



*Oversight Commissioner  
Al Hutchinson*

This is the eleventh in a series of oversight reports that commenced in 2001, and my second since being appointed as Oversight Commissioner in January of 2004. Further details regarding the nature and pace of policing reforms in Northern Ireland, including details on the independent oversight process and team, can be found on our website at [www.oversightcommissioner.org](http://www.oversightcommissioner.org). The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing, also known as the Patten Commission and its 175 recommendations for changes to the policing of Northern Ireland, can also be found on our website.

This report continues our results-based measurement of progress, or lack of progress, in achieving the new beginning to policing envisioned by the Belfast Agreement of 1998 and Independent Commission report of 1999. All of our reports flow from the objective standards and benchmarks, which the oversight team established in September of 2001. Appendix 'A' is a special thematic report on progress to date in the area of training, as training is seen as an important foundation that affects and supports the entirety of the Independent Commission's recommendations. Similar special thematic reports on progress in the area of policing with the community, as well as human rights and accountability, will be attached to our reports scheduled for publication in December of 2004 and May of 2005 respectively. The report published in May of 2005 will be my last scheduled report as Oversight Commissioner, and coincides with the legislated end of our independent oversight mandate.

As I conclude this introduction in early September of 2004, the political process in Northern Ireland is once again moving hopefully toward some kind of resolution, one which might ultimately lead to a restored and functioning local Assembly. It is perhaps ironic that as the Independent Commission published its report in 1999, they noted that talks aimed at completing the political process had also stalled. Nevertheless, the Independent Commission felt that its work was both relevant and crucial even in the absence of a functioning Assembly. This was primarily because the Commission rightly saw that policing was, and continues to be, at the heart of many of the problems that the political process has been unable to resolve in Northern Ireland. Then as now, the Independent Commission's recommendations touched overwhelmingly on the efficiency, acceptability and accountability of the police service, goals that remain worthwhile and admirable regardless of the wider political context.

That being said, policing reform of this magnitude does not occur in a vacuum but takes place in an environment of real people with genuine concerns and expectations. This is as true for the members of the wider community as it is for the men and women of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). There are of course those who are inclined to see only the negative, or the proverbial 'half-empty glass', and it is once again important to remind everyone that this has been a remarkable transformation which has taken place in a relatively short period of time. Given a societal backdrop devoid of full community and political support, as well as the absence of a functioning local Assembly, the progress that has been made to date is therefore all the more remarkable. As I noted in my last report, the absence of full political and community support is a barrier to fully achieving the Agreement's goal of "a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland, with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole".



At a community level, the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships are still not able to benefit from the full range of political representation necessary for true accountability and effectiveness. Equally, full community support has also been withheld from a range of other difficult issues, including 50:50 recruitment and the Registration of Notifiable Interests. Practical issues also lessen the effectiveness of the Police Service, including unencumbered patrolling, response to community emergencies, and criminal investigations in some areas. All of these represent a significant barrier to effectiveness, and those who resist or deny change should understand that the absence of full community support will only impede the necessary reforms, which in turn will only benefit the criminal activities of a few. No police service is equipped to deal with society's problems by itself, nor could it hope to function well under such circumstances, much less deliver an acceptable policing service.

While no meaningful organisational change is simple, the deep change that the police service will undergo is beginning to take root. Apart from a demonstrated commitment by the PSNI, a number of institutions have assisted the change process. Critically, Government has to date been supportive in seeding the change process, both legislatively and financially. The Policing Board and the Ombudsman have also diligently performed their roles, and been pivotal both in supporting change and as important institutions of governance and accountability.

The last five years have not been painless for the community, nor have they been easy for the Police Service and its employees. It is important to remember that throughout this time of considerable upheaval the Police Service has still been expected to provide a reliable and effective policing service. Credit is rightly due to the majority of people in Northern Ireland who have supported the policing change, in whole or in part, and who recognise the importance of a modern and effective criminal justice system. Community-minded people continue to support this ideal through their service on the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships. Bodies such as these, as well as the Police Ombudsman, ensure that the PSNI is already one of the most accountable and governed police organisations in the world.

Much credit must also go to the Catholic and non-Catholic men and women who have chosen to "vote with their feet", with over 38,000 recruit applications being received by the Police Service since 2001. I do regret the fact that such strong competition for a limited number of positions means that most of these dedicated men and women will not achieve their dream of serving their community. While this mirrors experiences elsewhere in the world, it is a testament to the reality that policing in Northern Ireland is now seen as a responsible and desirable vocation for future generations. It is encouraging that the next generation of police officers, as well as those who already serve, will in the words of the Agreement, ensure that the PSNI may soon become a police service capable of "attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole".

