need for reform**

The Government's main response to these challenges has been to significantly increase spending on the police. Police resources have increased by over 25 per cent in real terms since 2001. However, such a response is no longer possible. The recent Home Office spending settlement dictates that police spending will have to remain at current levels at least until 2012. In any case, simply pumping money into the policing system as it is currently configured appears to be producing limited and perhaps even decreasing returns. As a result, officials and commentators have started to look for other ways to improve performance and responsiveness.

One area that has been the focus of much public debate concerns the potential for a radical reconfiguration of police accountability and governance arrangements – with, for example, the Conservative Party proposing locally elected Police Chiefs as the primary change mechanism. The Flanagan Review is also looking at a range of issues at the request of the Labour Government, while the Police Federation has called for a still wider Royal Commission on Policing to investigate fundamental issues such as the role of the police.

However, while such areas are certainly in need of consideration, such changes are focused primarily on increasing police responsiveness and altering performance pressures; alone, they will be insufficient to generate required productivity improvements in policing. Furthermore, reform of accountability and governance mechanisms is likely take a significant amount of time to bear fruit. Therefore, alongside reforms of that kind, measures that can directly improve police productivity are urgently required, addressing performance and, crucially, workforce morale issues.

This requires a thorough examination of how the police workforce is currently managed, looking holistically at:

- The roles and structures in which officers and staff work
- The level of support they are given in training and development
- How they are rewarded
- How they are currently motivated to perform to their full potential.

It is reform in areas like these that offers the opportunity to address known performance issues and skills shortages – for example, weaknesses in:

- Communication skills at the front line
- Specialist skills such as detective work
- Resource and people management in leadership roles.

Such a thorough and holistic approach has not been pursued by either government or practitioners to date. Instead, workforce reform has been enacted in a piecemeal fashion, with ad hoc implementation of ‘New Public Management’-style initiatives and without a genuine or well-communicated overarching vision.

### Recommendations

The following are proposals for achieving a radical vision of a much modernised and professionalised police workforce.

- **A more skilled, specialised workforce:** A new configuration of roles within the Police Service that allows police workers to use and develop their skills to maximum effect by pursuing a wide range of specialisms.
- **New, more flexible team structures:** Increased use of mixed teams of warranted officers and specialist civilians, drawing on diverse skills and ending a culture that sometimes treats non-warranted officers as second-class citizens.
- **More efficient organisation of support resources:** Creation of centres of excellence for support functions, accompanied by a reduction of support resource levels at force level.
- **Refocused training and development:** A move away from a current culture of supervision to one of active development and training for each and every police worker, addressing key skills gaps and ensuring every worker reaches his or her full potential. In addition, the creation of attractive career paths for those with non-policing experience and high-potential graduates. Of particular importance will be renewed focus on people and resource management, in order to ensure swift adaptation to the increased challenge of managing a more specialised workforce.
- **A new culture of supportive performance management:** A move towards using targets as tools for performance management rather than ends in themselves. Performance could be primarily managed through close, supportive relationships between workers and their line managers, with clear messages that ‘gaming’ of targets is not acceptable.
- **Reward for skills, effort and performance, not length of service:** A move away from a system that rewards length of service beyond, for example three to five years, and instead rewards those who have the skills most needed in the Police Service, and those performing the most dangerous or arduous roles.

### Benefits to the public

- Specialist police workers would have greater skills in the task they are actually performing, leading to a higher quality of service for citizens.
- Victims would be more likely to be supported by those with well-developed victim-support skills.
- Mixed specialist teams would use their wide range of combined skills to solve crimes more effectively.

- Town centre disorder experts would ensure preventative approaches to alcohol-related disorder.
- New structures for support functions would free resources, which could then be directed towards public priorities.

#### **Benefits to police officers and staff**

- Officers and staff would be more able to develop skills in areas of particular personal interest.
- Abilities would be recognised and rewarded.
- There would be a fairer distribution of difficult or dangerous roles and unsociable hours, or those performing in such roles would be rewarded.
- The Police Service would become an increasingly unified but diverse service, where civilian staff felt their contribution was valued by warranted officers.
- All workers would also benefit from a more supportive working environment, which increasingly shifts away from an internal culture of blame towards a cooperative culture focused on two-way dialogue to improve performance.
- Officers would be supported if they felt they were no longer suited to a police role and, with more clearly defined skills, would find transition into civilian life easier.
- Officers would no longer feel obliged to act inappropriately or against their professional judgement in order to meet crude target quotas; instead, real impacts on crime outcomes would be valued and recognised.

As a consequence, the police workforce would also become more attractive to potential recruits with the skills and experience that would greatly benefit the Police Service, while generalist new recruits would have the opportunity to work alongside experts for each of the areas in which they worked.

#### **Making reform happen**

While the benefits of this new vision appear clear, achieving this transformation will not be straightforward. Public sector perceptions and experiences of recent public service reform initiatives have not always been positive, not least because the paradigm of reform has been that of New Public Management, which has typically sought to apply a range of private-sector management principles, rather than considering each public service individually and holistically. Furthermore, reform has often been presented in conflictual terms, and has typically been negotiated rather than collectively advocated.

Our vision for the police workforce seeks to move beyond this New Public Management approach, advocating one based on collaboration and dialogue between government and practitioners. However, implementation of this vision will still require careful vigilance to avoid another descent into the piecemeal bargaining approach that has been responsible for a range of negative outcomes both in policing and in other public services.

Furthermore, making this vision a reality may require complementary measures to overcome engrained barriers to the reform of the Police Service. Many of the ideas articulated here are not new but have yet to be implemented, despite support from a wide range of stakeholders.

#### **Three potential barriers to reform:**

1. Current accountability and governance structures may not be configured in a way that allows new ideas to be disseminated and coherently implemented across the policing system.
2. There are fractured relationships between diverse police worker representative organisations and government, caused in part by imperfect negotiating arrangements.
3. There may remain a political reluctance to accept some potential corollaries of reform, in particular because workforce reform may require a move away from the political obsession with warranted officer numbers and towards a genuine focus on police effectiveness.

The existence of these barriers highlights the fact that workforce reform cannot be considered in isolation from wider police reform issues and in particular debates on police role and governance.

### **Why workforce reform matters**

Even though it is just one part of the wider police reform agenda, workforce reform matters, whatever the priorities in policing or the accountability and governance arrangements, as demonstrated by the recent police pay dispute. It is vital to delivering better policing for citizens and improved workforce morale.

Workforce reform is not only important for policing but is a vital tool for addressing productivity and morale issues across public services. It is therefore hoped that, in addition to contributing to a new, wider vision of police reform, this paper helps to define a post-New Public Management model of workforce reform that is relevant to all public services. This model could help to generate a new compact between government and practitioners, one that encourages collaboration, avoids many of the perverse consequences that have resulted from recent initiatives and brings the priorities of workers and government back into greater alignment. This will in turn help to address the common public-sector challenges of the coming years, enabling services to meet rising public expectations without significant funding increases, and tackling damaged workforce

## Introduction

This paper outlines how changes to workforce policies and practices would help the Police Service to respond more effectively to the challenges it faces today. It sets out a vision for a much transformed modernised police workforce: one that embraces successful initiatives already being implemented and addresses gaps in the current workforce modernisation agenda.

The paper makes it clear that workforce reform matters – and has clear benefits both for citizens and the police themselves. In addition, the paper introduces potential explanations for why changes to police workforce arrangements have progressed more slowly than many would have wished and challenges stakeholders to consider how rapid workforce modernisation could best be achieved.

Where possible we have attempted to separate workforce issues from wider policing issues, such as those of police governance and accountability. However, it is naturally the case that workforce reform must be integrated into the wider police reform agenda – a difficult task that will be reflected in the final report from ippr's Future of Policing project, to be published later in 2008. There, we will incorporate the vision for workforce reform presented here within an overall vision for police reform.

It is hoped that the findings of both this paper and the full final report will inform current political and public debate, providing both impetus and challenge to the Flanagan Review of policing (due to report in February 2008).

### **Methodology**

In writing and researching this report ippr has drawn on a range of complementary research methods, including:

- An extensive review of the academic and public policy literature on policing and police reform
- A comprehensive review of Human Resource Management literature
- A number of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the police service (all ranks), government and academia
- Original quantitative analysis of police performance data
- Presentation and discussion of our research findings at an expert seminar held at ippr (full details can be found in the Appendix).

## 2. Context: challenges facing today's Police Service

### **An opportunity for change**

There is currently intense focus on the issue of police reform. This focus has been generated both by genuine challenges facing the Police Service, outlined below, and by changed political circumstances. Commentators and political parties recognise the importance of crime and policing as a political issue and are seeking to take advantage of this opportunity to set the terms of political discourse during the long run-in to the next General Election. The Conservatives have set out a radical vision to revise police accountability mechanisms through the introduction of new, locally elected police chiefs, while the Liberal Democrats have given recognition to the importance of crime and policing through their appointment of Chris Huhne as Shadow Home Secretary. Meanwhile, the Police Federation has called for a Royal Commission on Policing, to assess fundamental issues, including whether or not there is a need for a clear redefinition of the police role.

More incrementally, in March 2007, then Home Secretary John Reid announced an Independent Review of the Police Service, led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, which has promised to identify ways to achieve four Government aims:

- Reduced bureaucracy and better business processes
- Sustained progress on neighbourhood policing
- Increased public involvement in driving local policing priorities and improved local accountability mechanisms
- Improved resource management to boost productivity and effectiveness.

While at least two of these four issues touch on the issue of *workforce modernisation*, the latter is noticeably not a central theme in Sir Ronnie's review or in the rhetoric of any political party. This is partly due to a political recognition that practitioners and the public are expressing fatigue with past approaches to public service workforce reform in general, but the omission remains regrettable, as Sir Ronnie's interim report recognises (Flanagan 2007). It is also the case that workforce reform is sometimes technical and perhaps lends itself less easily to political rhetoric, while dealing with workforce reform also requires attention to the issue of police pay, which is at present a highly charged political issue.

The neglect of workforce issues in the current debate raises doubts over the potential impact of current reform initiatives but this doubt is amplified by a history of police reform that is littered with abandoned, or at best partially implemented, initiatives. As one newspaper leader summarised: 'The question is whether this, or any government, will have the will to act on any proposals Sir Ronnie Flanagan might make' (*The Independent* 2007).

Police force mergers, the recommendations of the 2004 White Paper and Sir Patrick Sheehy's recommendations of 1993 on performance-related pay and rank structure are just three examples of far-reaching workforce reform proposals not enacted. Admittedly, on each occasion, there may have been parts of the reform package that could have been improved but it is revealing that both the Sheehy and mergers plans were dropped without any viable alternatives suggested.

## Box 2.1 A brief history of workforce reform: successes and failures

- 1993 *Sheehy Inquiry into Police Rewards and Responsibilities*: this far-reaching review of HR policies and practices within the Police Service sought to apply New Public Management principles to the Police Service. The report initially recommended increased use of performance-related pay for all officers and staff before focusing on those of Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) rank (Assistant Chief Constable and above). Sheehy successfully recommended the abolition of the Deputy Chief Constable and Chief Inspector roles, which have since returned.
- 1994 *The Police and Magistrates Courts Act and 1996 Police Act*: reduced the size of Police Authority boards typically to around 17 people, approximately half their original size; reduced the directly elected element of the police authorities from two-thirds to 'majority', who were chosen from existing councillors (the remaining members were to be appointed from magistracy or as 'independents'); and transferred management functions and control over budgets from Police Authorities to Chief Constables. Authority functions dwindled to choosing Chief Constables from a Home Office shortlist, monitoring performance and sustaining public consultation mechanisms.
- 1994 *The Posen Inquiry, Home Office Review of Police Core and Ancillary Tasks* attempted to facilitate increased civilianisation of 'non-core' officer functions, but the Inquiry was derailed and led to only general and incremental recommendations.
- 1998 *The Lawrence Enquiry* reported 'pernicious and institutional racism' in the Police Service and roundly condemned police operational performance in the investigation of London teenager Stephen Lawrence's murder in 1993.
- 1998 *The Crime and Disorder Act* created Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships between Police Forces and local authorities, requiring regular 'crime audits' of the area which would involve all crime reduction stakeholders, for example health, education, social security and housing. The Act also introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).
- 2001 *The Criminal Justice and Police Act* introduced new Fixed Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) to allow 'on-the-spot' punishment for minor offences.
- 2002 *The Police Reform Act* (based on the White Paper *Policing a New Century: A Blueprint for Reform*) set up a new Police Standards Unit (operational from July 2001). The Home Secretary was empowered to draw up annual national policing plans and new codes of practice and to require Action Plans from failing forces. The Home Secretary could also now require Chief Constable resignation (including loss of pension rights). In addition, the Act required all police forces to adopt the National Intelligence Model (NIM).
- 2002 First Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) introduced.
- 2003 Consultation document *Policing: Building Safer Communities Together* published.
- 2003 *A Criminal Justice Act* increased police powers of detention, search, bail, drug testing and punishment.
- 2003 *The Anti-Social Behaviour Act* introduced new police dispersal powers, powers to impose conditions and close licensed premises, demoted tenancies, parenting contracts and parenting orders, Fixed Penalties for truancy, and extended PNDs to 16- to 18-year-olds.
- 2004 *The Bichard Report* identified 'systematic and corporate failings' in Humberside Police and 'widespread failure to appreciate the value of intelligence', alongside poor use of record-keeping and checking technology.
- 2004 An HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report *Modernising the Police Service: A Thematic Inspection of Workforce Modernisation* identified entrenched resistance to increases in the use of non-warranted staff for certain police functions.

Cont. next page

- 2004 The White Paper *Building Communities, Beating Crime* reiterated the need for an additional 4,000 PCSOs and commitment for 25,000 (later decreased to 12,000) PCSOs and wardens by 2008. It also promised reduced bureaucracy, improved Career Development, leadership training and recommended minimum powers for PCSOs, as well as recruitment at levels above Constable for those who can meet occupational standards.
- 2004 The *Morris Enquiry* highlighted an insufficient police focus on human resource management, called for an overhaul of the Directorate of Professional Standards and recommended stronger, centralised administrative functions.
- 2005 The *Serious and Organised Crime Act* created new powers to fight serious and organised crime.
- 2005 The Commission for Racial Equality reported highlighted continued police failings on race issues, making 125 recommendations aimed at increasing diversity.
- 2006 The *Police and Justice Act* established the National Policing Improvement Agency (replacing the Central Police Training and Development Authority and Police Information Technology Organisation). PCSOs were delegated a range of standard powers.
- 2007 The *Flanagan Review of the Police Service* was set up to investigate ways of reducing bureaucracy, embedding Neighbourhood Policing, improving local accountability and improving police efficiency. Its interim report (September), highlighted the issue of bureaucracy, the perverse consequences of government targets and recommending greater use of technology to drive workforce efficiency.
- 2007 The *Booth Review 'Fair Pay for Police Officers'* recommended that officer pay indexation be amended to a lower rate and that differential pay increases be introduced. Recommendations on current negotiating machinery and methods are pending at the time of writing.

### Why do we need to review workforce practices now?

Despite past reverses and current neglect, workforce reform remains a vital and urgent component of any revised approach to UK policing. A review of workforce practices is timely for a number of reasons:

- Police productivity is flat despite increased investment, suggesting significant scope to improve workforce management practices.
- A changing crime environment is presenting new challenges and will require new approaches.
- There is a fiscal imperative to improve workforce productivity owing to government spending commitments.
- Workforce reform to date in the Police Service has been implemented in a piecemeal manner, with no clear vision of what the police workforce of the future should look like.
- There is a need for a new framework for addressing the issue of public-sector workforce reform in general, in light of weaknesses that have been exposed by the New Public Management approach.

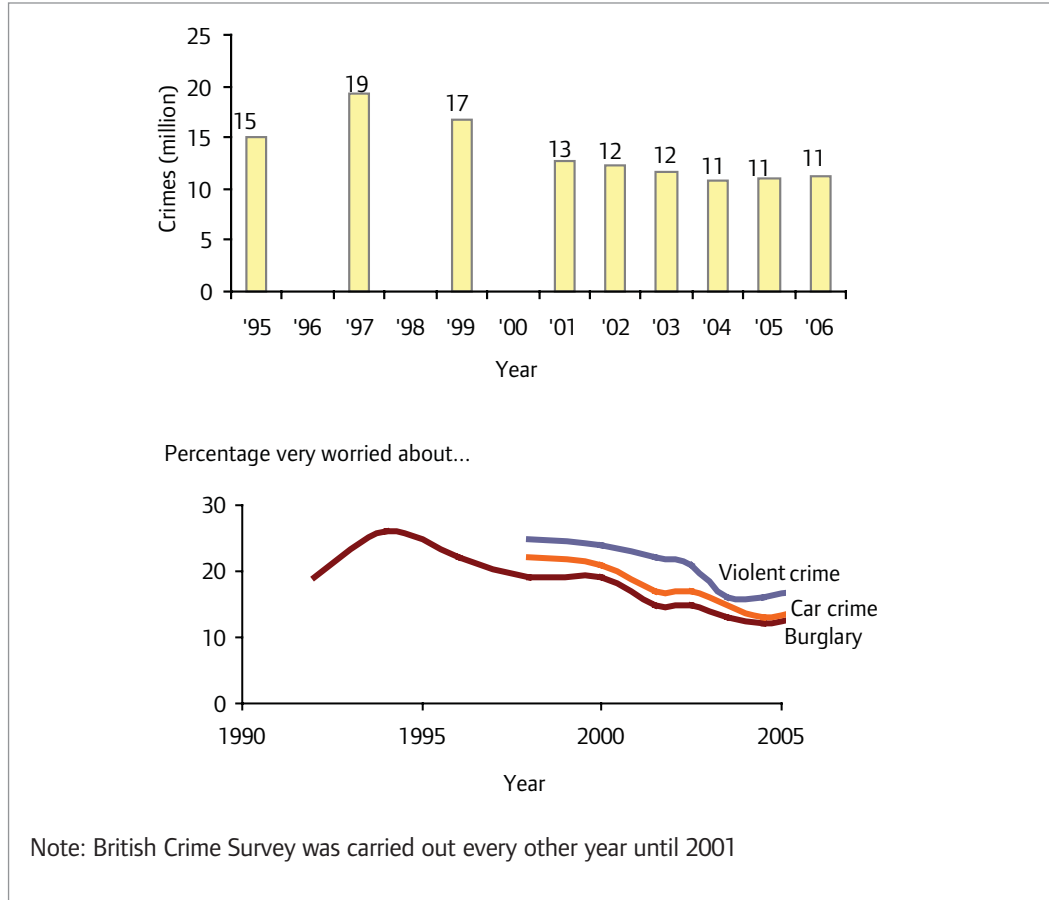
These issues are discussed in more detail below.

#### Flat police productivity

At first glance, it is reasonable to question why police performance is under such intense scrutiny at this point in time. On the surface, crime outcomes for policing have been impressive. Crime has fallen by 42 per cent since 1997, with British Crime Survey (BCS) victim-reported crime now at its lowest levels since the late 1970s (see Figure 2.1) (Home Office 2007b). Fear of crime is also down, with the percentage of the population very worried about violent crime falling from 25 per cent to 17 per cent in the same period (Home Office 2006a). The Home Office has consistently delivered its Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and the Police have delivered on theirs, including target efficiency savings. Furthermore, the centrepiece of the Government's community-focused reforms appears to be paying dividends: Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Neighbourhood Policing generally appear to be having positive impacts, particularly in terms of public confidence (Tuffin *et al* 2006).

Figure 2.1  
Number of crimes committed, and fear of crime

Source: British Crime Survey, 1992-2006



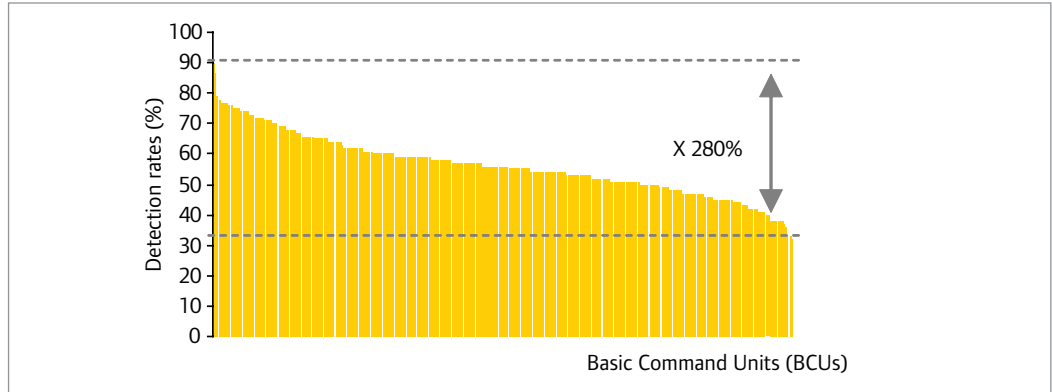
However, the wider context shows the police record in a less favourable light. Of particular concern are trends in so-called 'high harm' crime. There were twice as many recorded crimes involving the use of firearms (other than air weapons) in 2005/6 than in 1998/9, although there was a slight fall in incidents in 2006/7 (Walker *et al* 2007). Murder rates remain at around 1997 levels (there were 755 murders in 2006/7 compared to 739 in 1997), having risen to a peak of 1,047 in 2002/3 before falling (Walker *et al* 2007).

Equally importantly, England and Wales remain high-crime countries in the international context, and downward crime trends are currently flattening, although it must be acknowledged that judging police performance based solely on overall levels of crime remains a crude mechanism for assessing performance.<sup>1</sup> Studies have repeatedly shown that policing is just one of many factors that influence crime rates (Shaftoe 2004).

In fact, it is extremely difficult to find perfect measures of police performance and productivity, as the police have multiple aims, including crime prevention, detection and reassurance. Nonetheless, it is telling that, by several measures on which the police judge their own success, performance is relatively flat. Detection rates fell between 1998 and 2002 and are only now approaching 1998 levels, with around 24 per cent of recorded crimes 'cleared up' compared to 29 per cent in 1998/9 (Walker *et al* 2006). Performance across forces also remains highly variable, with detection rates for violence against the person varying between 26 and 59 per cent (see Figure 2.2 below) (Walker *et al* 2006).

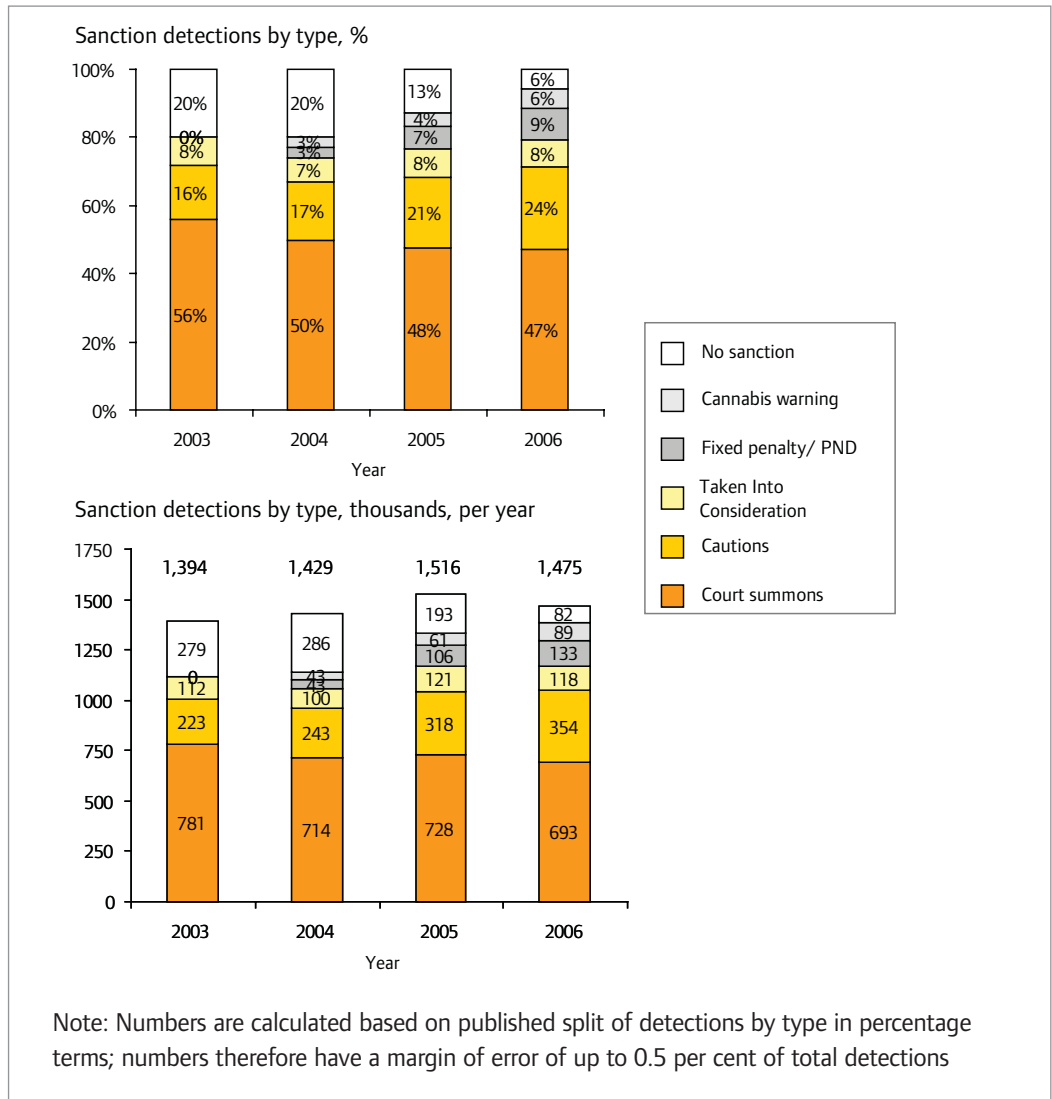
1. Draft version of (PMSU 2007) leaked to *Sunday Times*, 24 December 2006.

