

ACPO Professional Standards Conference
22nd – 23rd June 2009
Summary Document
Raising Confidence Through Standards

Day 1 – Morning Session

Introduction

The conference was opened and participants welcomed by the ACPO Portfolio lead, Chief Constable Paul West from West Mercia Police. Mr. West noted that this was the 10th, his 4th as Chair, bringing representatives from 46 forces and a number of partner agencies together, creating a great opportunity for continued professional development and sharing of expertise and experience. Mr. West said that this is a time of exceptional change for the police service with significant changes in senior personnel and that it had also been a period of intense scrutiny of professional standards and complaints.

Mr. West thanked Superintendent Vic Marshall for all his work and congratulated both him and David Lindley on their ACPO Presidential Commendations. Finally Mr. West thanked Mr. David Martin for his work and efforts and congratulated him on recently receiving an MBE in recognition of his services to policing. He recognised this as a great achievement and richly deserved honour.

Professor Jonathan Crego then explained and introduced the 10,000 Volts system which was to be used throughout the Conference to record comments and allow delegates to respond to the interactive exercises.

Session 1

Complaints and Misconduct

Deputy Chief Constable Feavour then gave a presentation on how we as professionals concern ourselves with what type of complaint we are dealing with (3 buckets) instead of managing complainant's expectations. He outlined how events and our response are key to the overall outcome of complaints and customer satisfaction. He challenged the audience to review whether the new regulations were now fully in place, whether staff knew the processes and what forces were doing. In addition Mr. Feavour asked the audience what they would like to see from the complaints and misconduct group. Numerous responses were recorded on the 10,000 Volts system.

Superintendent Marshall then presented on the importance of 'getting it right the first time'. He outlined that the Taylor reforms were not just a new set of regulations but a new idea and that PSD's are the centre of excellence and need to both understand this and have the skills to take this forward. Mr. Marshall also asked whether we consider the public when we write our policies and train our staff. Do we make it clear to those who apply to join the service what those standards are at the time of application, or does this get lost and left for the personnel

departments to manage. Mr, Marshall noted that huge progress has been made but that we need to be careful we do not slip back as we have only one opportunity to get this right. Proportionality is key.

Detective Chief Superintendent Campbell noted that historically it was agreed that only serious cases would be dealt with by PSD's, however we have always referred complaints up to PSD's resulting in little change over the last 20 years. Mr. Campbell noted that without early intervention by line managers the reforms would fail. We currently have a large number of misconduct hearings but only a small number of these individuals leave the organisation. Transparency and consistency at local level is key along with the recognition that there is no place in the police service for a 'pound of flesh' mentality.

Mr. Hardwick, from the IPCC then gave an update on the progress being made on the new Statutory Guidance. The draft is due to be issued in July 2009; the consultation to take place in October 2009 and the complete update version is due to be published in April 2010. The new guidance will explain and cover the new misconduct system, the Policing Pledge, learning the lessons and the IPCC performance framework. Mr. Hardwick also outlined the gender/age split of all complainants and that an apology or explanation is most commonly requested yet still 79% of complainants are a 'bit' or 'very dissatisfied' how their complaint has been dealt with.

Day 1 – Afternoon Session

Corruption

Session 2

Professor Jonathan Crego then took the delegates through a paper feed exercise based on the recently piloted Gold level Counter Corruption training. It was focused on Counter Corruption issues and made use of the 10,000 Volts voting pads.

Session 3

The first day closed with the delegates having an option of attending 3 fringe groups from a choice of 10 namely:

- Role and function of the APA – dip sampling – getting the sample right
- Death following Police contact – recent changes
- Statutory Guidance – an overview of the new guidance
- Decision making in vetting – risks and vulnerabilities
- What is a Policing purpose (DPA)
- Background briefing – what stance should the Police take
- Vetting transformation
- Independent Safeguarding Authority – functions, roles and responsibilities
- Complaint performance – new framework
- Disclosure – revamp of chapter 18

Day 2 – Morning Session

Vetting

The second day started with a reminder of day one and an opportunity to review or add to the questions raised during the paper feed exercise.

Session 4

Deputy Chief Constable Cole then gave a presentation on vetting entitled 'where are we now'. He outlined that vetting is a standard that raises confidence and therefore vetting acts as a guardian of the gateway to the integrity of the police organisation. He reminded delegates that protecting children and the vulnerable is key to our work, and that consideration needs to be given to the growing number of 'tainted' officers within the police service. Mr. Cole then outlined current issues and the need to review whether staff are declaring new offences once vetted. He noted that as a police service we have to have robust and excellent vetting systems in place to apply for an exemption for the service. The alternative having huge cost implications. Mr. Cole finished by stating that 'what you do in your vetting offices determines your standards'.

Mr. Cole then invited Chief Superintendent Bob Varey onto the stage where he was presented with and ACPO Presidential Commendation by Chief Constable Paul West in recognition of all his work, his distinguished career, especially remarkable work within vetting.

Mary Aiston, Director of Governance and Security for HM Revenue and Customs outlined the lessons learnt following on from the loss of data discs in 2007 and the damage this caused to their reputation. She outlined how security had not been a priority, that accountabilities had not been clear and how old processes had hampered the efficient working of the organisation. Although challenges remain and long term changes still need to be achieved, there has been significant progress made not only within HM Revenue and Customs but nationally in many other organisations as a result.

Deputy Chief Constable Cunningham outlined the work of the ACCAG and the need for raising confidence through standards. He noted that there is nothing that undermines confidence as effectively as corruption, and asked delegates how good they are at identifying emerging issues. He then noted the growing importance of social networking sites, the use of steroids, information leakage and the growing number of staff with unmanageable debt as emerging threats. He noted that there is currently one common theme in this area and that is leadership failure. That strong leadership is required to manage and stamp out corruption.

Session 5

The last session of the conference enabled delegates to attend two out of three interactive working group sessions. These were:

- Information leakage and the application of Misconduct in Public Office legislation.
- Misuse of controlled drugs within the service
- Emerging threats and issues

Close

The conference was drawn to a close by Chief Constable Paul West who outlined the key emerging challenges as:

- Are the Taylor reforms making a difference:
 1. To the management of police officers within your force?
 2. Are you ensuring that BCU's are fully engaged, at the right level and appropriately?
- Do you have effective command support and quality assurance structures in place to identify corruption, support effective investigations and ensure the security of your information?
- Is the provision of vetting in your force robust enough to ensure you are confident to claim exemption from the ISA registration for your staff?

Of note

- Numerous thanks were given to sponsors, conference organisers, table facilitators, presenters, Chief Inspector Gary Watson for his role as staff officer and co organiser of conference and especially David Martin for organising the event
- Over 12,000 words had been recorded on the 10,000 Volts system so very well suited. Some presentations generating over 100 questions and responses resulting in a wealth of information and knowledge recorded over the course of the conference.
- The material generated by the 10,000 volts system can be made available, to Police Services and Partner Agencies' Professional Standards Departments through ACCAG, Complaints and Misconduct Group and the National Vetting Group.
- **The material generated by the 10,000 volts system can be made available to Police Services and Partner Agencies' Professional Standards Departments through ACCAG, Complaints and Misconduct Group and the National Vetting Group.**