The challenges the police, policing board and DPP's face are considerable. Public expectations for change and effectiveness remain high; organised and violent crime continue to pose a significant threat; vigilantism and attacks on the most vulnerable – including seniors, ethnic minorities and young people – are still carried out, as are those on police and emergency services personnel. Cowardly threats and intimidation against some of the courageous people who have stepped forward to help their communities, either through service on the Policing Board or on the District Policing Partnerships, also continue to occur.

I absolutely condemn these attacks, as have others in public positions. However, it will ultimately

be up to the community itself to determine when the limits have been reached; a fair criminal justice system can only help enforce this determination.

I remain as confident as ever that all of the desired changes will be fully achieved within the decade predicted by the Independent Commission. In my last report I noted that progress towards achieving the new beginning envisioned by the Independent Commission is well underway – that is still the case. With increased community and political support, the remaining challenges will also be met.

  
P. H. WILSON



ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AEP	Attenuating Energy Projectile
ALR	Armoured Landrover
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CS	O-Chlorobenzylidene Malononitrile
DCU	District Command Unit
DIP	Discriminating Irritant Projectile
DPP	District Policing Partnership
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FTR	Full Time Reserve
GB	Great Britain
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
ICS	Information and Communications Services
ICT	Information, Communication, Technology
ILEF	International Law Enforcement Forum
IT	Information Technology
LAC	Learning Advisory Council
LICTE	Leadership in the Counter Terrorism Environment
NIHRC	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
NIM	National Intelligence Model
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence
PBR	Plastic Baton Round
PITO	Police Information Technology Organisation
PLS	Police Leadership Skills
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PTR	Part Time Reserve
SEA	Station Enquiry Assistant
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TED	Training, Education and Development
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TSG	Tactical Support Group
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VSSU	Voluntary Severance Support Unit

▶▶ **commissioner's overview**



The Independent Commission published its 175 recommendations in September of 1999. This was followed by the release of the Government's Updated Implementation Plan in August of 2001, which detailed accountability and time lines for the implementation of all 175 recommendations. In September of 2001 we specified 772 performance indicators, through which the process of implementation could be objectively measured. The measurement of change therefore actually began in September of 2001, two years after the release of the Independent Commission's report.

The oversight methodology involves an incremental, three-stage evaluation process for each of the 772 performance indicators. The first stage to be achieved is Administrative Compliance, whereby appropriate policies, procedures or formal guidance documents are expected to be in place as a foundation for the recommended change. The second stage involves an Evaluation of the policy or document by the oversight team, and an assessment of its appropriateness and degree of relevance to contemporary law enforcement practice. The final stage of review involves Verification, through on-site reviews and field visits; this determines whether new policy or practice is actually being applied, and whether the recommended change is taking place. Once we are satisfied that change is occurring, we indicate that compliance with a recommendations has been achieved. However, this remains subject to ongoing monitoring throughout the remainder of the oversight term to guarantee that an observed change is not 'undone', whether deliberately or unwittingly.

Oversight reports begin with a Commissioner's Overview. This reflects a general summary of the oversight team's principal findings from a previous evaluation visit. The summary is divided into two sections: Progress and Accomplishments, and Areas of Concern. I have also appended a special Thematic Report on Training at the end of this report, which represents the cumulative progress or lack of progress relating to the training recommendations made throughout the Independent Commission's comprehensive review of policing. The thematic report looks holistically at the many aspects of training that flow from the Independent Commission's recommendations, and the impact of the training recommendations on the PSNI's change and reform programme as a whole. This is intended to contrast with the more traditional way of seeing training as a discreet and distinct element within the change process, rather than the more appropriate way of seeing training as the foundation upon which much of the change programme is built. The many achievements made in this area, as well as the concerns that still remain, will therefore be spelled out in the thematic report, rather than being reported below. I will also apply a thematic approach in future oversight reports, where the topics dealt with will be policing with the community, and human rights and accountability. These thematic reports will be published in December of 2004 and May of 2005 respectively.

### **Progress and Accomplishments**

The PSNI's Human Rights Plan was published in May of 2004 and meets the oversight team's performance indicators. The Policing Board's human rights advisory team has developed an exhaustive plan for evaluating the human rights performance of the PSNI, including an action plan for collecting information, interviewing key persons, and observing police operations. The first monitoring report is awaited with interest and is scheduled for publication in the Autumn of 2004. The establishment of the monitoring process is critical, since it reflects a detailed system of measuring results and rendering accountability. It also reflects the commitment the Police Service and the Policing Board have to developing a human rights ethos within the PSNI.