Figure 2.2. Detection rates for violence across all Basic Command Units in England and Wales  
Source: Walker *et al* 2006



Furthermore, while more offenders are being brought to justice and more crimes ‘cleared up’, these improvements have not been achieved by taking an increased number of suspects to court but by making an ever-greater use of police discretion to punish offenders through cautions, ‘on-the-spot’ fines and Penalty Notices for Disorder (see Figure 2.3). While lower crime rates mean that there may be fewer serious crimes for which court punishments are appropriate, the rate of just 10 offences brought to justice (OBTJ) per warranted officer per year is in itself illuminating.

Figure 2.3. Sanction detections by type: percentages, and thousands per year  
Source: British Crime Survey, 2002-2007; ippr analysis

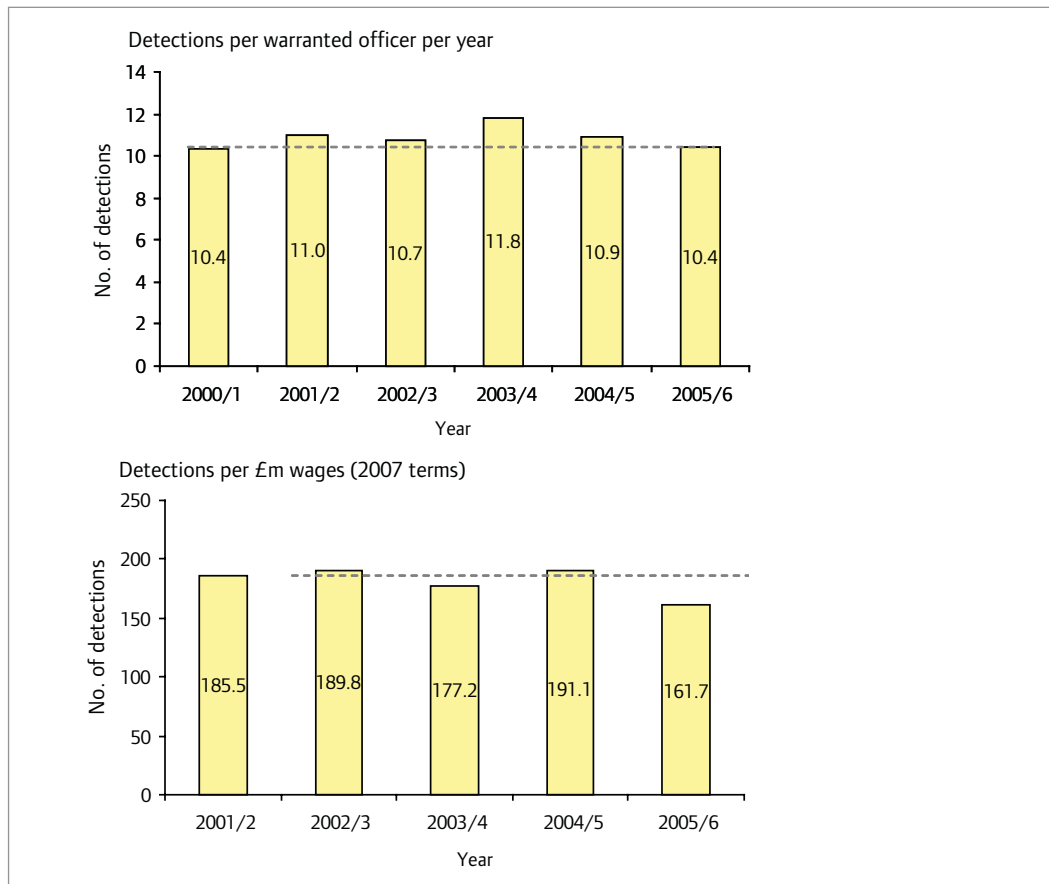


Note: Numbers are calculated based on published split of detections by type in percentage terms; numbers therefore have a margin of error of up to 0.5 per cent of total detections

Measuring police productivity is also difficult but, at least in terms of detections, productivity appears flat, with officers achieving the same level of detections per officer in 2006/7 as in 2001/2 (see Figure 2.4). In fact, each police detection now costs the public more in real terms than it did in 2000, although it should be acknowledged that there has been an increased focus on reassurance policing, which contributes only indirectly to sanction detections. This last point is revealing: as police officers themselves have noted, increasing the amount of high visibility, ‘reassurance’ policing could affect performance levels for crime reduction and detection, unless it is paid for through additional funding – as it has been in most cases to date.

Figure 2.4. Number of detections per warranted officer, and per wages

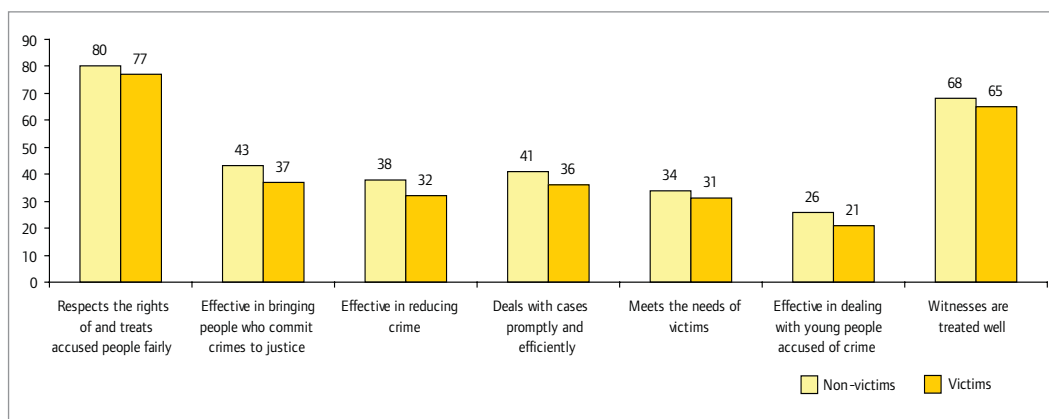
Source: CIFPA 2006; Hansard release on officer numbers; Walker *et al* 2007



Alongside these productivity issues, the public still perceive the police workforce to be insufficiently responsive to their needs. Victim satisfaction as measured by the British Crime Survey is lower today than in 1996 and victims of crime have less confidence in every aspect of police performance than non-victims, including, tellingly, how well the police meet the needs of victims (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Percentage of victims and non-victims of crime very or fairly confident that the police workforce...

Source: Walker *et al* 2007

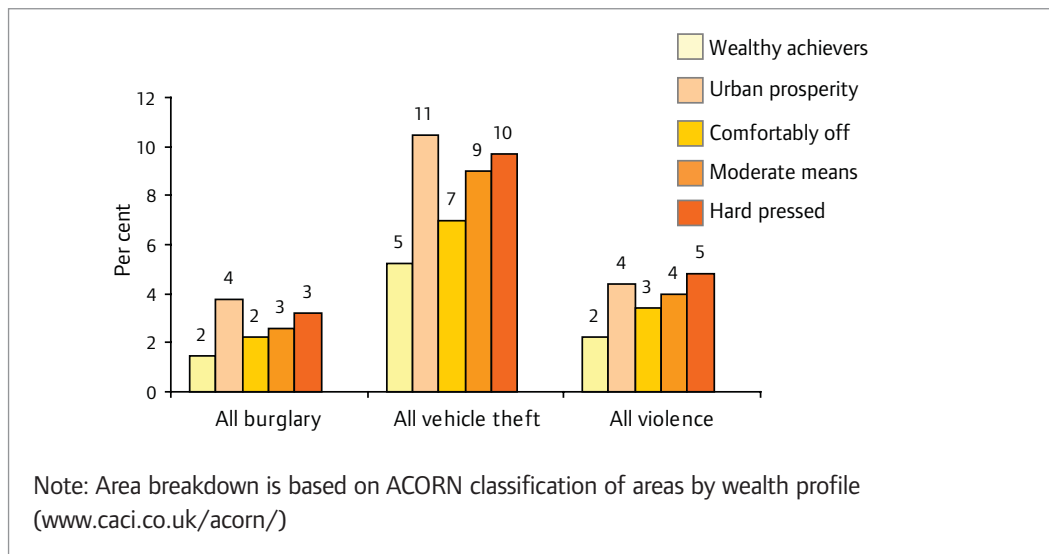


In fact, unlike, for example, the NHS, those who come into formal contact with the Police Service have lower confidence than those with no contact: 49 per cent of all adults say local police are doing a good or excellent job, compared with 44 per cent of victims, witnesses and suspects (MORI 2006).

Crime also remains a major obstacle to social justice. Both victims of crime and perpetrators come disproportionately from disadvantaged groups. In 2006, those living in ‘hard pressed’ areas were twice as likely to be victims of burglary or violence (see Figure 2.6), while over 60 per cent of gun crime was isolated within specific areas of just four police authorities (Walker *et al* 2006). As a consequence, the poor are more likely to be psychologically affected by crime in an adverse way and they are also disempowered by their inability to take precautionary measures against crime, for example through purchase of security devices (Dixon *et al* 2006).

Figure 2.6. Percentage of people who have been victims of crime once or more, by level of prosperity in an area

Source: Walker *et al* 2007



In fact, there are worrying indications that the burdens of crime are falling more severely than ever on those in the poorest areas. Between 1980 and 2000 the chances of being murdered decreased by around 5 per cent for those in the top quintile of localities as measured by wealth, but increased by over 35 per cent for those in the poorest quintile (Dorling 2005). While there is little evidence to suggest that this trend has continued since 2000, such inequality should certainly be of concern to progressives.

Overall, these factors suggest that there is still significant room to improve police performance and, in particular, police workforce productivity and cost effectiveness.

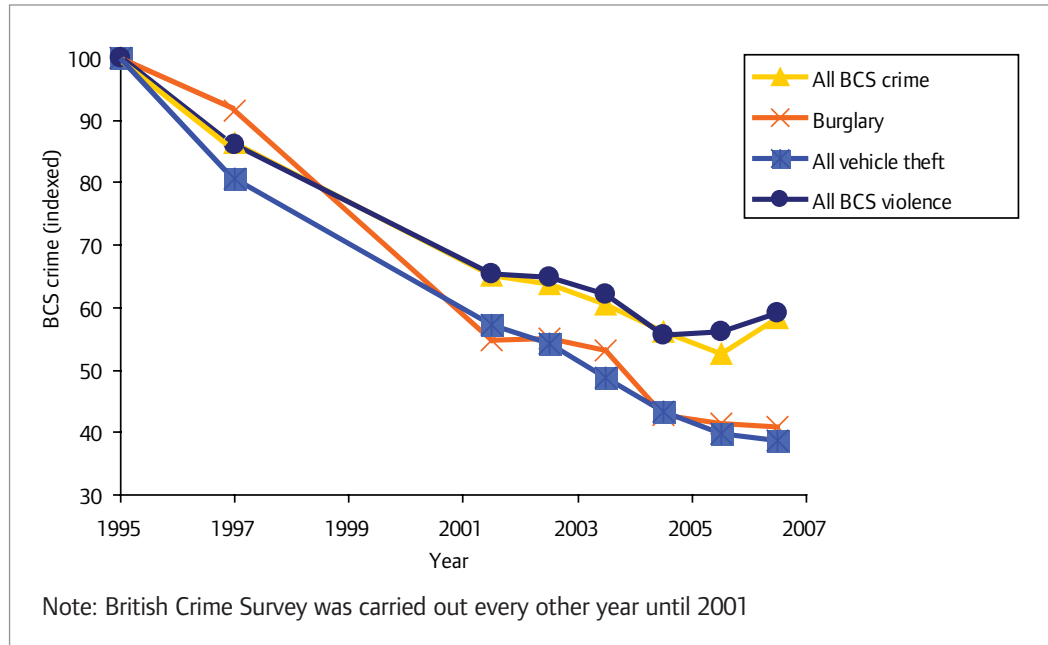
### A changing crime environment

There is some evidence to support the view that the crime environment is changing more rapidly than ever before. Technologies have presented opportunities for new types of identity and internet fraud, new factory-fabricated drugs have changed drug market dynamics (as seen, for example, with the explosion of methylamphetamine or ‘crystal meth’ use in the United States), and changing legal and regulatory environments create new crime opportunities, such as people-smuggling in response to tighter immigration laws and more effective border controls. New threats can emerge at short notice, as seen with the sudden arrival of a new form of terrorist threat from Al-Qaeda and other religious-fundamentalist terrorist groups.

Furthermore, the distribution of different crime types is constantly shifting. For example, the nature of acquisitive crime has changed as a reduction in the number of burglaries and vehicle thefts has been offset by a relative increase in muggings, a likely result of improved home security to deter burglars and the arrival of new high-value portable gadgets (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7. Trends in crime, as measured by the British Crime Survey, 1995-2006/7 (indexed 1995)

Source: British Crime Survey 2007



In addition, interviews carried out for this project suggest that professional criminals are responding increasingly quickly to changes in detection methodologies and sanctions. People and drug trafficking routes shift to evade authorities, while rises in tax and duties in the 1990s saw dramatic increases in sales of illegally imported cigarettes, not least because penalties for cigarette smuggling were lower than for alternative types of criminal activity. As communication mechanisms and technology constantly change and improve, it is likely that crime patterns may change in ever shorter timeframes, requiring an ever more responsive system.

Of equal importance, political and public priorities have changed rapidly. Increased demands for particular types of police activity, for example visible reassurance, have combined with a focus on specific crime types, such as knife crime, inspired by genuine citizen concern as well as media-inspired moral panics.

Such changes combine to mean that the police must be increasingly flexible and responsive and must develop new skills. For example, today's Police Service has a greater need for technological skills, requires a large number of officers trained to deal with terrorist emergencies, demands improved skills in serious and organised crime prevention and detection, and increased communication and customer service skills to inform and reassure increasingly demanding citizens.

### The fiscal imperative to improve efficiency

Increased pressures on policing and a record of flat performance are of particular concern in the current fiscal context. The Flanagan Review coincides with and is a reflection of an ever-increasing imperative to control police expenditure and there is, quite simply, no additional revenue to fund performance improvement. This is a radical departure from recent years, during which the Government's approach to ensuring that the Police Service met increased expectations was to dramatically increase funding for the Police Service.

Overall expenditure on policing has risen by 25 per cent since 2001 in real terms, a spending increase driven predominantly by sustained efforts to increase police numbers and to boost public confidence through high-visibility patrolling. Since 2001, Police Service numbers (including both officers and staff) have also increased by nearly 25 per cent, with 15,000 new Community Support Officers (CSOs) by the end of 2007 (National-PCSOs 2008).

However, current public spending pressures mean that efficiency will be the watchword in policing and public services generally over the next five to ten years. As Policing Minister Tony McNulty said in October 2007: 'We are now entering a more flat-line period in terms of resources after seven or eight years of growth' BBC News (2007a). In fact, the flat settlement for the Spending Review Period from

2007-12 will require a radical departure from recent spending trends and not simply a temporary belt-tightening. This is primarily because there are a number of in-built cost pressures for the police that mean that a flat settlement will result in a net reduction in controllable police spending.

The police face a growing pension deficit and, worryingly, Home Office Officials expect pension contributions to increase to around 40 per cent of the total officer salary bill by 2020 (see Figure 2.8). Meanwhile, the generosity of recent pay deals has set a precedent that will be politically difficult to manage, as exemplified by the tense pay negotiations being carried out between the Home Office and the Police Federation. In fact, such pressures are already beginning to manifest themselves in an actual decline in frontline resource in several police forces and Basic Command Units, for example in Sheffield. In this context, the productivity and performance of the police workforce becomes more important than ever.

Figure 2.8a Law and order as percentage of total managed expenditure, 2005

Source: Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis, in Bolton 2005

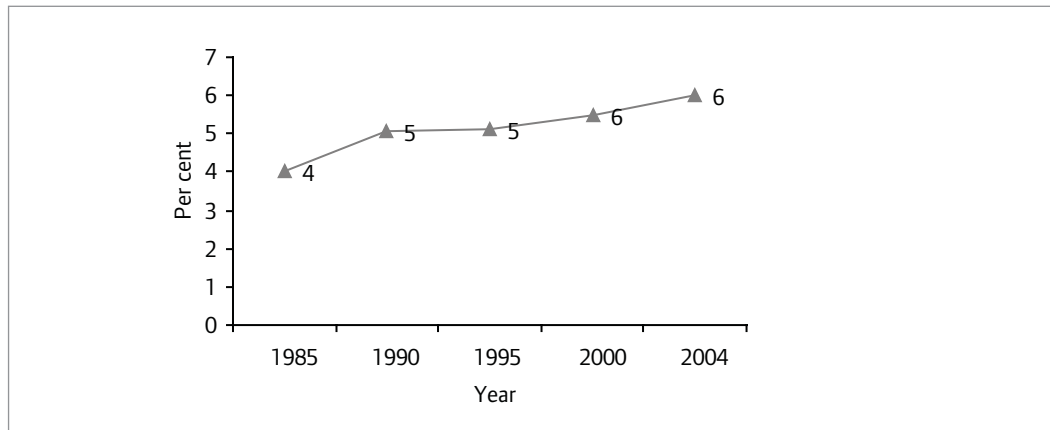
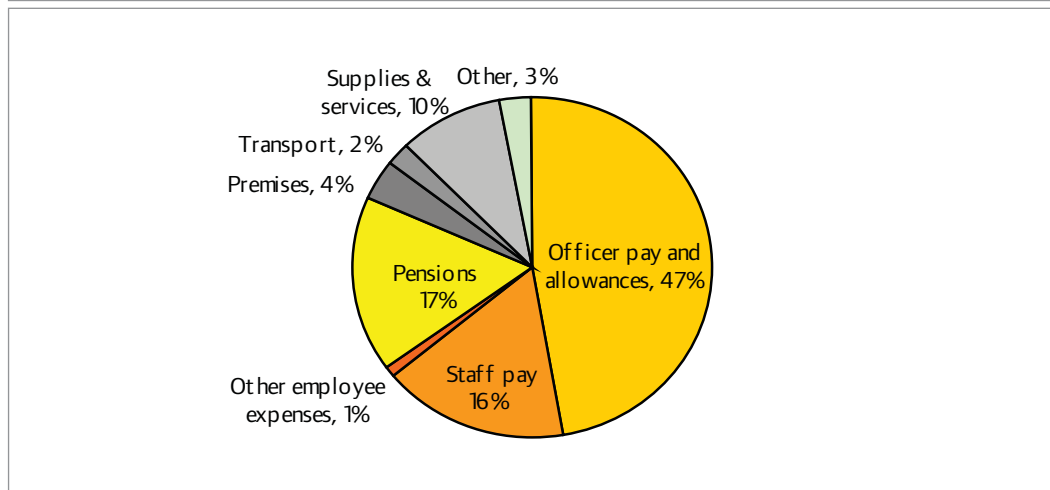


Figure 2.8b Force expenditure breakdown, 2005-6

Source: CIPFA 2006



### The Labour Government’s police workforce strategy since 1997

Since 1997, the Labour Government has recognised that policing is both an issue that the public care greatly about, and an area that is vitally important to maintaining social justice. Partly as a response, Labour has increased pressure and demands on the Police Service, with its responsibilities increasingly shifting away from a narrow emphasis on volume crime<sup>2</sup> towards a broader remit. While reassurance has always been part of the police role, it has become notably more pronounced in recent years and it has been paired in public consciousness with attempts to tackle less serious crime and anti-social behaviour. Meanwhile, there has been equal pressure to tackle serious and organised crime and, in particular, the threat of terrorism. The advent of terrorism in a new, post-IRA, form has highlighted the

2. ACPO identifies the following crime types to be included within the category ‘volume crime’: street robbery, burglary, theft (including shoplifting), vehicle crime, criminal damage and drugs (link with acquisitive crime) (ACPO 2001).

pace at which the police need to be able to refocus priorities in light of changing local and, increasingly, global events.

As shown above, the Government's primary approach to ensuring that the Police Service can meet the increased expectations placed on it has partly been to dramatically increase its funding. However, the Government has also instigated changes in the way in which the police work. These reforms can be summarised as follows:

- The beginnings of a more preventative and targeted approach – often resulting in increasing amounts of cooperation with other government and non-government agencies, in particular at local government level with, for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Agreements and Persistent and Priority Offender schemes.
- Increased punitiveness and wider use of blanket surveillance and monitoring now made available through technological advance.
- An attempt to circumvent perceived 'bureaucratic obstacles' to policing and justice, with increased use of civil orders such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and new summary powers (including 'on-the-spot' fines) – again resulting in increased breadth of the police role.
- Moves to increase responsiveness to local concerns, focusing on the most deprived areas, often as part of Neighbourhood Policing and roll-out of the Respect Action Plan.

As in all organisations, workforce policies and practices have also evolved. However, it is noticeable that workforce reform has been achieved in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, often as a response to short-term exigencies. The most notable workforce reforms have been:

1. Changes to workforce mix and increased use of civilian staff
2. The introduction of a prescriptive performance management regime, aimed to raise police performance across the board, and particularly for the worst-performing forces
3. Attempts to reduce the perceived bureaucratic obstacles resulting from tightened performance management procedures and procedural controls imposed to protect civil liberties
4. Incremental or abandoned reforms of police structures.

These are discussed in more detail below.

### **1. Changes to workforce mix**

To some extent changes in workforce mix have been driven by the above shifts in aims and approaches. The most notable and visible recent change in the Police Service has been in the area of workforce mix. New yellow-jacketed Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been given almost total responsibility for delivering on the reassurance agenda, while an increasing number of 'civilians' are also involved in administrative and support activities within policing. There has also been increased willingness to embrace 'plural policing' by designating new enforcement powers to local authority and other public service personnel. New neighbourhood wardens have been given increased powers, such as authority to issue 'on-the-spot' fines for specific offences, while environmental officers could issue similar penalties for offences such as littering and 'fly-tipping'.

Changes to police workforce composition were partly motivated by the need to control rising policing costs – low-skilled patrol and administrative functions, neither of which required the full powers or training of warranted officers, could be staffed more cheaply with 'civilian' staff. However, they were also motivated by recognition of skill shortages within the Police Service, as specialist support function administrators in finance, human resources and IT were brought into both senior and junior roles.

Nonetheless, despite a clear rationale for reform, changes to workforce mix met widespread opposition. The Police Federation and many Chief Constables opposed many changes because of perceived encroachment on the role of the warranted officers and reform was only secured when the Government protected police officer funding and provided additional 'ring-fenced' funding for PCSOs. The Government has also funded other workforce mix experiments, including the eleven workforce

modernisation demonstrations currently underway, which are testing the effectiveness of specialist and mixed civilian/warranted officer teams.

## 2. Tighter performance management

The Government has also attempted to drive productivity through a new performance management regime, which has had a profound impact on policing in the UK. The Police Service has responded to the new regime and have refocused efforts according to the outputs and outcomes measured. The regime, which compares the performance of forces and Basic Command Units (BCUs) with similar demographic and compositional characteristics, has also resulted in a significant performance improvement in some of the worst-performing areas. However, practitioners and commentators have observed flaws in the system's design that have resulted in perverse consequences – views validated by this report and the Flanagan Review's interim report, as well as ippr research on youth justice (Flanagan 2007, Margo forthcoming 2008). Partly in response to such criticisms, the Government has also taken steps to increase performance pressures through clearer 'answerability' to the public, for example through citizen forums.

## 3. Delivering 'speedier' justice

Partly to counter accusations of increasing bureaucracy through their performance management regime and partly to increase efficiency, the Government has also steadily aimed to reduce perceived procedural barriers to effective policing. Attempts to reduce bureaucracy are seen in powers to deal with anti-social behaviour, for example the increased use of civil orders such as ASBOs (where a lower burden of proof is required) and through new summary powers, such as 'on-the-spot' fines (Penalty Notices for Disorder) for a range of minor offences such as vandalism and drunk and disorderly behaviour. They are also seen at the other end of the scale in the new powers against serious and organised crime in the 2005 Serious and Organised Crime Act and in the extension of the time for which terrorist suspects can be held in custody without charge.

Such measures, characterised by the Government as 'rebalancing the Criminal Justice System in favour of the law abiding majority', have been widely used and have significantly reduced the time taken to process minor offences (DCA 2006). They have, however, also sparked controversy, partly because they have had a net-widening effect of bringing more people into the criminal justice system and partly because neither the judiciary nor civil liberties' groups are comfortable with the police exercising this level of discretion with regards to punishment, particularly given pressures to meet performance targets outlined above.<sup>3</sup>

## 4. Abandoned structural reforms

Another attempt to reform the police workforce focused on organisation structures. Home Secretary Charles Clarke's force merger initiative of 2005-6 aimed to reduce the number of forces, creating 'larger, more strategic' regional forces that, it was hoped, would improve operational resilience to peaks in demand and enable a more coordinated response to serious and organised crime (Home Office 2005c). Whatever the potential advantages of the scheme, which are discussed below, the proposal met strong opposition from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and several police forces. Objecting to the design of the mergers scheme, for both practical and political reasons, ACPO placed a £1bn price-tag on mergers. This was a significant sum bearing in mind that companies and even government agencies routinely merge on the grounds of potential cost savings. The scheme was abandoned following the arrival of John Reid at the Home Office in 2006.

As a result of such reversals, and despite the above developments, the police workforce is still far from appropriately configured. Those reforms successfully pushed through, including the introduction of PCSOs, have been bolt-ons to the current system rather than part of a coherent programme based on a full understanding of the workforce system. Structural reform was abandoned with no alternative

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3. Criticism has also focused on the fact that summary punishments are not deemed to be 'outcome' focused, shown, for example, in the issuing of fines to offenders living chaotic lifestyles and unable to pay.

solutions to problems of coordination offered and other reforms have been partially implemented and often at a slow pace. Civilianisation, which started decades ago, remains far more advanced in some forces than in others. Results from performance management reform have been mixed while there has been scant consideration of the impact of change on the police working environment.

Such problems with implementing change are indicative of the fact that the police system is not yet configured in a way that allows it to embrace workforce change, nor does it have a clear vision of how reform can help the workforce to adapt to the changing crime environment.

### **Concerns about the redundancy of the New Public Management model**

Since the 1980s onwards, the theory and language of public sector workforce reform has been that of New Public Management. Originating in the retrenchment of the state under Thatcher, New Public Management introduced concepts of human resource management more commonly found in private sector enterprises, in particular through efficiency measures and attempts to drive performance through economic incentives. The rhetoric of New Public Management shifted according to political circumstances but remains deeply entrenched, particularly in the minds of policymakers.

Imposing management disciplines into public services had significant merits. It provided an activist framework for performance improvement, signifying a refusal to accept that a low-productivity public sector was an unavoidable reality. It was also a welcome move away from the insularity that typified the civil service and professions, encouraging examination of alternative methods, and providing challenge to professional privilege where it was perceived to have created services less able to serve the public.

However, there has been a growing recognition of problems within the New Public Management model as it has been applied. Some of these problems result from theoretical flaws but others have been discovered in the detail of implementation. On occasion reforms have encouraged the opposite of what they aimed to do: performance incentives for teachers have been implemented in such a way that they are effectively rewarding seniority more than performance (Training and Development Agency for Schools 2008). Despite notable successes, for example in educational targets for literacy and numeracy, elements of the performance management system have created 'gaming' and, at their worst, perverse consequences. Structural reforms have been typified by reversals, as seen in both policing and the structural merry-go-rounding in the NHS. Perhaps most importantly, reforms have sometimes been enacted in a way that has undermined professional confidence and motivation.

Rapid change is in itself challenging but motivation has been particularly drained by the fact that reform has too often been instigated by a government that has positioned reform in conflictual terms. Many professionals have felt excluded from both the design and delivery of the reform agenda, and have perceived reform as something that is done to them rather than as a project to improve the public services that they are part of. Workforce reform has occasionally come to resemble a bargaining process, with reforms 'bought' through concessions, usually increased funding for the service in question or improved pay for workers.

This conflict model has often brought the worst out of both professionals and government – objections to reform have been treated as attempts to block, however valid, while professionals have occasionally seized opportunities to hijack reform. For example, GPs took full advantage of government miscalculations to achieve pay levels that can now exceed that of specialist consultants who work more unsociable hours, and in a more stressful working environment.

This conflict-based relationship has also left the top ranks of public services, and perhaps particularly the police, having to act as diplomats in order to manage conflicts, including conflicts between different groups within the Police Service. Thus, the conflict relationship distracts all concerned from the real job of improving public service productivity and public satisfaction.

However, while recognition of weaknesses in workforce reforms is growing, counter-proposals have tended to be retroactive, preferring to argue in favour of a pre-New Public Management model. This ignores the fact that 'letting professionals get on with the job' has not always proven effective at

delivering the services that the public want, in part because professionals are shielded from public pressures to change, unlike elected representatives. Looking at health, GPs vigorously opposed the creation of a National Health Service, despite the popularity of the idea, and are now reluctant to deliver longer opening hours to match changing patterns of life and work.

Such examples show that, if we are to have better public services, citizens and their parliamentary representatives must influence public service delivery. That role need not involve *forcing* change onto practitioners but it should ensure that the challenges faced by our public sector workforces are highlighted appropriately. Government must continue to ask difficult questions, such as 'how should we deal with the fact that not all good teachers would make good managers (i.e. head teachers)?'. But, as shown above, how this role can be performed without descent into demoralising, conflict-based relationships is not yet clear and, as a result, we do not yet have a truly progressive account of public sector workforce management.

### 3. Theories of workforce reform

By looking at police workforce issues rather than wider questions of the police role or police accountability, this paper focuses on how organisational productivity could be improved by reconfiguration of the police workforce or 'work system'. The paper adopts a broad definition of workforce reform, and concentrates on the following five main policy areas that define the nature of the workforce in any work system:

- **Job design:** Defining how work is divided between different roles and the type of workers in each role (workforce mix).
- **Organisation design:** Designing the most appropriate organisation structures for effective service delivery.
- **Training, development and skills:** Defining the mechanisms that facilitate skills development of those within the work system, as well as those that avoid loss of skills through ill-health and so on.
- **Reward:** Defining how workers are rewarded for performing their role.
- **Motivation:** Determining how workers are motivated to deliver improved performance through rewards and sanctions.

There is a growing recognition of the centrality of these issues to organisational success. In the private sector, companies increasingly see workforce reform as an essential complement to market strategy, 'looking to internal physical and intellectual resources for sources of competitive advantage' (Grimshaw and Jull 2007). There is also a growing literature on workforce issues, which are often referred to collectively as Human Resource Management (HRM). For example, Wright *et al* (2001) have observed that HRM provides three avenues for performance improvement:

- HRM practice can build knowledge and skill as well as elicit behaviour by developing the existing human capital pool (the stock of employee knowledge, skills, motivation and behaviours).
- HRM practice can affect an organisation's ability to capture human capital (people) passing through the organisation. Organisations and HRM practices can influence movement of people and information-sharing (through recruitment, rewards, organisational culture and so on).
- HRM practice can improve an organisation's ability to change. (HRM influences the primary levers that enable change.)

While most research has focused on private sector companies, New Public Management has also sought to adopt and adapt theories and practices developed predominantly in the private sector in public sector workforces. Interest has been fuelled by the rhetoric and the reality of a more knowledge-based economy but it is also attributable to the success of Human Resource Management techniques. A series of studies have shown an empirical correlation between particular sets of HR practices and organisational success, for example Arthur (1994), MacDuffie (1995), Delery and Doty (1996), Batt (1999), Rodriguez and Ventura (2003). Huselid has shown that a specific set of 13 HR practices representing a 'high-performance work system' was significantly and positively related to lower staff turnover but also to higher profits, sales and market value (Allen and Wright 2007).

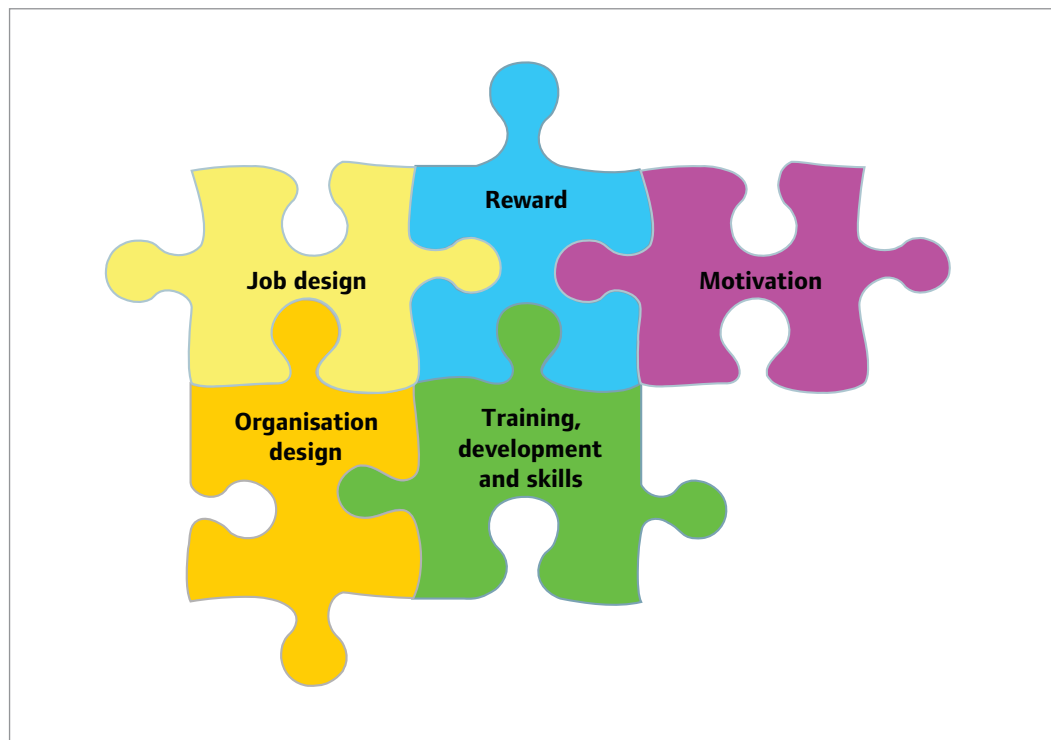
Studies have also consistently reinforced two principles of workforce reform that form a background to this paper's analysis of the police workforce. First, workforce issues are central to organisational strategy and not simply 'HR' problems. Senior managers must take an active role in HR decisions so that workforce strategy can be clearly aligned with organisational aims and appropriate to the environment in which the organisation operates. For example, HR processes in an organisation whose success depends on the ability to innovate should differ considerably from those in an organisation whose success depends predominantly from its ability to control costs.

This need to align workforce and organisational strategy highlights the importance of a clear understanding of organisational role and objectives (Allen and Wright 2007, Tyson 2006). It also emphasises the dangers of simplistically applying models of ‘best practice’. As one theorist observes: ‘Theories of best practice management of work may make little sense if there are systematic variations both in governance and in the operation of markets to which these practices should and indeed do adjust’ (Grimshaw and Jull 2007). Such observations are particularly pertinent when considering the public sector, and policing specifically.

Second, workforce issues are inextricably related to one another and cannot be dealt with in isolation.<sup>4</sup> For example, police recruitment and training and development strategies clearly relate to one another: the lack of formal recruiting qualifications dictates a greater emphasis on initial training than might be the case if, for example, a police training qualification (potentially similar to that in teaching) were required prior to application to the Police Service. In fact, the ramifications are wider still because the system might also need to adjust the rewards it offered to ensure individuals invested time to secure a qualification that carried with it no guarantee of employment and, potentially, considerable cost.

It would also affect the type of people who entered the service, potentially influencing how they could best be motivated or in which team structures they would operate most effectively. This example also shows the clear relationships between stocks and flows in the workforce – who is entering the workforce influences the HR processes required, while the processes within an organisation will affect who chooses to enter it. It is also noticeable that this description of workforce issues is perhaps broader than the one currently used by the Police Service when discussing workforce modernisation. Such complexities make it difficult to treat separately the five areas of workforce reform that we have identified. These areas are presented in Figure 3.1 below and are discussed in sections 5-9.

Figure 3.1. Five areas of workforce reform



4. This view is strongly supported by the Harvard ‘best practice’ approach of Beer *et al* (1984), among many others.

## 4. The aims of police workforce modernisation

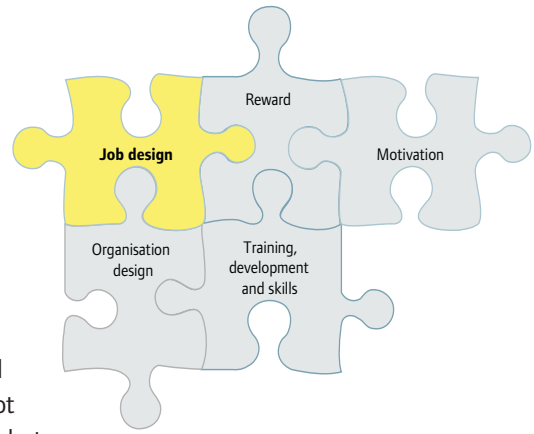
In each of the five related areas of workforce reform represented in Figure 3.1, our aim is to present options that will create a police workforce that is:

- **Effective:** Has still greater capacity to generate high levels of work performance and goal attainment by individuals
- **Efficient:** Develops, produces and delivers policing in a more efficient manner
- **Self-improving:** Sustains and builds on human capital and performance capabilities
- **Adaptable:** Adapts effectively to changes in strategic direction and operating environment
- **Responsive:** Is responsive to the public, reflecting citizen concerns and priorities
- **Representative:** Is more representative of the communities it serves, and is equitable in its treatment of citizens, irrespective of class, ethnicity, gender or religion. This is particularly important in policing as representativeness reinforces police legitimacy, and because, as reproducers of social values, it is important that the police represent the views of society as a whole rather than a particular sub-section of it (Waddington 1999)
- **Satisfying:** Generates rewards for those who operate it
- **Sustainable:** Is sustainable in terms of impact on the physical and psychological health of employees, and the degree to which it builds positive social relationships and a healthy work-life balance.

We have generated options for reform by addressing, in sections 5-9, each of the five areas of police workforce policy in turn, and outlining:

- **Theory** and key debates relating to this issue, drawn from Human Resource Management literature
- **Current approaches** and trends in this area of policing
- **Key issues and challenges** relating to current practices
- **Options for reform** that would improve Police Service delivery and/or worker motivation and morale
- **Implications** of reforms to this area for other police workforce practices.

## 5. Job design and role definitions in the Police Service



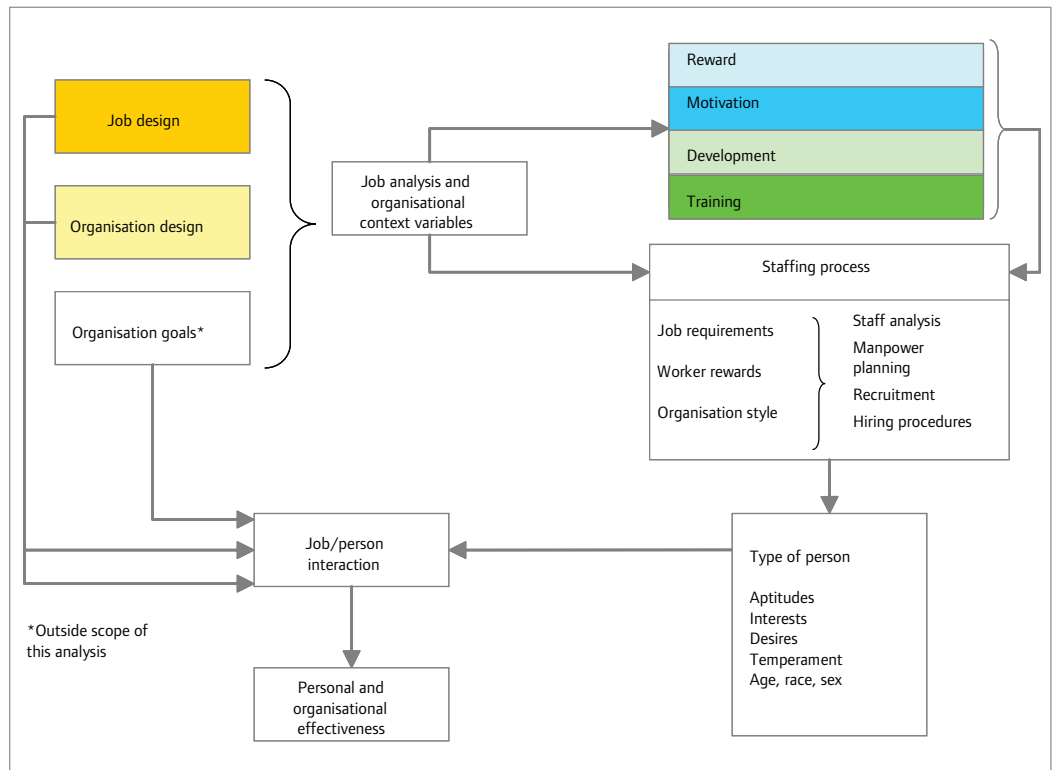
### Theory

Job design entails the division of all organisational activities into individual jobs or roles. It requires not just clarity about organisational aims and activities but also an understanding of the skills that are required and available for specific jobs. Individual jobs must either be filled with people who already have the skills and abilities required for the job or by candidates who can develop those skills, which can be provided through formal training and/or on-the-job learning.

A carefully managed job design process is central to achieving our vision of an effective workforce. It has a major impact on all other workforce areas examined. Outcomes and aims in other policy areas should also impact job design (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Human resourcing processes (all organisations)

Source: Adapted from Ployhart *et al* 2005



### Job segmentation

When considering job design, the extent to which organisational activities should be split and into how many distinct roles is usually of paramount concern. This decision involves carefully balancing advantages and disadvantages of job segmentation.

The most important advantages of a more segmented workforce are as follows.

- First, it can increase effectiveness. Narrow roles offer specialised workers the opportunity to accumulate task experience more quickly and tend to simplify the individual worker’s role, allowing greater focus and, for example, reducing the worker’s time devoted to prioritisation of tasks.
- Second, segmentation can reduce cost by decreasing the number of skills required for a particular role, which increases the number of potential workers in the labour market. To use a purposefully crude example, it is relatively easy to hire one accountant and one forensic scientist but much harder (and more costly) to fill two posts that require both accountancy and forensic science

abilities. Employing two accountants and training them in forensic science would not only require accountants with aptitude for forensic science but would also require expensive training.

- Third, specialisation can improve job satisfaction, by providing opportunities to develop specialist interests or expertise.
- Fourth, and paradoxically, specialisation can provide flexibility, as some specialist workers can be immediately recruited in response to changing demand.

Importantly, these advantages are not mutually exclusive and, for example, specialisation can reduce cost and increase quality.

Against these advantages must be set the main advantages of a less segmented labour force:

- First, broader roles encourage a better understanding of organisational activities and interdependencies – reducing the need for communication and management coordination.
- Second, more generalist roles often provide greater resource flexibility. This is particularly important for policing as the police must be able to respond to peaks in demand in specific areas at specific times – in what has become termed ‘operational resilience’.
- Third, broader roles can be more inherently satisfying and motivating, particularly if workers are able to see the real outcomes of their efforts.

### **Job design and role definitions: current approaches**

While it has always segmented roles to some extent, the Police Service has been increasing the degree to which roles are formally defined and specialised. There are two components to current specialisation in the Police Service. First, work previously performed by warranted officers is increasingly performed by civilian specialists and, second, specialist roles have developed for warranted officers themselves, for example domestic violence or drug-related crime specialists.

The number of civilian roles within the Police Service has increased steadily in recent years, with the proportion of non-warranted personnel rising from 30 per cent in 1997 to 37 per cent in 2006 (House of Commons 2007). Around half of this increase has been due to the introduction of PCSOs (now accounting for around 3 per cent of the police family), while the remainder has been due largely to the assignment of back-office functions previously performed by warranted officers to non-warranted staff. While the majority of new staff roles have been created at lower levels of the organisation, there has also been significant intake of experienced professionals into Police Service support functions. There are an increasing number of experienced civilians moving into senior IT, HR and finance roles, although a significant number of staff roles are still performed by warranted officers (Loveday 2007).

There have also been moves towards greater delineation and separation of police functions in areas of frontline policing. Many activities previously considered ‘core’ to the warranted officer role are now performed by PCSOs at lower cost, while teams have been established to focus on specific crime types or policing activities. The types and number of specialist police with warranted officer powers varies by area but specialist crime teams exist focusing on issues such as drugs, computer crime, street crime, gangs and gun crime. There is also a separate organisation dedicated to policing serious and organised crime in general, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA). Meanwhile cross-crime functional teams exist for criminal investigation (CID), dog and mounted sections, air support, search and recovery teams, traffic teams, public order specialists, domestic violence and child protection specialist units, among others.

### **Job design and role definitions: key issues and challenges**

Even in this context of increased specialisation there remains significant scope to increase civilianisation and specialisation in policing, with use of specialists remaining low in some forces, despite their clear benefits. Trials also suggest that further specialisation would be appropriate, with initial results suggesting the potential to raise workforce effectiveness still further, in addition to ensuring that the Police Service is ever more representative of the community it serves.

### Use of specialist roles in policing

There remains significant scope to increase civilianisation and specialisation in policing, without generating negative consequences. Despite existing civilianisation, many roles remain inaccessible to those who do not have or do not want full warranted police powers but who have skills that would benefit the Police Service. There remains dramatic variation in the use of police staff across forces in England and Wales, particularly for call handling, custody suites and forensic support. An HMIC report showed that nationally 72 per cent of personnel in crime and incident management units were police officers but that this varied at between 24 per cent and 99 per cent at a local level (HMIC 2004).

There are numerous examples of roles that are not always conducted by civilians but could be: for example, a civilian specialist could easily follow up burglary complaints, informing of case progress, reassuring victims and offering advice on home security, none of which would require warranted officer powers (see Box 5.1). Warranted officers are still too often performing administrative roles at high cost, detracting from frontline obligations and leaving them working on tasks for which they often lack the necessary skills, in technology or data entry, for example. The Police Service is also missing the opportunity to bring in functional skills and fresh ideas from other sectors by relying on warranted officers in this way.

#### Box 5.1 Background: The office of Constable

Unlike most public servants, who are employed by the state under UK employment, police officers are appointed by the Crown and must swear an oath of allegiance. This constitutional status has arisen because the police hold a monopoly on legitimate coercion, that is, they are able to use force against other citizen within the bounds of law. As Crown appointees, police officers, like judges, are held to be independent from political influences, in order to reduce risks of corruption and to strengthen and uphold the rule of law. Theoretically, police officers have complete discretion in whether or not they exercise their legal powers and ‘no superior can order a Constable to invoke legal powers or not in any given case; it is for the Constable to make that decision for which he or she will be directly legally responsible’ (Waddington 1999).

This independent constitutional position of police has been subject for criticism both in principle (by those who favour greater democratic and/or managerial control over officers) and because many believe it to be untrue in practice. Such arguments will be fully investigated as part of ippr’s wider Future of Policing project, which will examine the issue of the constitutional position of the Constable in the context of overall police accountability mechanisms. However, for the purposes of the debate on civilianisation, there is a clear need to distinguish police roles and activities that require the legitimate use of state coercion and those where the use or threat of force is not required. This paper assumes that these latter roles could be performed by civilians, who would be subject to general UK employment law.

It should be noted that while generally arguing in favour of greater civilianisation of support roles, government has itself created barriers to civilianisation through initiatives such as the Crime Fighting Fund, now ending, which ring-fenced funds to ensure increased warranted officer numbers. A 2007 survey showed that 78 per cent of Police Superintendents believe that Home Office guidance is inhibiting them from varying staff mix appropriately (Loveday and McClory 2007).

For warranted officers, there is also scope to take specialisation further. For example, specialist roles might be created to address alcohol-related disorder, a major problem in town centres. This role might require a certain amount of experience of town-centre response work at certain times, additional training in understanding preventative approaches to alcohol-related disorder, and the facilitated development of relationship with other government and non-government staff who could impact problems in this area, for example Trading Standards Officers, licensing authority staff and bar and club owners.

Specialised roles are popular with officers for reasons other than performance benefits: they appreciate opportunities to pursue particular areas of interest or to ensure they use specific areas of expertise to maximum effect. Criminal investigation roles have long been popular with officers and have attracted

some of the most capable officers in the Police Service. As we go on to outline below, however, specialisation is currently constrained by organisational and team structures in policing. Smaller forces are unable to both specialise and maintain operational resilience to peaks in demand and it is no coincidence that there are fewer specialist roles in Bedfordshire, for example, than in the Metropolitan Police Service. It is also constrained by weaknesses in resource management, one reason for the fact that pilots testing various types of civilianisation have stipulated that forces should be performing at average or higher levels before implementing similar schemes (Accenture 2006).

As a recent Police Federation report confirms, changes require appropriate information-sharing and a cooperative culture to be in place: ‘Officers frequently reported a lack of cooperation from other policing units where “that’s not in my remit” was a commonly used phrase. This contrasts with the environment of “flexibility” and “partnership” that management is looking to achieve’ (Chatterton and Bingham 2006). Outside of these constraints, there are other risks of specialisation that need to be mitigated, including the absence of appropriate training and development for newly created specialist roles and the danger that police forces concentrate on setting up specialist teams and neglect the more traditional focus of policing, for example emergency response. Officers in less specialist roles can feel undervalued and worry that the quality of the service they deliver is adversely affected by extractions and the high number of less experienced staff (ibid).

### **Trials and demonstrations of increased specialisation in policing**

Many within the Police Service fully recognise these opportunities to civilianise and specialise in order to deliver more satisfying police careers and a more effective service. ACPO and the National Police Improvement Agency have put forward a clearly articulated vision of ‘workforce modernisation’ that envisages an increased role for civilian staff and a move away from generalist policing to a world in which police officers maintain core skills (in order to ensure operational resilience) but increasingly develop career specialisms.

To complement civilianisation and new mixed-team policing, where civilian specialists and warranted officers work side-by-side, the NPIA proposes the creation of new, clearly defined and accredited roles within the Constable rank. The proposal is for the creation of two types of ‘Advanced Practitioner’ roles, a Technical Advanced Practitioner, who has specialist expertise in a particular area of policing, and a Team Leader Advanced Practitioner, who has management skills that can be used on the front line (NWMP 2006). The aim is that roles will be created solely based on business need:

‘A critical feature is the accurate match between the demands of the task required and the skill level of the resource allocated. It is this understanding of the business processes which is central to any Advanced Constable post. The role must have a justified business case and then be filled by a high performing and suitably accredited Constable. It is therefore necessary to consider the Advanced Constable as a key element within a new wider workforce mix, rather than being the solution in itself.’ (NWMP 2006)

The National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) now holds responsibility for delivering workforce modernisation in the police service, although still working closely with ACPO and other partners. Its pilots and ‘demonstrations’, facilitated by management consultancy Accenture, have provided increased evidence of the validity of a revised approach to police roles, and suggest efficiency and performance improvements through specialisation and changes in workforce mix.<sup>5</sup> In terms of efficiency, new custody teams in Dyfed Powys have been estimated to free officer time equivalent to 14,391 hours per annum, while Local Investigation Officers (LIOs) in Wiltshire freed up 12,598 officer hours over the course of 21 months. A CID team in Surrey has a 8 per cent lower running cost following a reconfiguration that made greater use of civilian staff. In terms of performance, following

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5. The National Workforce Modernisation Programme, now coordinated by the NPIA, uses ‘demonstrations’ to cover all current testing and evaluation of new workforce practices in policing. This is because, it argues, pilots have already proven that workforce modernisation has performance and efficiency benefits. It is now building an evidence base to encourage greater adoption of new models across police forces. Demonstration sites also build a more detailed knowledge of the specific changes that are most effective.

the introduction of a team-based approach to the investigation of volume crime, including Civilian Investigation Officers, the detection rate of a Surrey Basic Command Unit increased by a third (5.4 percentage points) year-on-year comparison for July to October, using the same numbers of police employees overall as in pre-pilot arrangement (against an increase of 7.7 per cent or 1.4 percentage points, in Surrey Police Force as a whole (Accenture 2006).

Such evidence is a welcome step towards generating an understanding of the skills required to perform roles effectively. There is scope to build this evidence further both through a greater number of demonstrations of the effectiveness of specialisation and through ensuring a thorough evaluation process, something that has not always been seen in pilots and demonstrations to date. There is also scope to extend this approach through analysis to determine the relationship between particular officer and staff skills and performance levels. This would generate a better understanding of questions such as whether formal educational requirements or, for example, experience in other parts of the criminal justice system or the army, aid performance.

### **Civilianisation to aid representativeness**

Increased use of civilian specialists may also deliver non-monetary advantages – particularly by improving how representative the police workforce is of the population as a whole. The Police Service has special reasons for having a workforce representative of the population it serves. The police are, at least to some extent, reproducers of social order, and it is in the interests of democracy (and legitimacy) that the Police Service represents the values of society as a whole, and not only particular sub-segments of it.

Civilian roles in the Police Service, including highly visible PCSOs, are more representative in terms of both ethnicity and gender than warranted officer roles. Fifty-eight per cent of police staff and 43 per cent of PCSOs are female and 7 per cent of staff and 12 per cent of PCSOs are from ethnic minorities, compared to 23 per cent women and 3.9 per cent ethnic minorities for the warranted officer role (Bullock and Gunning 2007). (For comparison, at least 7.9 per cent of the country's population are from ethnic minority groups [National Statistics 2001]).

### **Delivery of specialisation and civilianisation**

Despite clear benefits to modernisation proposals, progress to date has been slow and there are some areas of current proposals that could be counterproductive. In particular, the proposed Advanced Practitioner team leader role could be problematic. The rationale behind the Team Leader Advanced Practitioner role is flawed as it is based on the premise that PCSOs have added an additional management layer to policing and that Sergeants have insufficient time for front-line management, creating a need for the team leader Constable. However, the role of the PCSO is not junior to a police officer: it is fundamentally different, and should be seen more as a specialist role in community patrol and neighbourhood engagement.

Furthermore, while interviews suggest that some Sergeants are struggling to devote more than half of their time to frontline management, the solution to this problem does not necessarily lie in allowing juniors increasing responsibility. Rather, the solution could be, preferably, to refocus Sergeants on their core activities, by reducing bureaucracy and ensuring that Inspectors give Sergeants the requisite support and guidance. As the section below on organisation structures makes clear, there does not appear to be a need for additional Sergeants and there is no need for additional management layers in the Police Service. In any case, management skills should be the primary criteria for promotion to Sergeant so the creation of an Advance Practitioner role for Constables exhibiting these skills is unlikely to have a particularly strong motivational impact.

Also, despite the potential benefits, civilianisation will need to be more carefully handled than it has been historically. The way in which civilianisation has been achieved has not been optimal and has resulted in what the Her Majesty's Inspectorate has termed 'a two-tier workforce' with police staff often treated as second-class citizens. As HMIC and Loveday have observed, limited attention has been given to staff career paths and staff also receive less training than frontline officers, although this may reflect the fact that they already possess specific skills on entering the police or are employed in less complex activities (Bolton 2005). Police staff and officers are also represented separately, with Unison and the

Police Federation taking charge of staff and officer interests respectively, and Federation opposition to the civilianisation process both reflects and exacerbates divisions.

It is noticeable that senior officers have not always sought to reduce differences in treatment of civilian and warranted officer workforces. For example, the former Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary recently initiated a pay review for all civilian staff and a stringent evaluation regime and recommended pay cuts, without giving comparable attention to officers and, as Loveday observes, without any real appreciation of HR issues (Loveday 2007).

Similarly, one of the major problems with specialist roles for warranted officers to date has been that officers are often transferred into specialist roles, with limited prior training and inadequate support. ippr interviews carried out for this project with frontline officers revealed several instances of this: for example, one officer had been transferred into a CID domestic violence team without any additional training and with limited senior officer support. Specialisation can facilitate learning and development but must be accompanied by an appropriate development framework that supports transitions into more specialist roles.

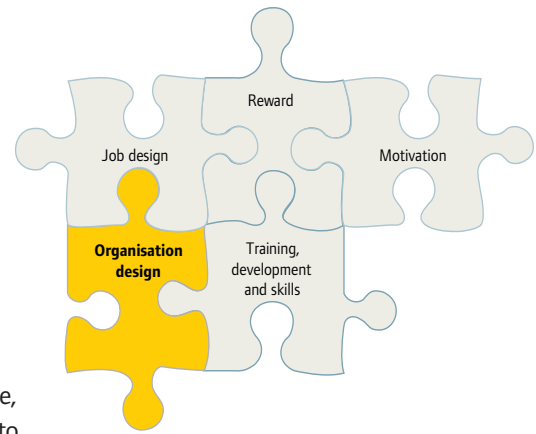
### **Job design and role definitions: summary of options for reform**

- As a first priority, forces should address current roles that have been civilianised successfully in other forces but remain filled with warranted officers in their own.
- In line with NPIA 'workforce modernisation' proposals and demonstrations, we recommend more specialist roles, using specialist civilian staff where appropriate. The technical specialist Advanced Practitioner roles could be created where there is a clear business case, but team leader Advanced Practitioner roles should not be implemented. Instead, pressure on Sergeants could be relieved in other ways and job descriptions for Sergeants and Inspectors tightened to ensure appropriate levels of front-line management support.
- As part of workforce modernisation, the police could consider a more radical model for facilitating more flexibility in workforce skills, for example attaching full warranted powers to specific roles rather than to individuals, with workers able to switch between warranted and non-warranted roles. This approach is currently used in New Zealand. A large number of officers maintain a standard set of powers to ensure resilience to major public order incidents and national emergencies but this system enables clarity on the nature of every role and the skills required to perform it.
- The police should devote considerable time and attention to the integration of police staff and officers. Mixed teams could help us to move in this direction but management would also need to devote attention to integration.
- Police should devote time to assessing which skills are needed for each police role, both analysing the skills necessary for specialist roles and those for entry into the Police Service. This might facilitate recruitment of appropriate personnel and improve worker satisfaction, as officers and staff would work in areas to which they were suited and would perform well.

### **Job design and role definitions: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- There is greater need for resource management and financial management skills, to address the issue described by Chatterton and Bingham (2006) thus: 'where civilians were undertaking tasks which did free officer time, this then raised questions over the diffusion of ownership of investigative work as no single individual had a complete overview of the case.'
- An improved career development methodology that allows individuals to develop and exploit specialist skills, or reinforced processes facilitating recruitment of specialists, is required. No officers should be placed into specialist roles without appropriate career planning and training mechanisms in place.
- There is greater need for improved communication methods and technologies throughout the Police Service.
- Focus is required on integration, development and motivation of non-warranted officers.
- There is potential to use new specialist roles to manage skills shortages internally by introducing variable rewards according to supply and demand.

## 6. Organisation design and police effectiveness



### Theory

Organisation design dictates how roles are aggregated into organisational entities (for example, teams, functions, departments or offices) in order to achieve workforce goals. Organisation design affects the immediate environment in which workers carry out their roles, covering issues such as team size and composition, the amount of management resource devoted to each worker, the amount of travel between locations and so on.

Decisions over such issues naturally affect how roles are performed, and thus organisational effectiveness and motivation. For example, an appropriate team structure can help to promote learning between team members and can increase commitment to collective or individual goals. Organisation design can also affect efficiency. For example, appropriate structures can allow better regulation of demand, either to minimise periods of 'down time' or to enable bulk processing. They can also minimise transaction times, for example by reducing the time needed to pass on a particular piece of information, or by reducing the number of transactions required.

Most theorists agree that organisation design is highly organisation-specific and that there are few 'best practice' rules that can be simplistically applied (for example, Bratton and Gold 2007). Instead, it is generally suggested that organisation structures must be tailored depending on current and future organisational goals and characteristics, as well as particular operational difficulties observed, be they the result of internal problems or of a changing external environment (Cordery and Parker 2007).

Organisation design rarely provides perfect solutions and important trade-offs are apparent. For example, there is a trade-off between supervision and managerial control on the one hand and empowerment and innovation on the other, and trade-offs between cooperation and collaboration, and task focus and simplicity of execution. As a result, much of organisation design involves working out how to redesign structures to remedy specific problems, and, importantly, reorganisation is just one option for addressing most problems. For example, a problem or communication between two workgroups could be solved by combining those workgroups in one team or location but might as easily involve a weekly meeting between the two teams or new IT software that standardised and shared team records.

The focus of organisation design is therefore on identifying areas in which current organisation structures are failing to get the most out of individual workers and then finding appropriate structural remedies, where such remedies are appropriate. (Note that, in general, theorists agree that organisation redesign is disruptive and major changes should typically be pursued only for considerable effectiveness or efficiency gains.)

In policing, there are two central issues in the organisation of the police force. First, the team environment in which individuals work and second, the macro-level structures and geographical locations in which teams and individuals operate.

### Police team structures: current approaches

Historically, the team environment for police officers has been relatively static. Officers typically worked in small teams (sometimes simply pairs) comprised solely of warranted Constables and directed by a Sergeant. For most work, including patrol and emergency response, teamwork and management support was limited, although, in larger operations including detective work or public order maintenance, there was increased managerial supervision to achieve coordination and an operational chain of command.

This method of organisation is still predominantly the case today but team structures are also showing

signs of adaptation in response to the arrival of new specialist and civilian roles in policing. For example, in several areas, Neighbourhood Policing is delivered by mixed teams comprising PCSOs working alongside or reporting to a warranted Constable and occasionally even supported by local authority neighbourhood wardens.<sup>6</sup> Notably, in this period of adaptation practices continue to vary significantly depending on the force in question, with areas of best practice sometimes identified but rarely rolled out more widely across the country. Rank structures in policing have also remained relatively fixed and there are currently nine warranted officer ranks.

### **Police team structures: key issues and challenges**

There are a range of issues with current team structures in policing. While some forces have been innovative in their recent approaches to team structures, many have not experimented with new models of approaches and the vast majority have not trialled new team structures for combating 'level 2' (serious) crime (Accenture 2006). This limits the potential performance and productivity impact of new specialised personnel, including civilians. Nor have successful innovations been replicated across the police system. In particular, there remains a lack of clarity around how neighbourhood policing teams should be structured and managed and how PCSOs should be incorporated within current structures.

There are particular advantages to teams comprising individuals with a diverse range of skills, as suggested by many HR theorists (Tyson 2006). This has been shown through experiments with mixed teams comprising both officers and police staff to date, within NPIA's workforce modernisation pilots. For example, an anti-social behaviour taskforce in Nottinghamshire, by adopting mixed teams, was better able to explore criminal and civilian approaches to combating anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, mixed teams have improved the integration of staff. Where new police staff and officers have been closely integrated in one team, this has increased staff morale and job motivation (Accenture 2006). Accenture has also found that:

'Where staff were introduced into operational teams, the integration of officers and staff has been found to be quicker than where new staff were operating independently from officers. This is often cited as being down to officers having direct experience of the benefits of working with the new staff.' (Accenture 2006)

Mixed teams also have significant efficiency-related benefits. Warranted officers working in such teams can focus on the areas in which their full police training and powers are most required, while civilians can drive performance in their own areas of expertise, be that serious fraud detection or victim support, while being supported by warranted officers where required. Thus, it is clear that civilianisation and revision of team structures will need to develop in tandem and if specialisation is to develop further, further innovation in team structures is likely to be required. The current approach piloting new team structures will need to be expanded, while a method for rolling successful innovations across the police system will need to be identified and implemented.

ippr interviews carried out for this project with frontline officers indicate that current management structures are not always delivering appropriate supervision or support to frontline officers, and in particular that insufficient emphasis has been placed on their development, a view supported by wider surveys of police officers (for example, Morris *et al* 2004).

One proposed solution to this deficit has been the creation of additional frontline management roles, as discussed above. However, to a large extent, officers feel unsupported for procedural and practical issues rather than any fundamental structural problems. For example, one reason for Constables' concerns about levels of support was the fact that, in places, they had been given additional responsibilities, for example the supervision of PCSOs, without being given appropriate training for these additional responsibilities. In fact, there are certainly sufficient Sergeants to support frontline

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6. For example, in Surrey, Neighbourhood Policing teams comprise one PC, three to four PCSOs (one per ward) and one allocator, who provides briefing and administrative support.

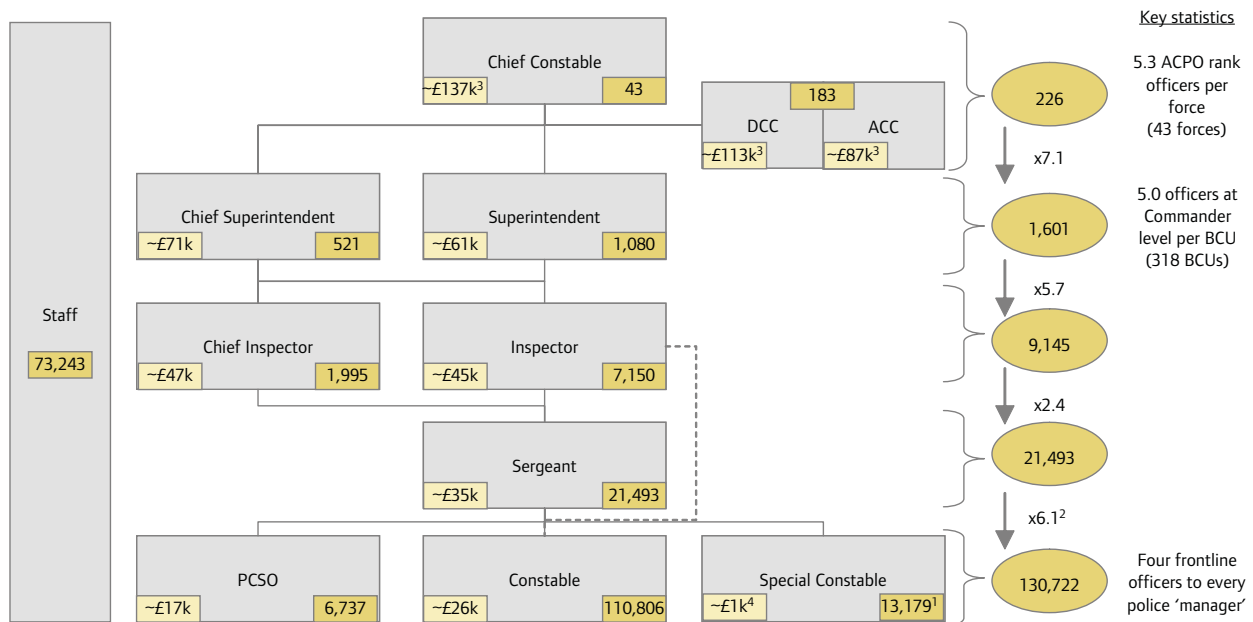
workers: while frontline levels of management support are among the lowest, spans of management control in the police are, in general, low, resulting in ‘too many chiefs and not enough indians’ (see Figure 6.1).

Most people-focused businesses aim to ensure that managers are responsible for between six and eight people, with higher spans of control for low-skilled industries such as manufacturing. This is because reducing management layers tends to facilitate faster communication across an organisation, enabling faster decision-making and improved feedback to management from the frontline, and can support organisational efficiency (Cordery and Parker 2007). The current ratio of Sergeants to Constables (about one to six) is about right, if somewhat low, but more surprising is the fact that there is more than one Inspector for every three Sergeants (see Figure 6.1). At the top of the hierarchy, spans of control are more sensible but again, confusion about levels of management support is compounded by the plethora of ill-defined roles, including those of Chief Inspector, Chief Superintendent and Assistant and Deputy Chief Constable. The existence of such roles may have benefits in terms of motivation and career development but attention is required to ensure that they do not simply get diverted into non-core or low-value-adding activities, particularly given current spending constraints.

In other organisations, particularly outside the public sector, careful attention is paid to minimising the number of management ranks and ensuring appropriate ‘spans of control’ at each management level, as doing so can free resources for core frontline activities (see Box 6.1). Within the Police Service, while it would not be fair to implement redundancies for officers who are performing well at more senior ranks, there is a strong case for transition to a better rank structure and larger spans of control over time. However, such a transition may be extremely difficult to achieve given current very low levels of officer turnover: only around 1 per cent of officers resign from policing each year, with most of these being in the early stages of their careers rather than at more junior ranks (Cooper and Ingram 2004).

Figure 6.1. Police operational resource structure

Source: Clegg and Kirwan 2006 for police numbers; Police Negotiating Board 2006 for police pay



Notes: 1. Heads 2. 5.5 excluding part-time special Constables 3. Based on average force weighting (5, Kent) 4. Based on 15 hours per month service

All Figures show full time equivalents (FTEs) at March 2006 levels except Special Constables; there are also 1,036 FTE traffic wardens and 1,323 FTE designated officers not shown. Shows typical salary at that level after three years of service; level 3 for management roles.

**Box 6.1. Examples of potential savings from structural reorganisation**

Without a detailed examination of the activities and spans of control of senior officers, it is not possible to produce a precise estimate of the potential savings that could be gained through rationalisation of police management layers. However, the following calculations are useful for indicating the potential cost opportunity.

- Leicestershire is a high-performing police force and 81 per cent of its officers are at Constable level. Only between 73 per cent and 80 per cent of officers are Constables in other forces. If all police forces were able to manage their Constables with the same amount of senior officers as Leicestershire, savings would free resources equivalent to at least an additional 6,000 frontline officers.
- Removing Chief Superintendent and Chief Inspector roles would save around £9 million, even if same personnel were retained at Superintendent and Inspector levels.
- If a ratio of six Sergeants for every Inspector could be achieved, this would result in savings of over £350 million per year.
- If a ratio of eight frontline staff for every officer of management rank could be achieved, this would result in savings of at least £1 billion per year.

**Team structures: summary options for reform**

- There is potential to experiment more widely with team structures, following on from workforce modernisation pilots.
- There is a need to develop mechanisms to ensure that successful innovations in team structures are rolled out across police forces.
- There could be a clearer definition of top management roles and responsibilities in policing, and ‘delayering’ of upper management could be considered, if appropriate. Such role definition could also be applied to Sergeant and Inspector roles to ensure sufficient frontline management and co-working.

**Team structures: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- There is potential to offset risks of specialisation through innovative team working methods and improved cross-team communication.

**High-level police structures: current approaches**

High-level police structures currently remain static. England and Wales remain subdivided into the 43 police forces that have existed in their current form since the 1964 Police Act, although the size and nature of these forces remains extremely diverse. For example, total police force officer numbers are 1,204 in Bedfordshire but 8,246 in the West Midlands (Bullock and Gunning 2007). Police grant funding varies similarly, with a £32.6 million central grant for Cumbria compared with £231.9 million for Greater Manchester (Home Office 2007b).

Within these diverse force structures are Basic Command Units (BCUs), of which there are 228 in England and Wales, an average of six per police force, each with an average of 426 warranted officers, 157 civilian support staff, ten police stations and six public enquiry desks (Loveday and McClory 2007). Again, variation is considerable. For example, the Bristol Basic Command Unit covers a similar population to the entire Warwickshire Police Force and has a similar number of officers (Loveday and McClory 2007).

There has been a trend towards increased size and decreased number of BCUs in recent years, there having been 379 in 1997, compared with 228 in 2008. In parallel, there has also been pressure to increase the size of police forces for reasons discussed below, although planned force mergers have been abandoned in response to objections from a variety of quarters. Instead, alongside the force/BCU structure, national-level delivery capability has developed as a separate organisation,

SOCA, established to deal with serious and organised crime issues that affected multiple forces. This has replaced the much-criticised National Crime Squad and National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Other national level delivery structures have also been established, the most recent being in 2007 the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), which has taken national-level responsibility for IT and HR issues, as well as serious crime analysis support, general policing research and a remit for modernising police operational practice.<sup>7</sup>

### High-level structures: key issues and challenges

There are a wide range of issues that relate to larger structures in policing, many of which were raised during the discussion of force mergers. The primary rationale for mergers was to improve police ability to tackle serious crime across force boundaries, which was found to be lacking. As Denis O'Connor reported in an HMIC review of current police structures in 2005: 'Typically, less than 6 per cent of the over 1,500 organised crime groups active at a force and regional level are actually targeted annually by the police' (O'Connor 2005). Proposals suggested that new regional structures would allow improved communication and information-sharing on areas such as the drugs market, allowing improved sharing of best practice and, in particular, data sharing, following on from the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry into the Soham murders of 2002.

The second rationale for mergers was that larger force size would provide greater flexibility. Larger forces, it was argued, would enable improved resource allocation for public order maintenance (for example, the policing of events) and better management of peaks in demand. Scale would also better allow forces to maintain and develop specialist police skills, such as those required following the murders of five prostitutes in Ipswich between October and December 2006. There were also advocates who claimed that mergers would allow significant economies of scale, in particular in back-office functions such as IT, finance and HR.

However, while these arguments are clearly pertinent, they have been undermined by insufficient evidence to support the view that mergers alone would be sufficient to solve problems identified.

First, serious and organised crime is as unlikely to respect regional boundaries as it is to respect current force delineations. The establishment of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency is recognition of this fact, although early indications suggest that the separation of national, force and BCU policing issues is not straightforward. Crime types are not simply delineated: the local theft from a shop funds a drug addict who buys drugs from a regional drug network, which is part of a national organised crime ring, which is part of an international network. Whatever the level at which lines are drawn, communication mechanisms would need to be in place and, in any case, the design of new regional boundaries did not appear to have been based on a full consideration of crime patterns.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, mergers would not improve interaction with other non-police agencies at a local level, and could risk undermining the increased local responsiveness advocated by the Neighbourhood Policing agenda (Loveday 2006b). The lack of co-terminosity between Police Forces and local government is currently a significant impediment to a holistic local approach to crime issues that the merger plans did not promise to resolve.

Second, forces do currently manage peaks in workload through cooperative agreements and the need for inter-force cooperation is relatively rare. The Ipswich murders of late 2006 are a pertinent example

7. NPIA has replaced Centrex, PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation), NCPE (National Centre for Policing Excellence) and SCAS (Serious Crime Analysis Support), as well as select Home Office responsibilities.

8. The most commonly cited example of the poor design of police structures was the desire to unite North and South Wales, despite the fact that crime problems in North Wales were linked (through transport networks and proximity) to crime networks in the North West of England, and those in South Wales were more closely tied to London via the M4 corridor. It also ignored the fact that North Wales is far more rural than, and has a distinctly different crime mix from, South Wales, which includes urban centres such as Swansea and Cardiff.

of cross-force specialist resource support for a specific peak in demand that was shown to work well, if at high cost.

Third, regional data-sharing is only a half-way house to the required national level information-sharing systems and processes required in a time of high social mobility and national crime networks.

Fourth, the proposed £1 billion cost of the merger programme undermined any efficiency arguments, despite the fact that mergers should, in theory, produce significant savings.

This point is important. By accepting ACPO's merger cost estimates, the Home Office undermined an important argument for restructuring. While the case for improved force effectiveness through mergers is somewhat unproven, there should be a clear cost rationale for pursuing an element of structural reform. It is likely that several functions could be administered more efficiently and effectively by consolidating activity at a supra-regional or national level.

The current resourcing levels for finance and HR at a regional level are high, with frequent duplication of activities within and between forces. For example, there are frequently large finance teams at BCU and at force levels, despite general acknowledgment by government that sharing such services across larger areas is more efficient (see Box 6.2) (CIO Council 2008). Even without the full civilianisation of non-core officer functions, 37 per cent of police personnel are staff, a level that may indicate inefficiency in back office functions as well as the burdens of bureaucracy<sup>9</sup> (Clegg and Kirwan 2007).

In this context, the planned centralisation of IT and HR functions within the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) seems sensible but there will also be a parallel need to be clear on which activities the NPIA is responsible for and to reduce levels of resource in forces and BCUs accordingly. Similarly, there may be an effectiveness and efficiency argument for an element of structural reform to ensure that all areas have access to appropriately skilled and specialised officers. This is particularly the case for certain specialised administrative functions such as emergency response/customer care call centres, where current structures remain typically co-located with police force headquarters. However, it is also the case for specialist warranted officer roles. Shared specialist services such as the East Midlands Air Support Unit (covering Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Forces) appear to be working well in some areas, although the governance arrangements are naturally complicated. It also seems strange that force mergers have been removed from the reform agenda even where they have near-unanimous support, particularly for smaller forces such as Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

#### **Box 6.2 Examples of potential savings from support function reconfiguration**

Without a detailed examination of roles and activities across BCUs and forces it is not possible to produce an accurate estimate of the potential savings that could be gained through centralisation of support functions. However, in commercial enterprises, sharing support functions across geographic areas and/or business units has reduced costs for those functions of between 15 per cent and 50 per cent.

At current resource levels, a 25 per cent reduction in staff numbers would free at least £500 million per year for frontline policing work.

Of course, it is not possible to fully consider structural reform without examining governance and accountability arrangements, particularly because of the need to ensure police structures are compatible with the structures of other relevant organisations, particularly local government. Such an examination is beyond the remit of this paper but it should be observed that effectiveness and efficiency arguments should feed into discussions around governance and accountability structures. It is also observed here that failures to implement structural reform may indicate issues with current

9. As an interesting comparison, pharmaceuticals companies who rely heavily on sales staff in the field aim to ensure that around 70 per cent of staff are frontline, excluding research and development activity.

accountability and governance mechanisms, particularly at a national level.<sup>10</sup> These issues will all be addressed in ippr's upcoming report on the future of policing and initial recommendations on structural reform will be revised based on further research undertaken as part of our wider project.

### **High-level structures: summary of options for reform**

- Voluntary mergers, particularly for smallest forces, could be implemented.
- Centres of Excellence for specialised functions (cross-force) could be rolled out more widely where appropriate. This applies equally to specialist administrative functions such as call handling and for specialised warranted officer roles.
- Support functions (particularly in finance, HR and IT) not already performed at supra-regional level could be aggregated for scale where appropriate. Such a change would require a thorough exercise to define which activities should take place at which organisational level – and levels of resource should be adjusted accordingly.
- There should be an ongoing focus on ensuring resilience against serious crime, and addressing weaknesses identified in HMIC thematic reports and independent reviews such as the Soham and Bichard enquiries.

These are preliminary recommendations; more detailed recommendations on police structures will be presented in the final report of ippr's future of policing project.

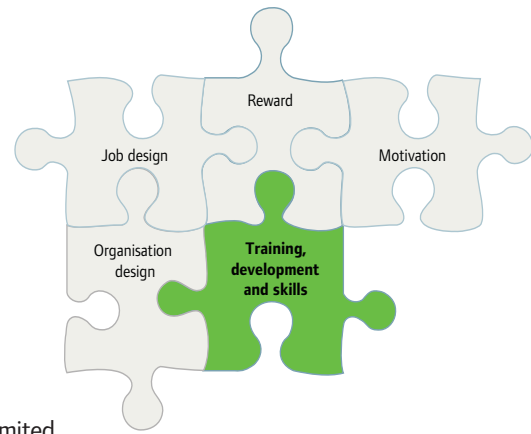
### **High-level structures: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- There is a need to revisit structural issues in the context of overall police governance and accountability issues. Current governance structures do not appear to facilitate straightforward decision-making at the national level.
- Any structural reform must be supported by appropriate national-level IT data-sharing and analysis infrastructure, coordinated by the NPIA and SOCA.

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10. The fact that activities are not always carried out at the right organisational levels is not peculiar to the Police Service. It is not unusual for departments (and individuals within them) to amass responsibilities that should not be under their control. In some cases, additional activities are taken on in an attempt to find palliatives for problems that should be solved in a more direct manner, for example an additional accountant might be employed by a BCU Commander because force-level finance staff failed to deal promptly with a specific issue. In other cases, perhaps subconsciously, some individuals and organisational entities welcome any additional resources, either because resource gain is perceived as a primary purpose of the organisation or because systems equate responsibility and resource levels with power. However, what is peculiar about the Police Service is that the situation has not been effectively remedied at any point in time, either by operational leadership or by the Home Office.

## 7. Creating a culture of learning and development



### Theory

Development and training processes are the primary ways in which organisations can develop their human capital. They can enable those with limited experience, and sometimes few developed skills, to become quickly productive and to contribute to the workforce, as well as developing specialist skills and expertise which are valuable to the organisation. Training and development processes also play an important role in motivating staff, and, like most human resource processes, have a decisive impact on the type of people who choose to enter an organisation.

It is difficult to treat training and development processes separately but for the purposes of this section the term 'training' will be used narrowly, to refer to all formal, structured learning that takes place within the Police Service, including induction/initial training, ongoing training and training for career transition points. The term 'development' will be used broadly to refer to the overarching process of managing workers' careers, including the identification of skills needs and remedies, worker progression between different roles and support for those wishing to leave the service. Development will also encompass those processes which involve learning but not in a formal environment, for example 'on-the-job' training, coaching, mentoring and self-learning. Both training and development are of particular importance in the Police Service, not least because the single entry point for warranted officers and a lack of formal pre-entry vocational training mean that all officer training must be designed and provided by the service.

There is a vast theoretical literature on training and development, which draws on the work of educationalists, HR and management specialists and generalist social scientists. There are a range of theories of how to optimise career learning and development but there is also agreement on the need for:

- A proactive approach to development, one that identifies strengths and weaknesses as basis for future action and ascertains training, development and experience needs, alongside suitability for advancement (Tyson 2006).
- Sustained emphasis on building skills and not just abilities, partly to enable adaptability and to develop skills for future roles (Grimshaw and Jull 2007).
- Processes tailored to individuals where possible, with research highlighting that individuals have different learning styles (for example, identifying 'auditory', 'visual' and 'active' learners).
- Workers to be given an active role in their own development, with programmes for training and development featuring 'personal actions', before, during and afterwards (Mayo 2004).
- A move away from authoritarian performance appraisal in order to develop constructive manager-subordinate relationships (Tyson 2006).

### Training, development and skills: current approaches and challenges

Many of these theoretical developments have been recognised, at least in part, through changes to the management of police training and career development. Importantly, the police invest heavily in training, both in terms of resources and officer time. The police spend at least £500 million per year on training, although, perhaps revealingly, there are no exact figures on police training spending (HMIC 2005). The service is also moving towards a skills-based framework and increasing its emphasis on professional development, in particular in plans linked to the workforce modernisation agenda, although these have not yet been implemented.

## Training, development and skills: key issues and challenges

There are significant weaknesses in current development and training provision, which manifest themselves in three main areas of skill shortage, outlined below.

### Underdeveloped leadership and management skills for senior officers and staff

Although there are many excellent senior officers, the Police Service suffers a shortage of core managerial skills. Financial and resource management are important areas for improvement, and there are indications that the Service does not value these skills as highly as it should. Commendations are given to those who achieve targets irrespective of large budget over-spends, over-time costs have only recently come under control and procurement expertise remain underdeveloped (Ayling and Grabosky 2006). ‘Double crewing’ (when officers work in pairs) remains commonplace often irrespective of need, with around 80 per cent of patrols double-crewed (Knox and McKonald 2001). In a recent survey of BCU Commanders, over 60 per cent of respondents said that they did not have adequate financial training to manage their delegated budgets (Loveday and McClory 2007).

Perhaps even more importantly, police leadership skills have been repeatedly identified as an area of distinct weakness, which is of particular concern given that the police leadership will need to lead significant change programmes (including in workforce practices) over the coming years.<sup>11</sup> As the Police Skills and Standards Organisation has identified:

‘[The raising of] workforce skills needs to go hand-in-hand with improving management and leadership skills to create the right opportunities to innovate and change. Improved management and leadership capability is, therefore, a prerequisite to better workforce development.’ (Skills for Justice 2004)

### Weaknesses in specific policing specialisms

There are skills deficits for specialist functions. Skills Foresight Reports have identified a range of gaps in particular investigative and detective skills and technical, technological and information technology skills (Skills for Justice 2004).

### Skills shortages among generalist warranted officers

There are skills issues affecting generalist warranted officers at more junior ranks. Skills Foresight Reports (Skills for Justice 2004) have identified the following areas of weakness:

- Case file preparation and management skills
- Customer care and communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Forensic awareness and crime scene management skills
- Leadership and management skills, including people management skills
- Performance management skills.

There are a number of reasons for these skills gaps in the police.

1. Police recruitment and career development policies do not always encourage those with appropriate skills to enter policing careers, placing an unnecessarily heavy burden on police training and development processes.
2. Career development processes are not sufficiently tailored to individual or organisational needs.
3. Most importantly, there is no genuine culture of professional development in the police, resulting in insufficient prioritisation of development and gaps in current provision.
4. There remain important delivery issues in training and development.

We now discuss each of these reasons in more detail.

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11. This issue was highlighted repeatedly in ippr interviews and seminars and has been highlighted by leading practitioners, such as Ian Blair (Blair 2005b).

### 1. Police recruitment and career development policies do not always encourage those with appropriate skills to enter policing careers

It is unusual in both the public and private sectors to rely on internal skills development to the extent to which the Police Service does. Few officers enter policing with significant experience and only around 15 to 20 per cent of police recruits are graduates, with this proportion being relatively flat or even falling since 1995 (Bolton 2005). This compares with the fact that around 25 per cent of UK private sector workers and 44 per cent of public servants have a degree or higher vocational qualification (Back and Kessler 2007).

This situation has been caused both by the failure of accelerated development schemes and the existence of a single point of entry for warranted officers, for which recruitment requires no formal educational qualifications. Currently, all those seeking to exercise warranted powers, or simply hold warranted officer posts, must enter the Police Service as probationer Constables and, as a result of suspension of the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) in 2006, must serve as probationers on probationer pay for two years and then progress through all officer ranks. This discourages both experienced candidates and ambitious graduates with skills gained through higher formal education from joining the police. It also ignores findings in a statistical analysis of Texas law enforcement officers that show that formal educational qualifications and educational performance have a clear positive impact on police performance<sup>12</sup> (Campbell 1997). In fact, that research suggested that pre-entry qualifications had a far greater impact on performance and progression than in-service training (ibid).

The current system also ignores police research studies that have repeatedly shown that cultivating high-potential individuals for specific roles can be highly effective (Smith and Flanagan 2000). As a result, and as Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair himself has professed to recognise, failures to attract graduates present a significant issue in terms of maintaining police standards (Blair 2005a).

Despite the strain it adds to internal development and training processes, the single entry point has some intrinsic merit, and is also something to which most police officers are committed. There are clear advantages to spending a period of time 'at the coal-face' to understand day-to-day policing dilemmas and Constables frequently indicate that they have greater confidence in leaders who have had significant frontline experience when they are in difficult or dangerous situations (Rowe 2006). However, it remains the case that many of the skills essential to the successful police manager (Inspector-level and above) are qualitatively and quantitatively different from those of the successful Police Constable, and are in many ways more similar to management roles outside policing. Superintendents spend far more of their time on leadership, budgeting, resource allocation and performance management than on operational command and, given these are current areas of relative weakness in the police skill-set, something should be done to encourage bringing in ideas and experience from other sectors.

The suspension of the High Potential Development Scheme is hugely important practically but it also reflects a wider police culture that values experience over skills. It is notable that the HPDS was suspended because it was failing to achieve results, much like predecessor schemes – and it was particularly failing for high-potential graduates. Just 21.1 per cent of successful HPDS candidates were under the age of 31. Progression expectations were also not being met. The Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates was introduced in 1962 but the Home Office target for recruits to reach the position of Chief Inspector after nine years was not met until 1992.

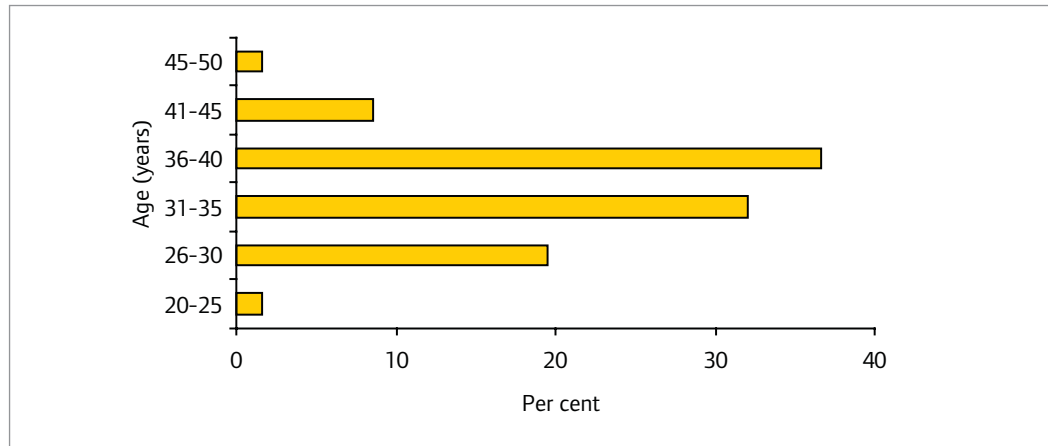
These failures do not lie purely on structures in place but also on reluctance of individuals within the service to break with organisational norms of experience requirements. ippr's own interviews

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12. There is not currently any empirical evidence on the performance of UK graduates versus non-graduates in the Police Service. However, it is notable that all other sectors highly value graduate qualification as an indication of aptitude and that more senior officers are far more likely to be graduates than those of similar length of service who have not been promoted.

particularly suggested that high-potential officers were reluctant to forward themselves for promotion because of the perception that they would be undermined in their new role by more junior (although often longer serving) officers (see Figure 7.1). This was perceived to be particularly the case for women, who felt more susceptible to challenges to their authority for other cultural reasons. Worryingly, this may indicate a police culture that somehow discourages open expressions of ambition or willingness to put in extra effort to develop and perform.

Figure 7.1.  
Proportion of  
successful High  
Potential  
Development  
Scheme applicants  
by age (%)  
Source: Public  
Expenditure  
Statistical Analysis,  
in Bolton 2005



Demands on police development and training mechanisms are not just increased by failures to bring into the service those with strong skills and experience gained elsewhere. They are also increased by the current methods for initial probationer training, which takes place wholly within the police establishment. This differs to other professions, for example teaching and medicine, where training is provided by independent institutions who provide potential professionals with a higher vocational qualification. Typically, these courses are subsidised but participants will rarely earn more than a subsistence income and often develop debts which they are expected to pay off upon gaining employment.

There are both advantages and risks to this alternative system. Advantages could include that those committed to formal learning and development are more attracted to the Police Service, and that initial training needs could be met more fully and also more cost effectively. However, it has the disadvantage of asking candidates to train without guarantee of employment, potentially creating recruitment issues.

**2. Career development processes are not sufficiently tailored to individual or organisational needs**  
The absence of specific development schemes for graduates and those with experience is indicative of the fact that career development mechanisms in the Police Service are not sufficiently tailored to individual needs. Significant talent in the Police Service is undeveloped, as indicated by the fact that less than 17 per cent of the current officers have ever been promoted (Bullock and Gunning 2007). As shown by the skills deficits identified above, there are particular weaknesses in training provision for key points of transition for police officers, and in particular for those entering senior manager roles. Among Superintendents, 62 per cent believe they have had inadequate financial training to manage budgetary responsibilities (Loveday and McClory 2007). Police officers are promoted into management positions with limited experience of the range of skills required in such roles, yet receive only limited training in these areas, as many officers recognise (Policing Today 2006).

Importantly, the current Core Leadership Development Programme for officers who have completed their probationary period comprises 16 self-managed e-learning modules and focuses primarily on improving officers' abilities to perform their current roles, with an additional focus on 'leadership skills' (Morris *et al* 2004). Senior officers are therefore highly dependent on 'on-the-job' learning and their promotion training, the quality of which has also been questioned. An HMIC Inspection of HR in Northern Ireland highlighted that 'training and development for managers in people management skills has not occurred for some time. Elements are covered in police officer promotion courses but are

not especially emphasised' (HMIC 2007). This could equally be applied to the situation in England and Wales.

Development and training are also not yet properly configured for those who wish to develop specialisms or for those with skills that the service would benefit from channelling in a specific direction. There is a growing consensus within the Police Service that a new framework of professional development is required, particularly at the Constable level, and this approach is being developed as part of workforce modernisation pilots (NWMP 2006). New specialist and/or advanced practitioner roles, outlined above, will certainly need to be supported by an appropriate career development framework, as ACPO and others recognise. The integrated and accredited competency-based framework that is currently proposed is commendable:

'To support individuals' development, more bespoke modernised learning will take account of, through accreditation, previous learning and experience, identifying and addressing the technical and leadership gaps when mapped against the individual's career plans. The Modernised Employment Framework and Strategic Career Pathways are structural tools used to achieve greater specialisation, an increase in staff mix and accreditation within the police service... All staff will be assessed against National Occupational Standards that are appropriate for their role and they will be accredited by an external awarding body.' (NWMP 2006)

### 3. There is no genuine culture of professional development in the police

However, the extent of change required to achieve the envisioned training and development programme to enable advanced practitioner roles should not be under-estimated. Currently, there is no real culture of professional development in the Police Service and this is reinforced by the fact that people management skills are weak at all levels of the organisation.

The Morris Enquiry into professional standards and employment matters in the Metropolitan Police Service found that, although line managers were generally perceived positively, 'respondents are least likely to feel that their manager is interested in their personal development with only 54 per cent stating this is the case' (NWMP 2006). This was particularly true for certain groups, as the Enquiry also found that respondents felt that access to training and development opportunities was neither fair nor equal (Morris *et al* 2004). Given historic and ongoing issues with ensuring fair treatment of women and ethnic minorities in policing, this is of particular concern. Ethnic minorities are twice as likely as white officers to resign from the Police Service and their rate of dismissal is two to three times higher. Furthermore, ethnic minorities take on average 12 months longer than white colleagues to reach the rank of Sergeant, and this includes Asians who have on average higher educational qualifications than their white counterparts (Bland *et al* 1999).

The lack of a 'professional development culture' is also suggested by complaints surrounding the bureaucracy attached to current development tools, Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs). New guidance has been issued in an attempt to ensure that PDRs are 'treated as a change management project and not as the implementation of a bureaucratic process', while both the Police Federation and the Flanagan Review of Policing have highlighted the bureaucracy arising from current PDR implementation (Skills for Justice 2006).

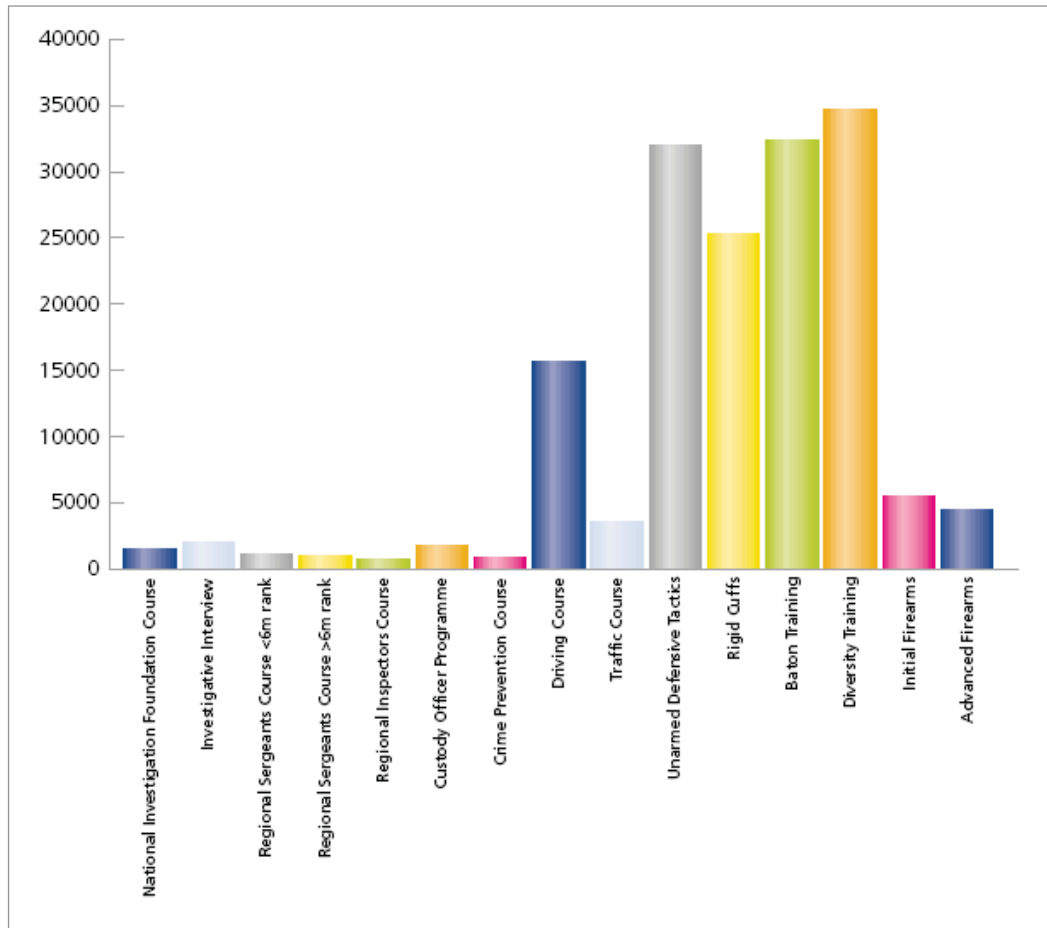
One reason for the weak culture of professional development may be that there is insufficient appreciation of just how much personnel management occurs at relatively junior police ranks. The vast majority of management is actually carried out by Sergeants, who, at this time, take the leading role in the development of over 80 per cent of police officers. The challenge of ensuring that this role is carried out properly, given the very limited experience of most Sergeants in people management, is considerable.

This reality will require far greater training in management and development for Sergeants and for Constables likely to progress into Sergeant roles. In fact, if advanced practitioners with greater management responsibilities are introduced, still more responsibility for development issues is likely to

be pushed lower down through the organisation. The transformation in training that this might need to entail is suggested by Figure 7.2, which shows that currently few workers receive formal training in people management or career development. Instead, training prioritises exercises to develop specific practical skills, and such courses are often treated as check-box exercises, rather than training that allows the development of improved general skills such as problem-solving or management.

Figure 7.2. Range of courses delivered to the Police Service, 2001-2

Source: HMIC 2002



The creation of a culture of development is also undermined by the fact that police workers appear to be operating in a culture of blame. Evidence suggests that workers feel that they will not be supported if they make mistakes and the Work Foundation found that the majority of respondents in the Metropolitan Police Service did not think they were working in a blame-free culture. In fact, only 16 per cent of respondents felt they were, resulting in one of the worst scores as pitted against Work Foundation benchmarks in the whole survey (mean score of -0.61 versus benchmark of 0.35) (Morris *et al* 2004). This is naturally partly associated with current performance management mechanisms, discussed below, but it may also be exacerbated by clear distance between ranks, who are each represented by different industrial relations bodies.

#### 4. There remain important delivery issues in training and development

The absence of a culture of development is exacerbated by more specific delivery issues too. Where provided, formal Police Service training is generally of good quality. In a 2005 Adult Learning Inspectorate inspection, only four per cent of lessons observed were graded unsatisfactory and 67 per cent rated good or better (HMIC 2005). This is encouraging and suggests that trainers used, either internal or external, are adequately trained, contrary to perceptions in some quarters and despite the high proportion of training given by police Constables themselves (Bolton 2005).

However, evidence suggests that despite a concerted effort to improve training since 2001, ‘the scale of improvement is still not considered sufficient and a great deal of work remains to be undertaken’

(HMIC 2005). In fact, the best value HMIC inspections in 2005 showed that in terms of the general quality of training services being provided, 10 were poor, 17 were fair, 16 were good and none were excellent, although prospects for improvement were more promising. The Morris Review has shown that officers themselves, and particularly senior officers, feel that they have insufficient opportunities for training and development (Morris *et al* 2004).

Issues in training provision for police officers and staff include:

- Variable types and quality of training across and within forces, with some not providing training across all areas, although training provision itself (that is, the teaching) is generally of a good standard.
- Insufficient focus on cost effectiveness, with limited sharing of resources and expertise across forces.
- Not enough training for staff.

One of the drivers of performance variability is the failure to harmonise training policy and strategy across regions and align to the National Training Strategy, outlined in 2001. As Her Majesty's Inspectorate observed, progress in ensuring best practices are shared across forces has been limited, measures taken have 'not led to a harmonisation of policy' and 'practice in this area is generally considered to be a local issue' (HMIC 2005). In addition to performance variation, local approaches have meant that there has been no real progress on resource-sharing to increase training effectiveness.

There is evidence that some specific training sessions are not provided as a result of shortages of specific in-force training expertise and the HMIC indicated that the 1989 Audit Commission finding remained true:

'Many forces have considerable excess capacity in their training schools. Utilisation levels of around 70 per cent residential and 30 per cent classroom are typical... There needs to be some planned rationalisation of facilities.'  
(HMIC 2005)

Where there has been collaboration in training provision between forces, it has largely been on a case by case basis, and typically only to overcome the most acute training issues, such as the absence of a trainer equipped to train on firearms procedures, rather than to improve overall cost effectiveness.

In this context, recent changes to probationer training must be managed with extreme care. Previously, probationers received 18 weeks of centrally-delivered training, mixing classroom and practical training, followed by 10 weeks of street training duties. However, it was felt both that this approach placed insufficient focus on community engagement and that it gave probationers insufficient 'real-life' experience during the training period. As a consequence, and after trialling, in 2007 a new Initial Police Learning and Development Programme reduced the period of centrally-delivered training to just five weeks, followed by 25 weeks of training delivered at BCU level.

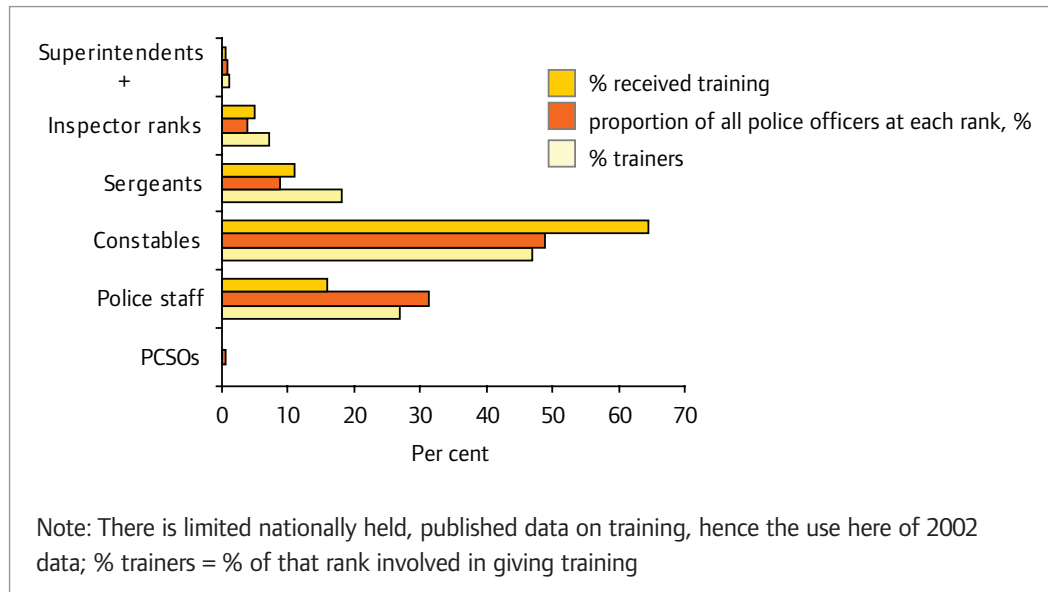
Apart from concerns regarding the existence of local BCU capability and evidence of poor capability and resource-sharing mechanisms between forces and BCUs, it should be noted that, if not managed carefully, this development could undermine the potential of the police leadership to promote cultural and attitudinal change such as increased focus on customer care and communication. New recruits would quickly be exposed to existing police attitudes and a challenging working environment. In interviews, new recruits revealed the existence of a working environment in BCUs that was unforgiving of mistakes and, as a result, there was genuine concern that a shortened central training provision would undermine recruits' confidence. It is also arguable that the reduction in the formal, centralised element of probationer training sends a signal to recruits and potential recruits that formal learning is not as important as might be thought. Overall, the success of this new probationer training strategy depends more than ever on creating a police culture that is fully supportive of learning and development.

The training of staff has been highlighted as an area for development by HMIC and the Police Skills and Standards Organisation. As some staff roles are less complex, we would expect levels of training

provided to be somewhat lower overall than for warranted officers but it is still unsatisfactory that while staff constitute a third of the police family, they receive only around 16 per cent of all training delivered within the Police Service (see Figure 7.3) (Bolton 2005). There is also a lack of clear, well-defined development structures for staff, which results in far higher levels of wastage than for warranted officers, often to the detriment of overall service levels.

Figure 7.3.  
Training  
participation by  
rank, 2002

Source: HMIC data  
2002/3, in Bolton  
2005



### Training, development and skills: summary of options for reform

There is a need to:

- Build a culture of development and learning within the Police Service, ensuring that individuals are aware of the development opportunities open to them and are encouraged to continually develop. Within this are the needs to:
  - Provide clear leadership messages on the importance of continual development and to create a learning organisation; and communicate that mistakes during probationary periods and for those new to a role are learning experiences, and that all people in the organisation should support learning rather than focus on past mistakes.
  - Ensure greater training in people management and people development at all levels of the organisation, including Constable level.
  - Focus intensely on the role of Sergeant to ensure that this rank is appropriately trained and supported to prioritise the development of officers working to them.
  - Place greater emphasis on the close and supportive interactions between workers and line managers rather than check-box training and development exercises to meet reporting requirements.
- Pursue the accreditation and professional development programme as set out by ACPO and the NPIA. This agenda has taken time to materialise and momentum should not be lost. Within this:
  - Accredited specialist roles should be pursued to facilitate development
  - Staff career paths should be sufficiently prioritised and integrated within this programme.
- Introduce a new high-performer accelerated-development scheme as a matter of urgency. This scheme should allow development to be tailored to individuals and take into account variations in skills and experience. It may be sensible to consider as many as three separate schemes: one for graduates, one for staff roles and another for experienced hires with significant management experience. For the latter, time 'on the beat' could be reduced to around six to twelve months.

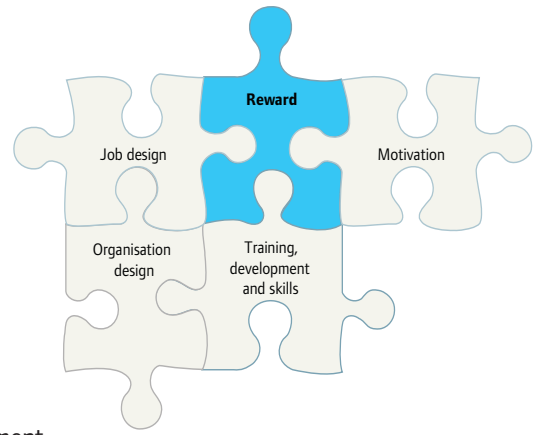
Implementing such a scheme will require consideration of how to create sufficient opportunities for high-potential joiners, including, potentially, measures to facilitate increased exit rates from the Police Service.

- Commission a review into the option of introducing a professional policing qualification equivalent to the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.
- Continue to drive harmonisation of training policy to address variable provision and gaps. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that forces are sufficiently supported for their increased responsibilities in probationer training. Again, there is a particular need to create a supportive learning environment for recruits.

### **Training, development and skills: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- A development agenda based on tailored career paths naturally requires that appropriate specialist roles are available and clearly defined, and skills required in those roles made clear throughout the organisation.
- Reward must be aligned with this skills development agenda. If this is done it will allow the Police Service to more effectively encourage workers to pursue career paths that will meet organisational needs – while ensuring that workers in difficult areas of policing are appropriately recognised.
- Effective career development opportunities and mechanisms open to all should motivate workers but care will need to be taken to ensure that those who do not choose to specialise are not marginalised from the workforce.
- It may be necessary to bolster HR capability and capacity in order to implement a change of this magnitude.

## 8. Rewarding the Police Service



### Theory

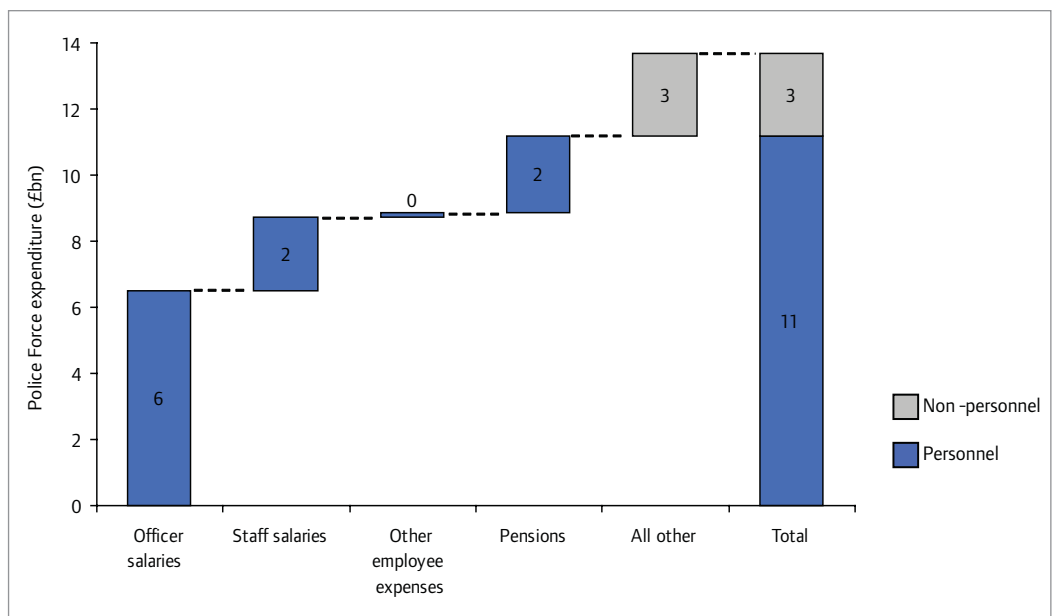
In this section the term reward is used to cover standard financial remuneration mechanisms such as pay and pension but also non-financial employment rewards, for example job security. Management practices that are focused primarily on motivating workers to be more productive through incentives or penalties are covered in Section 9 on motivation that follows.

The theory surrounding appropriate reward mechanisms has tended to be dominated by economic literature, which has focused within the framework of supply and demand. Wages are set (or taken) by employers with the aim being to pay the minimum that is required to recruit and retain staff with the level of skills and expertise demanded by the organisation. Of course, the principle of fairness also enters theory and practice in reward systems and where supply of workers far exceeds demand, for example during periods of high unemployment, progressive governments typically intervene to protect workers from exploitation, for example through social security benefits and minimum wage programmes. Governments also extend fairness principles beyond setting social minimums through redistributive taxation.

For the purposes of this discussion of police reward, however, it is not necessary to enter into such complex and political areas. Instead we can assume that such fairness principles should be met through wider government action that affects all UK workers, while recognising the need for the public sector to set a clear example of ethical employment practice to all employers (Back and Kessler 2007). Similarly, there is little need to devote significant time to the concept of ‘efficiency wages’, which suggests that pay levels can impact overall performance. Evidence suggests that this concept is not highly relevant for the issue of police reward. A range of studies has found some evidence of ‘efficiency wages’ but effects are typically found only for the most poorly paid roles (Guthrie 2007). What slight effects are found are typically the result of ‘sorting effects’, whereby pay at above-market rates increases competition for roles and allows recruiters to select more able candidates.

Nonetheless, reward is an issue of huge importance to the Police Service. Spending on reward constitutes the vast majority of police spend, at over 80 per cent of total expenditure in 2005/6 (see Figure 8.1), while changes to reward arrangements can send certain signals and potentially impact

Figure 8.1. Police Force expenditure, 2005-6 (actuals)  
Source: CIPFA 2006



workforce morale. Reward is one of the primary mechanisms that allows the Police Service to influence the number of people wanting police careers – and it also offers a way of controlling demand for specific roles internally. Reward structures can also increase the number of people who wish to develop the skills that the Police Service needs, and provide a means of ensuring that difficult jobs are distributed fairly or staffed by the most able personnel.

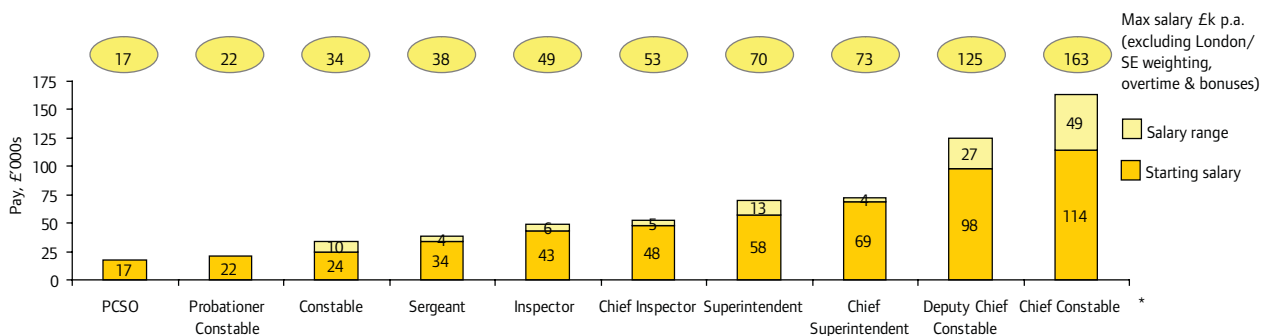
**Reward: current approaches**

Currently, reward in the Police Service is based primarily on length of service rather than on skills and performance or the difficulty of the role performed. Movement through ranks can be slow and few officers progress beyond Sergeant or Inspector level, meaning that much of the workforce stays at one rank, and sometimes performs a role that does not change very much, for long periods.

However, pay increases irrespective of career development or performance. Constables receive annual tenure-related increments of between 2 and 6 per cent per year for the first 10 years of service, before the above-inflation impact of pay settlements (PNB Circular 2007). In fact, in effect, pay increases continue for beyond ten years. This is owing to the fact that Competency Related Threshold Payments, which came into effect in 2003, have been made available only to officers at the top of their payscales and are given to the vast majority of this group, undermining the goals of the scheme. Similarly, more senior ranks receive tenure-related increments, typically annually for three to five years, although performance bonuses exist for Superintendent ranks and above.

Figure 8.2. Police pay, per year

Source: Police Negotiating Board Circular, 06/06; Police Arbitration Tribunal 2007



Notes: \* Excludes Metropolitan Police service.

Pay as at January 2008; figures excludes competency threshold payments of £1,095 for ranks up to Superintendent on highest pay bands and performance-related pay for Superintendents and above; figures also exclude any overtime payments

**Reward: key issues and challenges**

There are a range of problems with current police reward arrangements:

- Current pay arrangements based on length of service do not encourage the development of skills that are much needed in policing.
- Pay structures deter those from outside policing from pursuing police careers.
- Pay does not reward those performing the most difficult or dangerous roles.
- Pay for Constables is high, creating barriers to exit for those who find themselves unsuited to their role.
- Current reward mechanisms are not set up in a way that supports the specialisation agenda.

These challenges are discussed below.

### **Pay arrangement based on length of service do not encourage the development of skills that are much needed in policing**

It might appear from what we have shown above that there is effectively no payment for skills and competency in policing at Constable level. However, this is not precisely the case. There is naturally value in experience, and it is clear that the average probationer in his or her first year will not perform as well as an officer with more experience. Length of service may be an appropriate proxy for performance in some cases, not least because performance measurement can be complex, and add unnecessary pressures to those in early years of service.

However, while this may be true for initial years, the argument for beyond three to five years becomes extremely tenuous. It is far from clear that an officer with five years' experience will perform worse than one with ten years' experience – in fact, many Sergeants or Inspectors manage individuals with longer tenure than their own. (It is of interest that owing to competency thresholds, a long-serving Constable can now earn more than his or her Sergeant [PNB Circular 2006]). Such a system reduces incentives for progression, as officers taking on significant responsibility gain limited additional compensation. It is also out of line with systems in other public services, which are increasingly moving away from tenure-based pay, as is the overall job market (see Box 8.1).

#### **Box 8.1 Benchmarks: pay structures in other public services (as at February, 2008)**

**Prison officers:** Starting salary for prison officers outside London is £17,744 p.a.. All training takes place at the expense of the service after entry. Salary progression is annual, based on performance. Promotion is based on performance and aptitude for more senior roles. (HMPS 2008)

**Firefighters:** Starting salary for trainee firefighters outside London is £20,396 p.a.. All training takes place at the expense of the service after entry, although some areas require trainees to pay a bond which is refundable in the case of early exit from the service. Salary progression to 'Development' firefighter and 'Competent' firefighter is then based on training and competency. Promotion is based on performance and aptitude for more senior roles. (UK Fire Service 2008)

**Nurses:** Starting salaries for graduate/diplomate nurses outside London are around £19,166 p.a.. These nurses are trained prior to entering the NHS. Salary progression is based on movement through a pay grade system, with progression for those who have performed competently and demonstrate the specific skills expected at the next job grade. In addition, there are annual pay increases within pay bands, although these increases can be withdrawn or deferred in reaction to poor performance. (NHS Staff Council 2007)

**Teachers:** Starting salaries for graduate, newly-qualified teachers outside London are £20,133 p.a.. Additional pay can be earned for taking on additional responsibilities ('responsibility payments'). There are five main pay scales in teaching: Teacher, Advanced Skills Teacher, Excellent Teacher, Leadership Group and Headteacher. Progression between pay scales depends on skills, competency and aptitude for next-level roles. Within the teacher pay scale, pay also increases each year for the first five years of service. (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008)

Note: All public servants also negotiate annual pay increases with government. Typically, these increases reflect inflation, shifting supply and demand for roles in the sector, and government spending plans.

### **Pay structures deter talented and skilled individuals outside policing from pursuing police careers**

Because they do not reward specific skills, police pay structures act to discourage experienced and skilled workers from other sectors from pursuing a police career. While a lack of progression opportunities is equally significant, potential applicants are deterred from joining a police organisation that does not recognise or reward past skills and experience. Those who have already performed well in other occupations are often required to take significant pay cuts in order to enter policing and will have to work alongside officers with less overall work experience but who are paid far more than them.

There are distinct advantages to differential entry pay-bands like those that exist in most occupations, including in public sector environments such as the civil service. Differential pay both provides a

financial incentive to skilled professionals who wish to join the Service and sends positive signals, indicating to potential applicants that their skills are recognised. Currently, qualifications and experience are marginally factored into the recruitment process – but are otherwise unrewarded. This contrasts with practices elsewhere, both outside the UK and in other areas of the UK public sector. For example, starting salaries for new recruits at the Los Angeles Police Department are not universal but instead cover quite a wide range, depending on qualifications and skills brought to the service, from around US\$52,638 to \$59,793<sup>13</sup> (LAPD 2007). And in the UK civil service, recruits are paid depending on skills and experience through a system of banding, with the highest available salary within a band typically being 25 per cent more than the lowest.

#### **Pay does not reward those performing the most difficult or dangerous roles**

In addition to reward being at best very tenuously related to skills or performance, the reward system appears still more unsatisfactory when considering the nature of work that is undertaken by different officers. Currently, it is commonly less well-paid officers who perform roles in the most dangerous and difficult working environments, for example emergency response, often without appropriate supervision and support from more experienced or senior officers (Chatterton and Bingham 2006). This has adverse consequences for service delivery, which senior officers find difficult to address without demoralising officers by placing them in roles in which they do not wish to work. It can also penalise the most accommodating officers or those who are most easily pressured into working in less desirable roles, which is at odds with principles of fairness.

Similarly, reward structures fail to encourage the most able police leaders to take on the most difficult challenges. BCU Commanders are paid the same irrespective of the number of officers or type of challenges in their BCU, which in some cases leads to significant disparities in pay and responsibility. For example, a BCU Commander of Bristol or Sheffield might command a similar number of officers to Warwickshire's Chief Constable but could theoretically receive only half of his or her remuneration. This indicates that pay progression to Chief Superintendent rank may be too flat, while pay progression from Chief Superintendent to Chief Constable is arguably too steep.

This system creates perverse incentives for Superintendents, who could be discouraged from more difficult BCU posts where it is harder to point to low levels of crime or an absence of high profile incidents as a sign of 'success'. In addition, it also seems strange that to advance to higher levels of pay or superiority, BCU Commanders typically move into force-level Assistant Chief Constable or Deputy Chief Constable roles, where responsibilities and potential impact can be less apparent. Until recently some of these issues also existed for Chief Constables. However, apart from a number of posts where individuals' historic pay agreements have been maintained as a temporary measure, Chief Constables are now paid differentially based on the difficulty of their role and the number of officers under their command.

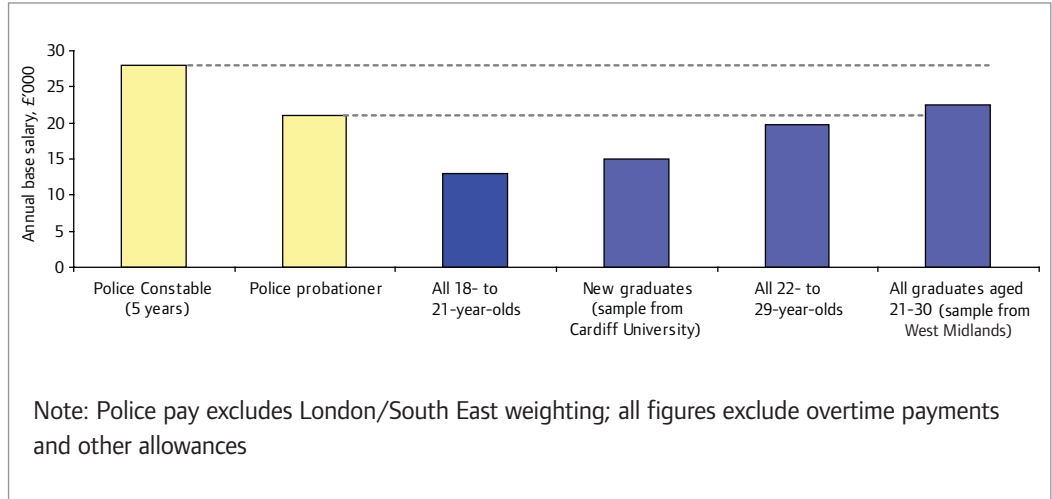
#### **Pay for Constables is high, creating barriers to exit for those who find themselves unsuited to their role**

Reward for police officers could be described as somewhat high in relation to comparable opportunities in the market, undermining efficiency but meaning it can be an attractive employment option. Police starting salary levels are best examined by comparing labour market earnings opportunities. Entry-level police salaries outside London and the South East are £21,009 and this rises to £27,049 in London, which can be complemented with overtime payments at between one-and-a-half and three times the base hourly rate, travel allowances and a generous final salary pension scheme. Figure 8.3 gives an indication of how police salaries compare with others, including opportunities for those with similar educational attainment to that of typical police recruits. It is worth noting that joining the police requires no formal qualifications and selection is based on a written examination testing basic literacy, numeracy and logic, and on role play exercises conducted at an assessment centre.

13. Degree uplift of \$4,260 plus 2.75-5.5 per cent premium for language skills.

Figure 8.3. Police salaries compared with average salaries for non-police, graduates and non-graduates

Source: Police Negotiating Board Circular, 06/06, 2006; Labour Force Survey 2003, adjusted to 2006 levels; HESA/ Sunday Times Good University Guide 2006



Naturally, there are elements of the police role that are unique and need to be compensated. For example, although pay does not officially include compensation for being put in ‘danger’, it is logical that danger is recognised. Equally, compensation should reflect that a police officer has additional constitutional obligations to be available at short notice if necessary. However, it is arguable that this latter obligation is well compensated for: officers given less than five days’ notice of additional work requirements are compensated at double normal daily rates and if notice is given between five and 15 days before changes to schedule, at one-and-a-half times the daily rate. In fact, if officers are obliged to work on public holidays with less than eight days notice, they are entitled to be paid double time and to receive an additional day in lieu.

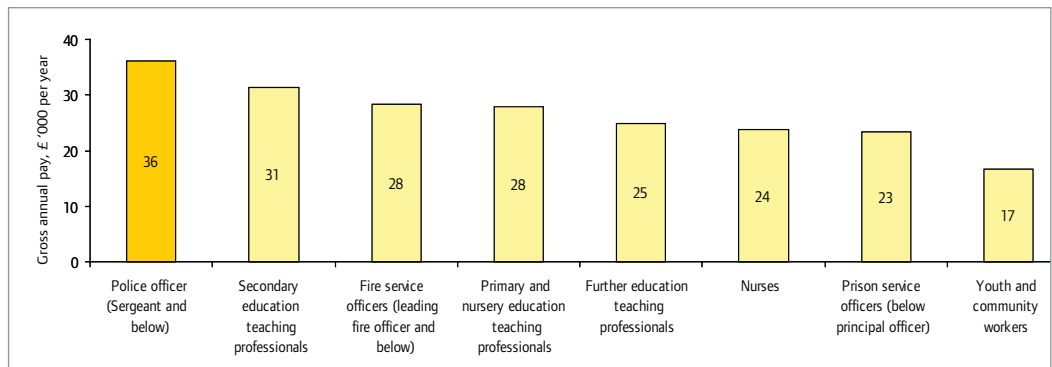
These additional compensations mean that police starting pay is somewhat high, even compared with professions with more demanding entry requirements or higher risks of fatal injury, for example the fire service and teaching professions. Certainly, there has been no shortage of applicants for recently created police officer roles, despite the unhelpful stop-start recruitment schemes instigated by government (Metropolitan Police 2007, TDA 2007).

However, much more important than salary level itself is the fact that the police pay system rewards length of service, leading to high average salaries at relatively junior ranks, particularly compared with other professions (see Figure 8.4). By rewarding length of service rather than performance or skills, the current police pay system creates barriers to exit from the Service for those who find themselves unsuited to police work and/or demotivated. This is because the labour market in general rewards skills and responsibility levels rather than length of service, meaning that officers find themselves unable to find roles outside policing without taking a considerable pay-cut.

While the service should do all it can to avoid losing officers who have been trained and are performing well, all organisations should accept that some recruits will not be suited to their job and will lose motivation, bringing down overall workforce performance and morale. Current pay structures may be preventing officers in this position from moving onto more rewarding careers outside the service and consequently limiting the opportunities for high performers within the service to progress.

Figure 8.4. Gross annual pay, by occupation

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2007



Until recently, police pension arrangements exacerbated barriers to exit for those who felt they were no longer suited to a career in policing. The pension scheme for most serving officers was set up in 1987 (the Police Pension Scheme, PPS) and it offered annual pension of two-thirds of final salary with an option to commute 25 per cent of the pension into a tax-free lump sum (Home Office 2007c). This scheme also had a built-in penalty for early exit due to the fact that the pension accrued at two rates: at 1/60 of final salary for the first 20 years of service and at 2/60 for the remaining 10 years.

Significant changes have now been made to this scheme for those joining the Police Service after April 2006. The New Police Pension Scheme (NPPS) has a single rate of accrual (1/70 final salary per annum) and provides a pension income of half of final salary plus a lump-sum payment of four times the annual payment. Additionally, while both schemes created perverse incentives for officers to leave the service immediately on reaching pensionable age (initially at just 49 years of age), measures have now been taken to avoid unnecessary staff wastage through a '30+' scheme, which allows officers to stay on if they wish to and if their force makes a valid business case for retention (NPIA 2007).

Of course, it is important to recognise that generous terms and conditions of employment are a mechanism for retention but current 'wastage rates' (the proportion of all officers leaving forces each year as a result of retirement, transfer, resignation and dismissal) in the Police Service of around 6 per cent compare very favourably to other sectors, where wastage is around 18 per cent across sectors and around 15 per cent for central and local government<sup>14</sup> (Cooper and Ingram 2004). In addition, in the Police Service resignations account for only just over 20 per cent of all wastage, equating to a wastage excluding retiring and transferring staff of around 1 per cent. Furthermore, these resignations are highly skewed to those in the first years of their police careers who find that they are unsuited to the profession (Cooper and Ingram 2004).

It is also the case that pay in the public sector is generally found to be a retention issue only if workers are demoralised for other reasons (Audit Commission 2002). This is reflected in exit surveys of those leaving policing, where pay does not feature as one of the top five reasons for leaving the service and, in fact, the majority of those resigning considered pay, benefits and promotion prospects in their new employment to be less favourable than in the Police Service (Cooper and Ingram 2004).

### **Current reward mechanisms are not set up in a way that supports specialisation**

Workforce modernisation creates a new opportunity to reform reward structures to ensure that they reward skills and performance, are matched to the role performed and do not create insurmountable barriers to exit for those who find themselves unsuited to a career in policing. In fact, as ACPO notes, a revised reward system is vital to the success of the workforce modernisation:

'For these tools to function properly and release the potential benefits of these concepts, investment must be made in three critical workforce processes: greater alignment of the terms and conditions for police officers and staff, a robust performance appraisal system and strategic succession planning.' (NWMP 2006)

However, delivering a reformed reward system to enable workforce modernisation will entail overcoming significant challenges, although it should be noted that other professions, such as nursing, have radically reformed pay structures over recent years (NHS Staff Council 2007). Importantly, a revised reward system is likely to create inflationary wage pressures in policing: rewarding higher levels of skills, or more challenging roles will involve additional spending, unless pay holds or cuts are enacted elsewhere.

As real reductions in pay are proven to be extremely damaging for morale, and consequently performance, it will be necessary to find appropriate mechanisms for managing changes, ensuring that

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14. Numerous studies have shown that higher wages improve recruitment and retention. Examples from Holmes and Zellner are quoted in Guthrie 2007.

the spirit of existing agreements between government and officers and staff is maintained. Mechanisms for this might include applying changes to incoming personnel only (although this adds the complexity of a two-tier system) or transparently demonstrating that overall pay levels at each rank are remaining unchanged but shifting distribution of pay to a skills-based system, potentially by giving lower annual pay awards or, more radically, removing pay increments based on length of service after, for example, three to five years.

Of course, the latter approach again risks damaging morale without total transparency to prove that overall reward funding is maintained and would need to avoid any breaches of employment law. Furthermore, the current pension system would need to be reformed: as currently configured, the system would discourage officers from moving into less demanding or specialised roles as they progressed towards retirement because officers would be unlikely to want to sacrifice long-term pension income even if they wished to improve their work-life balance.

Managing changes of this magnitude would also put extreme pressure on the current negotiating machinery, which is already undergoing an independent review led by Sir Clive Booth. There are a number of difficult decisions to be made here, including whether there is a need to move from national pay negotiations to a local apparatus, whether current systems are correct to treat officers and staff differently and whether the ranks representational system is inappropriately complex. Regarding regional pay negotiations, risks potentially outweigh the benefits of creating a pay structure that is fairer across regions. This is partly because of the bureaucratic duplication of creating multiple negotiating bodies and partly because the nature of the police workforce would be very likely to generate still more inflationary wage pressures in a regionalised system; the police workforce is currently highly static following a period of rapid recruitment.

Given spending and cost pressures, there is unlikely to be a recruitment drive while Police Service wastage, as noted above, is extremely low. The effect of such low wastage has been to create a fixed pool of labour, which has historically put the workforce in a more powerful negotiating position (Back and Kessler 2007). It is highly likely that regionalised negotiating machinery would therefore result in police forces 'bidding' for officers with greater skills and experience and we may also see the escalation effect noticed in other regionalised negotiating systems, for example for railway drivers. The incorporation of police staff into current negotiating machinery may also add complexity but may be desirable, in principle, as it might symbolise improved integration of staff within the policing family.

### **Reward: options for reform**

- **Pay should be more tied to skills and roles rather than length of service.** This could be achieved by pay bands for each rank, with pay uplifts for specific skills and for specific roles. Tenure-related increments beyond two, or at most five, years could be ended and the current Competency Related Threshold Payments could be scrapped. This would both ensure fairer rewards and enable the police to manage demand and supply of roles internally – avoiding the current situation of less experienced workers being often placed in the most stressful and challenging roles. Basic Command Unit Commanders could be paid based on the responsibilities that managing their BCU entails, as Chief Constables are.

Given the potential impact on police morale and behaviour of such changes, it will be essential to ensure officers play an active role in jointly planning the revisions and it may also be helpful to trial new approaches in specific areas.

- **A revised pension system that enables earlier exit from the Police Service without penalties could be introduced.** The pension scheme could also move away from the final salary system, in order to allow officers to move into less demanding (and well-paid) roles towards the end of their careers if desired for work-life balance or other reasons. One alternative would be a pensionable income based on average career salary or simply annual contribution levels by workers and the service. This scheme could also potentially be used as a means of enabling demotivated officers whose services are no longer essential to the service to leave the Police Service early if desired,

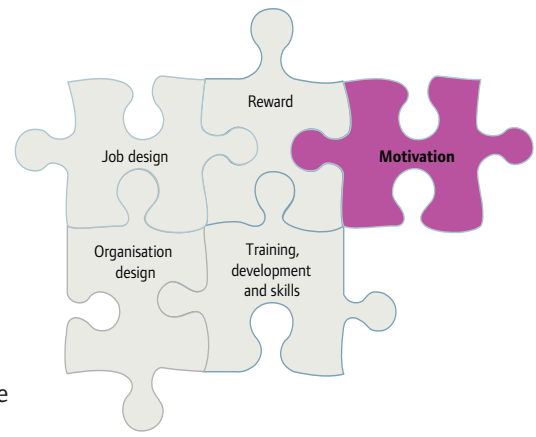
potentially after 15 years of service, as in the army. Again, changes will need to be carefully managed but should certainly be implemented for incoming officers and staff.

- **There should be careful management of inflationary wage pressures.** Rewarding skills and performance will create upward pay pressure that will need to be counterbalanced if the Police Service is to remain within current spending thresholds or at current staffing levels. This will be extremely problematic and will require an open and frank discussion about how best to achieve the new system affordably. One potential mechanism to facilitate negotiations could be to keep total pay at each rank the same (including whatever inflation measure is agreed) but to distribute differently within ranks. Another way to implement changes would be to apply them only to incoming personnel, although this would clearly slow down the potential impact of changes and add complexity to the existing system. Real pay cuts should be avoided at all costs owing to their debilitating impact on organisational effectiveness (Armstrong 2007).
- **Changes to pay structures should be anticipated and reflected in any changes to the current negotiating machinery,** which is being investigated by Sir Clive Booth.
- **The tenure-related pay structure should be checked to ensure it is compliant with employment law,** in order to avoid unnecessary legal costs.

### **Reward: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- A variable pay system where skills and experience are rewarded requires less focus on achieving performance through other performance-related incentives.
- The removal of tenure-related increments could combine with a supportive career transition process to increase voluntary exit of poor performers, reducing reliance on aggressive performance management.

## 9. Motivation in policing



This section focuses predominantly on police policies and practices aimed directly at motivating officers to deliver improved performance, which are typically focused on changing the rewards for achieving particular goals. It will also examine a range of issues that are currently having a negative impact on police motivation, for example high levels of bureaucracy, where these are not fully covered in other sections of this paper.

### Theory

Motivation levels depend on three factors: the extent to which goals are valued, the energy required to achieve goals and the probability that goals will be achieved (Tyson and Jackson 1992). Goals are valued both as a result of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction from goal achievement. *Intrinsic* satisfaction depends on the innate value attached to achieving the goal, in particular whether the goal is perceived as a ‘good’ but also as a result of general human satisfaction from completing any task (Tyson 2006). *Extrinsic* satisfaction depends on direct rewards to the individual as a result of their efforts, for example increased compensation, status or career progression.

As seen throughout this paper, almost any aspect of policy can affect workforce motivation. Changed career development mechanisms could affect the perceived or real value of improved performance, changed team structures could affect the energy required to achieve goals, and increased specialisation could affect the probability that goals could be achieved.

Ensuring that workers are motivated is essential to delivering improved performance, particularly in certain areas. Theorists are nearly unanimous in the view that workforce motivation policies and practices can have a dramatic impact on levels of performance and productivity (for example, Baron and Kreps 1999). Furthermore, motivational methods are also an important tool for maintaining workforce morale, which in turn can have positive impact on performance. Harter *et al* found correlations between overall employee satisfaction and engagement and certain measures of performance: in rank order, customer satisfaction, loyalty, employee turnover, safety, productivity and profitability (Purcell and Kinnie 2007).

### Current approaches to promoting motivation in the Police Service

There are a range of policies intended to improve Police Service motivation. The current framework for performance management – Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) – is based on nationally defined targets and performance comparisons between ‘most similar’ police forces. These targets focus on how much crime is ‘cleared up’ (through targets for bringing offenders to justice) but also include ‘ceiling targets’ to keep specific recorded crimes under certain levels, as well as some limited performance measures based on public satisfaction indicators. Forces are also inspected by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of the Constabulary (HMIC) and, where they are found to be underperforming, are supported through interventions from the Home Office Police Standards Unit.

Strong performance is rewarded through performance bonuses to some senior officers (not all have chosen to accept performance pay, feeling that it undermines their status as public servants), increased government funding and recognition. Poor performance is sanctioned through interventions and, theoretically, poor performing Chief Constables can be dismissed.

In addition to this performance management framework, recent initiatives have attempted to generate increased performance pressures through ‘answerability’ to the public at a local level, for example by requiring officers to respond to citizens forums, or through relationships with local authority staff in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Further pressures have been generated for civilian staff through the increased use of outsourcing for ‘non-core’ policing functions, including processing

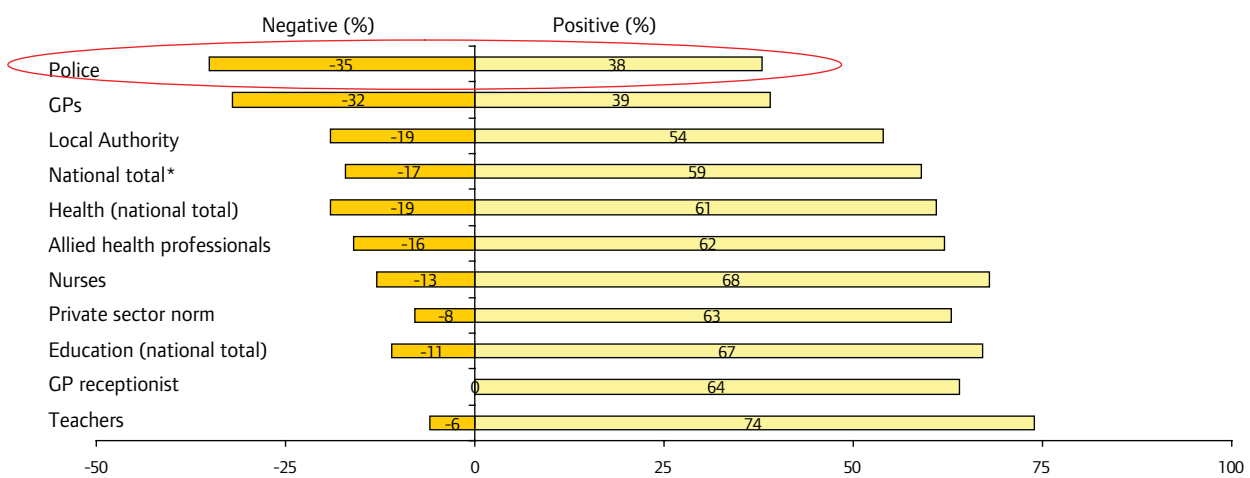
functions but also, more recently, custody suite management (overseeing the booking in and care of those held in custody). Staff are aware that they must provide services effectively and efficiently while a growing number of private providers compete to provide better service at lower cost.

### Motivation: key issues and challenges

Despite the above efforts to increase motivation in the Police Service, performance and productivity challenges suggest that motivational tools are not achieving desired results and there are indications that police morale is poor. Importantly, many police appear to have little pride in their organisation, and are the public servants most likely to speak negatively about service levels (see Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1. Positive and negative opinions of services provided by employees

Source: MORI, October 2007



Notes: \*all workers in the survey (public and private sector)

From responses to question: 'Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak about the services your organisation provides?'

There is further evidence that motivation and morale are low; for example, only 52 per cent of Metropolitan Police Service workers were 'satisfied' with their current job in 2003 (Morris *et al* 2004). International evidence suggests this may partly be driven by the existence of barriers to exit from the Police Service described above, in particular tenure-based pay and historic pension arrangements. This is because where barriers to exit exist, some officers will remain in service for financial reasons even when they are unhappy or unsuited to the police role, with adverse consequences for their own morale and also for the morale of fellow officers.

A recent study of Norwegian police forces (where barriers to exit are comparable to those in the UK) sought to understand the relationship between a range of factors and officer motivation (Burke and Mikkelsen 2006). This analysis identified a group of 'plateaued' officers (those who have served for 15 years or more without promotion). On average, these officers perceived themselves to be less influential, had less freedom, felt their role had less meaning and had significantly lower job satisfaction than other officers. Using the same criteria, around a third of police Constables in the UK fall within this 'plateaued' group, presenting a considerable challenge for police management.

The main weaknesses of current motivational approaches in policing are as follows:

- The current national performance management system is creating perverse incentives and undermining police morale.
- Individual performance incentives and sanctions are poorly designed and applied.

- Bureaucracy is undermining the intrinsic rewards of the police role.
- Poor police working conditions are frustrating police workers and they undermine efficiency.

#### **Perverse incentives created by the national performance management system**

Of recent initiatives to increase performance pressures, it is undoubtedly the 'top-down' performance management framework that has had most impact. The Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) has been extremely effective in redirecting police efforts and targets have cascaded through the police system to become engrained in the daily lives of frontline officers.

PPAF currently attempts to improve police performance against the following core objectives of the police: bringing offenders to justice, reducing crime, ensuring responsiveness to public priorities, and maintaining procedural correctness and fairness. Of course, a nationally-based target framework is not the only way to increase performance against these aims and alternative pressures, such as more direct accountability to local citizens, will be considered in ippr's upcoming report on the future of policing. Nonetheless, there are two clear and well-documented problems with the current performance management framework, which we discuss in more detail below:

- Insufficient emphasis on actual crime levels
- Insufficient checks and balances to ensure procedural correctness and the maintenance of professional ethics.

These also apply to the revised performance management framework, Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS), which is to be implemented in 2008.

#### **Insufficient emphasis on actual crime levels**

The public believe that reducing crime should be the number one priority for policing, and lower crime levels minimise the social and economic costs of crime and are the strongest determinant of reducing fear of crime and improving feelings of safety. However, despite this, PPAF currently places only limited emphasis on actual crime levels, through ceiling targets for recorded crimes.

There are two main reasons for this. First, there are inherent difficulties in measuring crime levels. While the British Crime Survey provides accurate annual crime data through in-depth victim surveys, which is reliable at a force level, the only more frequent and locally available data is based on crimes recorded by the police rather than total crime. This is problematic as it leaves the police with control of the measurement mechanisms on which their success is based, encouraging 'gaming' or under-reporting.

The measurement mechanism can also be misleading. Improved policing quality could actually lead to increases in recorded crime, because a public that is more confident in the police is more likely to report crime, inflating recorded crime figures. This is particularly true where the only incentive to report crime is in order to ensure the perpetrator is found and punished or prevented from reoffending – which is essentially the case for all crimes except those where victims are required to lodge police reports for insurance or other regulatory purposes.

Second, crime trends have multiple causes and many of the levers for reducing crime are outside of police control, and, in this context, reluctance to give the police full responsibility for overall crime levels is understandable. Most current evidence points to the fact that crime levels are driven by factors that are predominantly outside direct police control. For example, Home Office modelling shows that around half of all changes in acquisitive crime levels in the past years may have been the result of economic and demographic factors, while the most cost-effective crime reduction programmes have been shown to be supportive of early-years interventions for those at high risk of falling into criminality. In terms of situational crime prevention, home security devices are highly effective (houses with home security are nearly ten times less likely to be burgled) while the

introduction of chip and pin has led to dramatic falls in levels of credit card fraud (Walker *et al* 2007). Local government action, such as changes to licensing conditions and improved street-lighting, has also proven an effective way of targeting crime 'hot spots' locally.

However, difficulties of measurement and the lack of police control of all crime levers should not prevent an increased emphasis on reducing crime within the performance framework. First, there is sufficient data to measure performance at force level annually based on actual (victim reported) crime data, and an expansion of the British Crime Survey could make this data reliable at a more local level. Second, police interventions can be highly effective at controlling crime, in addition to bringing offenders to justice. For example, patrolling of crime 'hot spots' significantly reduces crime in targeted areas and does not simply displace crimes to other areas (Sherman *et al* 1998), and there is strong evidence that increasing the probability of offenders being caught and punished also reduces offending rates (Grove and MacLeod 2006).

As importantly, the police often have a better understanding of crime problems than other agencies that hold levers to reduce crime. For example, the police are most likely to know which pubs or clubs are strongly associated with disorder or which streets have an unexpectedly high level of night-time muggings, even if it is the local authorities that can place licensing restrictions on premises to ensure responsible licensee behaviour or improve street-lighting. It is based on this fact that the Government has encouraged increased partnership working between police and other agencies, for example through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and local authority Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets for crime. It is also, in part, recognised through the new APACS performance management framework that increases the proportion of joint local authority and police targets. Such changes should be encouraged but it remains the case that APACS targets remain focused on recorded crime figures and retain a weighting towards improving detections rather than crime reduction, which risks undermining focus on local crime reduction through cooperation between multiple agencies.

#### **Insufficient checks and balances to ensure procedural correctness and the maintenance of professional ethics**

The widespread use of performance data produced by the Police Service itself creates opportunities for the police to 'game' the target regime, for example by reclassifying crimes in order to avoid hitting recorded crime ceiling targets. Gaming is also facilitated by the fact that police now have at their disposal several tools with which to meet other targets, for example using Cautions or Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) to meet sanction detection rate targets, which are a clear focus of the Police Performance Assessment Framework. This has sometimes resulted in officers being encouraged to prioritise lower level crimes where they are easily 'solved' and has led to a significant increase in transactional punishments such as PNDs, as these are the simplest way of ensuring sanction detection targets are met. As Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Interim Review reports:

'An emphasis on sanction detection levels has undoubtedly to a degree produced the unintended effect of officers spending time investigating crimes with a view to obtaining a detection, even when that is clearly not in the public interest.' (Flanagan 2007)

This finding has been validated by ippr's own research into youth justice, which has also found that sanction detection targets are unnecessarily drawing an ever greater number of young people into formal contact with the Criminal Justice System, to the detriment of their life chances (Margo 2008 forthcoming). Examples of gaming also suggest that current inspection regimes are insufficient to ensure ethical reporting standards. Officers of Greater Manchester police were recently found guilty by an internal tribunal of 'lying over detection rates', while press accusations that officers of Surrey police were told to log their own 999 calls on mobile telephones in order to boost call response times were not convincingly rebuffed (Loveday 2006a). These issues are recognised by the police themselves and, in a recent survey, 71 per cent of BCU Commanders reported that Home Office Reporting Requirements have a negative impact on the quality of policing (Loveday and McClory 2007).

Importantly, the system's emphasis on achieving sanction detection targets also has a knock-on impact on police morale. Officers can feel pressurised to act against their professional instincts, for

example to deal formally with a minor incident of youth offending such as a playground scuffle. The police can also feel that where they follow their professional judgement in such cases they may be subject to questioning from superior officers and/or may be damaging their career prospects.

### Poor design and application of individual performance incentives

#### a) Financial incentives

The appropriateness of financial performance incentives in the public sector is widely debated by commentators and theorists. Some believe that there is no reason why a practice that is commonplace in the private sector cannot be applied successfully for public servants (Handfield-Jones *et al* 2001), and that financial incentives can both improve performance of existing employees and create a strong 'sorting effect', encouraging those with high performance capability to join the organisation.

Certainly, the success of incentives has been proven in a range of private sector contexts, particularly where focus is on production quantities (Lazear 1999, Jenkins *et al* 1998). However, others view incentives as inappropriate for public sector workers, believing them to undermine the traditional ethos of public service, whereby individuals are motivated by higher ambitions than money (Le Grand 2003). Evidence that financial motivations actually undermine wider public service goals are, however, extremely limited and it is, instead, the design of public sector incentive schemes that is problematic (Council for Industry and Higher Education 2001).

Certainly, a poorly designed incentive system can encourage perverse behaviour, particularly where targets are purely quantity-focused, are pre-prescribed or discourage cooperation between workers (Bevan and Hood 2006). Nonetheless, such risks can clearly be mitigated, for example through replacing distant prescriptive targets with subjective and post-performance evaluations, performed by those most familiar with real performance levels, for example line managers. This approach is successfully applied in a range of careers in the private sector, for example in legal or consulting careers, where financial rewards are given for strong performance, even where there are no tangible performance outputs and team working is essential to achieving positive outcomes. Team incentives have also proven to be an effective way of improving performance. An evaluated pilot for Jobcentre Plus showed that in small offices the use of team financial incentives delivered significantly better outcomes than either pay rises or staff increases of the same cost would have (Burgess *et al* 2004).

#### Example: individual performance incentives in professional services firms

In professional services firms, the absence of clearly measurable outcomes has not deterred the development of sophisticated and effective performance evaluation and reward systems.

Such systems vary by industry and company but the following characteristics are typical:

- Managers assess the performance of those working for them against a range of competency criteria, highlighting areas of strength and areas for development.
- Performance assessments are used to determine both promotion and financial rewards, in particular bonuses amounting to between 10 and 100 per cent of base salary.
- Bonuses account for a higher proportion of salary where there are clear outcome measures of performance, for example sales/client acquisition.
- To ensure realistic performance classification and to avoid grade inflation, procedures often ensure a 'spread' of performance scores. (For example, on a 1-5 grading system only 20 per cent can be categorised at each level.)
- Performance assessments are part of wider career development processes that ensure that development needs are addressed, either through proactive staffing of individuals on particular types of work or through training or mentoring provision.
- 'Upward' or '360 degree' feedback is encouraged and is used as an important evaluation component for those with management responsibilities.

While it is clear that performance incentives can improve performance in certain contexts, the way in which performance incentives have been introduced into policing means that current arrangements are unlikely to be very effective. The police have introduced moderate performance bonuses (known as Competency Related Threshold Payments) of less than 4 per cent for federated ranks, while Chief Constables can receive bonus payments worth around 15 per cent of their base salaries.

However, as noted above, competency payments are only available to officers already on the highest tenure-based pay band and this, in effect, means that only officers who have not performed sufficiently well to be promoted are eligible for the bonus. Constables are eligible for these bonuses only after ten years of service, while Sergeants and Inspectors must typically wait four years to be eligible. This means that performance bonuses become irrelevant for the very highest performing officers who are typically promoted before they become eligible for bonuses and the vast majority of officers receive the competency threshold payment. In addition, several Chief Constables have chosen not to opt into bonus schemes, believing them to undermine the public service ethos that motivates them.

This situation combines with the tenure-based eligibility criteria to mean that relatively few officers are affected by bonuses and the system as a whole is unlikely to be regarded by potential applicants as highly performance-focused, reducing potential sorting effects. These factors mean that, while bonuses may provide a focal point for development and career discussions for some staff, the majority of costs resulting from the scheme are likely to be wasted.

#### b) Sanctions for poor performance

While most workers in any organisation will meet required standards, there will always be some officers who perform consistently poorly, because of lack of either aptitude or effort. Removing poor performers can improve the productivity of an organisation, not just by replacing underperformers with competent officers but because, unlike wholesale redundancy, targeted sanctions for poor performers can also improve morale. When a survey asked managers 'Would you be delighted if your company more aggressively moved on low performers, either out of the organization or out of critical leadership positions?', 58 per cent strongly agreed and 96 per cent strongly or somewhat agreed (Handfield-Jones *et al* 2001).

However, there are currently barriers that prevent the removal of low-performing and negligent officers from policing. ippr interviews revealed that many senior officers find the procedure for dismissing underperformers is in fact so convoluted that it prevents many managing officers from attempting to dismiss officers altogether. One senior officer estimated that it had taken nearly two years for him to remove a grossly incompetent officer from his BCU, a finding that has been supported by other interview-based studies (Loveday *et al* 2007). One of the causes of complexity and red-tape in this area is the legal status of the police officer. Officers, alongside soldiers and judges, are Crown appointees. In addition they are not legally bound to obey superior officers, in theory having near-total individual discretion and responsibility for when they make an arrest, despite the fact that commanding officers are directly accountable for their actions.

While recognising that this offers protection against political influence, which may or may not be necessary in modern policing, it still seems anomalous that police dismissals must be proved to criminal standards, rather than civil standards as in almost all other sectors, including, for example, in the Serious and Organised Crime Agency. Recommendations proposed in Bill Taylor's review of police disciplinary arrangements are currently being implemented, although their impact has yet to be assessed (Taylor 2006).

#### **Undermining of morale by bureaucracy**

Information-recording is an essential part of modern policing. It provides the evidence that is essential to securing successful prosecutions, builds an understanding of crime problems and how they can effectively be tackled and ensures procedural correctness, for example by building awareness of and limiting racial profiling. Recording of stop and search incidents, for example, is clearly required to ensure policing remains unbiased and legitimate.

However, there is significant evidence of high levels of unnecessary bureaucracy, as highlighted in Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Interim Report (Flanagan 2007). This bureaucracy undermines morale, and is a commonly cited reason for leaving the service. Looking at what makes people leave the public sector more generally, the Audit Commission has found that bureaucracy and paperwork are the biggest reason (Cooper and Ingram 2004).

Police bureaucracy is partly linked to a misapplication of procedures and what Sir Ronnie refers to as a 'risk-averse' culture. Targeted measures to minimise unnecessary paperwork, such as those proposed by Sir Ronnie and others, may have some impact on reducing administrative burdens. However, as Sir Ronnie identifies, bureaucracy is also linked to a range of other procedural and structural issues, many of which have been highlighted in this paper. For example, lack of technological skills and infrastructure in policing, combined with devolution of recording and IT solutions to force level, have led to a situation where a large amount of information has to be input manually into different IT systems. As Sir Ronnie reports: 'multiple systems still do not interact effectively within one force area, let alone between different forces.' Further, recording procedures vary dramatically by force, with some processes being more than twice as burdensome as others (Flanagan 2007).

The extent of administrative burdens such as these is also naturally increased both by the fact that the technological skills of most police officers are poor or the fact that some officers continue to perform activities that could be transferred to civilians who could perform them more effectively, at lower cost and to the benefit of officer morale.

#### **Poor working conditions**

Just as bureaucracy can demotivate officers and staff, so can poor working conditions. Currently, there are factors that are making the Police Service a less pleasant and productive environment in which to work. Perhaps most importantly, there is a lack of basic technological infrastructure to support officers in their day-to-day activities and particularly for administrative tasks, such as recording the details of incidents. ippr interviews revealed that frontline officers are often unable to access computer terminals to write up reports, resulting in wasted waiting time at police stations, while remote technology, which is standard in organisations such as the AA, for example, is rare.

Interviews suggest that, in fact, little has changed since 2001, when a Constable reported:

'The crime reporting system is electronic but I have to wait my turn until a terminal is free. It takes 20 minutes for me to log through to all the screens. I'm not the fastest typist so it usually takes me longer. In all, the reporting for the robbery takes me about an hour and a half, partly because I've had to enter the same information several times.' (Knox and McKonald 2001)

Shortages of technology are driven at least in part by an incessant political and media focus on police officer numbers, which are associated with increased police visibility and effectiveness. However, it is clear that if technology investment (either in infrastructure or hardware) can repeatedly save police time, it is a worthwhile investment for policing, driving improved police effectiveness and removing frustrations from the police workplace.

Problems with the availability of good technology at work are compounded by other issues with the working environment. For example, the design and layout of custody suites is often not optimal for reducing risks of violence, with blind spots or bottlenecks in the process that may affect the likelihood of violent incidents and the ease of response to incidents (HSE 2007). Weaknesses in this and other areas prompted the Health and Safety Executive to report in 2007 that 'there were no clear policies setting out a strategic approach to managing the risk of violence and aggression to officers and staff', although this and other inspections did suggest that treatment and management of officers and staff suffering from injury or stress is good (Hayday *et al* 2007).

### **Motivation: summary of options for reform**

- The current top-down performance management framework could be revised to minimise current problems. The system would be improved through greater focus on actual crime reduction performance (using BCS-level crime data), giving greater rewards for strong performance in reducing the most harmful crime types, such as serious violence. A similar system of rewarding performance in solving the most serious crimes would also be appropriate, potentially exempting certain crime types or offender types from inclusion in target measures, for example those under 16 years old committing more minor crimes. In order to ensure local priorities and citizen satisfaction are emphasised, there could be a far greater focus on public satisfaction indicators, including victim satisfaction.
- If it is believed that performance management targets will always create ‘gaming’ of some sort, however, and will restrict local responsiveness, there could be clearer democratic accountability pressures, which will be discussed in the forthcoming ippr final report from the Future of Policing project.
- A more genuine performance culture and a high standard of professional ethics should be promoted through a far greater emphasis on performance assessment and personal development within line management. Those working most closely with other officers would be better placed to assess performance and support performance improvement, as discussed above. This relationship should be heavily focused on the development and motivation of police officers and staff, moving away from a culture of blame.
- There should be much greater focus on increasing intrinsic job satisfaction. Important measures here would include reducing bureaucracy and, importantly, providing officers and staff with the equipment and technology they need to meet their goals more effectively. Stress and risk management could be further prioritised.
- Current performance pay thresholds should be adapted or eliminated where they are not currently working. At this stage, it might be the case that individual performance pay has limited impact on performance given current attitudes in policing and difficulties arising from individual competition within policing. However, there might be potential to pilot a range of performance pay approaches (including group incentives) given the success of such incentives in other public services.
- Greater support could be provided to officers who wish to remove poor performers from their Police Service.

All of the above measures could be supported by the wider benefits of measures presented throughout this paper, which could act to dramatically increase intrinsic job satisfaction, for example through new, more rewarding, roles or through more supportive career development and training mechanisms.

### **Motivation: summary of implications for other workforce policies**

- Wide consultation on impacts on morale of workforce reforms could mitigate potential risks, particularly if combined with ongoing monitoring of morale.

## 10. A vision for a modernised police workforce and the benefits of change

The recommendations for reform outlined above combine to create a radical vision of a much modernised and professionalised police workforce. Overall, our proposals envisage:

- **A more skilled, specialised workforce:** A new configuration of roles within the Police Service that allows police workers to use and develop their skills to maximum effect by pursuing a wide range of specialisms.
- **New, more flexible team structures:** Increased use of mixed teams of warranted officers and specialist civilians, drawing on diverse skills and ending a culture that sometimes treats non-warranted officers as second-class citizens.
- **More efficient organisation of support resources:** Creation of centres of excellence for support functions, accompanied by a fundamental review of support mechanisms and resource levels locally.
- **Refocused training and development:** A move away from a current culture of supervision to one of active development and training for each and every police worker, addressing key skills gaps and ensuring every worker reaches his or her full potential. In addition, the creation of attractive career paths for those with non-policing experience and high potential graduates. Of particular importance will be renewed focus on people and resource management, in order to ensure swift adaptation to the increased challenge of managing a more specialised workforce.
- **A new culture of supportive performance management:** A move towards using targets as tools for performance management rather than ends in themselves. Instead, performance could be primarily managed through close, supportive relationships between workers and their line managers, with clear messages that ‘gaming’ of targets is not acceptable. In addition, the top-down performance management regime should be rebalanced, and a greater emphasis should be placed on crime reduction and improved responsiveness to citizens.
- **Reward for skills and effort, not length of service:** A move away from a system that rewards length of service beyond, for example three to five years, and instead rewards those who have skills most needed in the Police Service, and those performing the most dangerous or arduous roles.

### The benefits of change

The above directions for reform combine to create a radical new vision for the police workforce. Reforms in each area are complementary to one another rather than mutually exclusive and, in fact, many are interdependent and could not be effectively implemented alone.

All of the proposed measures are intended to stimulate action but are not always precise blueprints for reform. This is not least because we are acutely aware of the difficulties inherent in proposing new solutions in this area – in particular that it is very hard to assess the way in which a complex system such as policing would respond to such changes. It is therefore hoped that further stakeholder interaction will more fully highlight the potential implications of implementing such options, allowing further refinement. We are particularly aware of the need to consult the workforce itself on the impact of potential changes and to listen to concerns in order to refine approaches and plan for change.

However, this new vision for the police workforce already offers clear benefits to citizens and the police.

### Benefits for the public

Workforce reform is not simply an area full of management-speak and complex detail but is one that makes a real difference to the quality of service received by the public. It can enable better policing as specialist police workers will have greater skills in the task they are actually performing, leading to a higher quality of service for citizens. Victims will be more likely to be supported by those with well-

### **Beyond policing: a new framework for public sector workforce reform**

In addition to contributing to a new and wider vision of police reform, it is hoped that this paper begins a journey towards the creation of a post-New Public Management model of public service workforce reform. Lessons gleaned from an examination of police workforce practices will have clear parallels to other public services, although it must be recognised that every public service is distinct and at a different stage of development. ippr's 2007 report *Public Services at the Crossroads* has clearly set out the need to reconsider approaches workforce management across public services, and the challenges currently faced by policing are also faced by other sectors (Brooks ed 2007).

Issues of productivity will continue to be of paramount importance to all public services over the coming years: it is not just policing that must meet ever-growing public expectations with finite resources. Current spending settlements allow at best modest spending increases across sectors and 74 per cent of respondents to a 2007 public survey agreed that 'it is reasonable to expect the same levels of speed and service from the public sector as we would from the private sector', up from 72 per cent in 2005.

Other public services are also suffering similar crises of morale as a result of past workforce changes. Public sector workers are consistently less positive about the efficiency and customer service standards of their organisations, with 19 per cent of public sector workers critical of employers, compared with just 11 per cent in the private sector (MORI/Work Foundation 2006). Such challenges are compounded, as in policing, by a constantly evolving external environment, as a result of rapid technological advance and shifting public and political priorities.

Government and public sector leaders are increasingly aware of this reality and are beginning to recognise both the centrality of workforce reform to the public sector productivity agenda and the need to find new ways of deciding on and implementing change. As a result, there is potential to build on the model of workforce reform presented here for policing in order to generate a renewed focus on workforce issues, as well as a revised approach. This approach must involve government and practitioners working in collaboration to improve our public services. It is hoped that such an approach will allow a new compact between government and practitioners, one that avoids many of the perverse consequences that have resulted from many of the recent reform initiatives and brings the priorities of workers and government back into greater alignment.

developed victim support skills, mixed specialist teams will use their wide range of combined skills to solve crimes more effectively, and town centre disorder experts will ensure preventative approaches to alcohol-related disorder. It can also enable a larger amount of policing, as new structures for support functions and decreased use of officers in administrative roles will free resources that can be directed towards public priorities.

Tangible examples of how specialisation and new team structures benefit the public are already available in some areas of the country. For example, in Greater Manchester, following a burglary, home security experts talk to victims and provide them with advice on protecting their homes and, in some cases, low-cost security devices such as window locks. Such specialists can work in teams with warranted officers, ensuring that warranted officers can concentrate on detection and response activities. In Merseyside, a specialist team, comprising detectives who actively target gun criminals and uniform officers who aim to disrupt criminal activity, is providing additional focus to tackling gun and gang-related crime. There are many other examples of initial moves towards implementing aspects of the vision for workforce reform outlined in this report – but we believe that fully achieving the changes proposed here will deliver still greater results.

#### **Benefits for the police**

As importantly, this new vision presents a more rewarding environment for those working in the Police Service. Officers and staff will be more able to develop skills in areas of particular personal interest and abilities will be recognised and rewarded, ensuring workers feel more valued. The current situation in which officers can be transferred into specialist roles, for example dealing with domestic violence in a CID unit without appropriate preparation, training or initial support, will end. There will be a fairer distribution of difficult or dangerous roles and unsociable hours, or those performing in such roles will be rewarded. At the same time, officers who wish to will be able to prioritise work-life balance by performing roles where this is more achievable.

The Police Service will become an increasingly unified and diverse service, where civilian staff feel that their contribution is valued by warranted officers. All workers will also benefit from a more supportive working environment, which increasingly shifts away from an internal culture of blame towards a supportive culture that focuses on two-way dialogue to improve performance. Officers will be supported if they feel they are no longer suited to a police role and, with more clearly defined skills, will find transition into civilian life easier. Officers will also no longer feel obliged to act inappropriately or against their professional judgement in order to meet crude target quotas; instead real impacts on crime outcomes will be valued and recognised.

As a consequence of these developments, the police workforce will also become more attractive to potential recruits who have skills and experience that would greatly benefit the Police Service, while generalist new recruits will have the opportunity to perform alongside experts for each of the areas in which they work.

## 12. Making reform happen

Of course, implementing this new vision will also place demands on the police workforce. Police leaders will need to clearly communicate changes in direction and practitioners will need to understand and embrace change. This will not be straightforward as communication and leadership have been highlighted as a weakness in the police skill-set, change is perceived as threatening in most organisations and, in fact, many have suggested that the Police Service may even be an inherently conservative institution particularly resistant to reform (Ericson 2005). Furthermore, implementing this vision will demand both government support and a clear willingness to engage in open dialogue to ensure that the details of change are clearly thought-through.

However, the strong case for reform combines with other factors to create optimism. Importantly, the Police Service is not uniformly resistant to change but is a diverse organisation, with many individuals and sub-groups who are open to change and workers who have themselves been pointing out weaknesses in current approaches. What is vital is that workers are encouraged to enter into a full consideration of what reforms will mean for them, for the workforce as a whole and for the service that they can offer to the public.

Nonetheless, whether the Police Service is currently configured in a way that allows it to embrace and drive through change is open to question. Many of the ideas presented in this paper are not new, and yet few have been fully implemented. As noted above, existing civilianisation has progressed slowly, the introduction of PCSOs was only achieved through ring-fenced funding incentives, and structural reforms have been abandoned without the forwarding of any alternatives. System dynamics also seem to have hampered reform implementation, resulting in implementation in a manner that made reforms totally counter-productive. This has been seen, for example, in the introduction of competency-related pay thresholds made available only to those of a certain level of seniority. Of course, these failings are partly due to the lack of a coherent workforce reform strategy but there may be other underlying barriers to reform.

### **Three core barriers to reform**

#### **1. Governance**

Current governance and accountability arrangements in policing may present one barrier. This area has been under intense scrutiny of late and is certainly highly complex. There are immediate signs that suggest that it is very difficult to deliver national police reform through current tripartite governance arrangements. Weaknesses in these current arrangements include the often fractious relationships between the Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers and Association of Police Authorities, and the genuine lack of clarity over who decides what and how nationally. It is revealing that the Home Office and ACPO both created separate 'visions' for policing in 2007, despite Home Office efforts to achieve a jointly agreed document.

In fact, it may be unsurprising that workforce reforms have not been uniformly implemented given the diffusion of national level leadership in policing. Importantly, two-thirds of the tripartite bodies are not truly national-level organisations: both ACPO and the APA representatives are guided by regional perspectives and are conflicted on occasions where national issues demand solutions that run counter to their force-level interests. Such governance issues have clear implications for workforce issues such as the reconfiguration of police structures and raise the question of whether workforce reform can be achieved without revised accountability or governance mechanisms.

#### **2. Industrial relations**

Another barrier to workforce reform may be the nature of current police worker representative groups and their relationships with government. Police workers are fractured into multiple representative groups, who often differ in their views on specific issues. The Police Federation, Superintendents Association, ACPO and Unison (representing police staff) have all adopted distinct positions on a

range of workforce issues, including performance-related pay and force mergers. This naturally makes achieving workforce reform more difficult as any required negotiations with and within the Police Service become inherently more complex.

The situation is complicated still further by a high level of diversity within these representative groups. Interestingly the Police Federation is one of the few remaining 'closed shop' worker representative groups but members are split both between Federated ranks and within ranks on issues such as civilianisation or the introduction of PCSOs. Such diversity within representative groups arguably leads to a situation where continuation of the status quo is the default response to proposed measures, as it leaves the least room for criticism from dissatisfied members. There has been some recognition of difficulties in industrial relations, resulting in Sir Clive Booth's review of police pay and the police negotiating machinery but there may be a need for a more fundamental look at whether current structures are working well for practitioners as well as for government.

### **Background: industrial relations and the Police Service**

Industrial relations in the Police Service are different to those in other public services. Since the police strike of 1919, it has been illegal for police officers to be members of unions or to proceed with industrial action. Officers are sworn into service, and are not afforded the protection of standard employment legislation, except where they are specifically written into employment legislation, as for example on anti-discrimination legislation.

As a consequence, there has developed the tacit agreement between the police and government that the police are assured fair pay and conditions, primarily through mechanisms such as ensuring wages rise at above inflation (wages have historically tracked the private sector wage index). In other words, unlike in a unionised workforce, the labour relationship 'deal' is largely set at the start of the officer's service rather than being constantly adjusted over time – and attempts to in any way change the police workforce risk being perceived as attempts to break this compact. This has been seen most powerfully in recent disputes over the Government's decision to implement the 2.5 per cent pay increase recommended by the Police Negotiating Board from December 2007 rather than September 2007, meaning an effective 1.9 per cent annual rise, although the 2.5 per cent increase will be the starting point for negotiations in 2008. Feeling that the long-term bargain between the police and government had been broken, several officers have called for reintroduction of the right to strike.

### **3. The political climate**

An additional barrier to reform may be a political reluctance to implement reform. While there has been undoubted political recognition of the importance of policing, political willingness to drive through workforce reforms has been less apparent. In part this stems from the fact that politicians are naturally reluctant to appear unsupportive of a popular police establishment or to suggest that crime is not fully under control.

However, another important element of lack of political support for workforce reform has been the current terms of political debate, which is focused on police officer numbers. This is in part because inputs such as police numbers are easier to measure than crime outcomes but also because recent governments have been in a position to highlight increased officer numbers. Of course, more police will, all other things being equal, support the delivery of police objectives but this emphasis is disproportionate and fails to focus sufficiently on policing outcomes.

Several elements of workforce reform have the potential to run contrary to the current political dialogue – for example, civilianisation of non-core police functions could lead to a decline in officer numbers, even if it is also likely to free resources for more frontline policing activity. There may be a need to redefine the politics of policing and to create an overarching narrative of police reform that allows a focus on outcomes and reflects the realities of current policing challenges.

## Next steps

These three possible barriers to implementing the above workforce vision – governance, the nature of police industrial relations and the politics of policing – show that the issue of workforce reform cannot be considered entirely in isolation from wider issues in police reform. Outlining revised police workforce arrangements will not provide a panacea to policing problems and this vision for the police workforce must be incorporated within still more wide-reaching reform of the Police Service. This ambitious exercise will be undertaken as part of ippr's final report on the future of policing, where the directions of travel and options for reform of the police workforce will also be refined, based on stakeholder responses to this paper.

Importantly, despite barriers to workforce reform, it is worth reiterating that there remain compelling reasons for optimism about willingness to pursue modernisation at this time. First, there is intense public and political focus on the issue of crime and policing, with the public consistently perceiving crime as one of the top three most important issues facing Britain (MORI pulsecheck 2007). Second, there is an urgent need to improve performance and police productivity in a resource-constrained environment, with significant opportunity to drive improvements given historic expenditure increases.

Third, there is a growing awareness that policing must respond to a constantly evolving crime environment and that policing must become increasingly flexible while also developing deep skills in areas that are of increasing importance for citizens. Such areas include improved customer service and technological ability, and skills in managing serious violent crime. Fourth, there is appetite for change within the workforce, exemplified by vocal dissatisfaction with the current target regime and high levels of bureaucracy.

We hope that these factors encourage and enable measures such as those presented in this report to be implemented. Such changes must be implemented holistically rather than in a piecemeal fashion. There must be a clear vision for reform, which must be understood and accepted by all stakeholders, ensuring that police workforce modernisation moves beyond the New Public Management approach to workforce reform and builds ongoing collaborative dialogue.

This is not a minor undertaking but the rewards of implementing workforce modernisation in the Police Service would be great, both for the public and for police officers and staff.

## Appendix: seminar details

The analysis and findings from this paper were originally presented and discussed at an expert seminar held at ippr's London office on 15 November 2007. We are very grateful to Peter Neyroud, Chief Executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency, for agreeing to respond to the research and to the following participants for providing thoughtful and helpful feedback:

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