As noted in our Report No. 10, released in April of 2004, all of the institutions called for by the Independent Commission for ensuring the accountability of the Police Service are now in place. These are all performing at very high levels of impartiality, professionalism and effectiveness. The District Policing Partnerships (DPPs), which were the last element to be created, have finished their first year of operation. The lone exception is the DPP for Dungannon and South Tyrone, which is now expected to be formed by October of 2004.

The activities of those DPPs visited certainly met with our performance indicators. The DPPs have developed a strong sense of identity and purpose, and both public and private meetings take place on a regular basis. The Police Service published District Policing Plans for all 29 DCUs in April of 2004. This initial annual planning cycle afforded all DPPs the opportunity to collaborate in the development of local policing objectives, and represents a promising beginning to what is already recognised as a crucial relationship. All of the local policing plans are available from the PSNI's website.

A new "Policing with the Community Awards" programme was launched in May of 2004. Awards will be given out annually recognising individual police officers and police – community partnerships for their outstanding achievements. This is an important signal to both police officers and communities that policing with the community is becoming entrenched as a core means of doing business.

The Independent Commission made a number of recommendations relating to policing in a peaceful society. These dealt with many different aspects of policing under increasingly normal circumstances, including the appearance of police stations, the closure of certain holding centres, the role of the army, and the phasing out of armoured Landrovers. With the exception of the appearance of police stations, overall progress has been noteworthy. As always the challenge remains matching the public's growing perception of life in a normal society, with police actions that also reflects this change.

Statistics released in May of 2004 seem to indicate that the security situation in Northern Ireland continued to improve for 2003/2004. For example, security-related deaths have dropped by 50%, while shooting incidents dropped by 40%. Bombing incidents have decreased by roughly 60%, a dramatic reduction. The number of armoured Landrovers used for regular patrol duties has also decreased by about 32% in one year. Both the oversight team and the Independent Reviewer of the Terrorism Act (2000) have analysed the use of emergency powers by the Police Service, and report a significant drop in the number of persons stopped under section 89 of the Terrorism Act.

Grosvenor Road has been selected by the Police Service as an alternative to Gough Barracks for the detention of terrorist suspects, in the event that the facility at Antrim is not available. Likewise, progress was made when the Police Service recently decided to reduce the number of custody suites from 22 to 17. Taken together, the changes spelled out above indicate a steady progression toward the objective of policing in a peaceful society.

One of the more contentious issues dealt with by the Independent Commission involved the use of plastic baton rounds (PBRs). While recognising the need for effective crowd control measures that would protect both the public and the police, the Independent Commission recommended the search for an alternative to the PBR. With the fourth research report into a viable alternative to the PBR, released in January of 2004, the NIO and the Police Service have decided on the



Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) as the best means of eventually replacing the L21A1 plastic baton round. We have been advised that the AEP will be available for deployment and use by June of 2005, at which point the existing PBR would then be taken out of service altogether. A positive note in this regard is that as at August of 2004, no PBRs had been fired in Northern Ireland since September of 2002. In addition, six new vehicle-mounted water cannons were recently purchased and are now available for deployment and use.

The Policing Plan 2004 – 2007 includes a detailed summary of Best Value Reviews undertaken in 2003/2004. The evidence shows that both the Policing Board and the Chief Constable are intent on improving overall organisational efficiency. Also worth noting is that the Police Service performed within budget for fiscal year 2003/2004. Best value and continuous improvement objectives established for 2004/2005 include: better management of the police vehicle fleet, better estate management, staff retention, enforcement of legislation, and also four DCU reviews. An executive level operational review system is now firmly in place. Twice annually Regional ACCs conduct rigorous reviews of each DCU Commander. This process is applied in successive cycles, and should serve to drive the organisation towards adopting a more performance-oriented culture. Assessing progress on devolution is now the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Constable, who carries out twice-yearly assessments of the business plans of Regional ACCs and department heads to ensure that decisions are being taken at the lowest and most effective level.

The Independent Commission made several recommendations in response to concerns raised about Special Branch. Overall, recent changes designed to meet the Independent Commission and other recommendations are progressing very well, albeit after a late start. The Police Service made several organisational changes in an attempt to implement the Independent Commission's recommendations concerning Special Branch. The changes were made in April of 2001, with the placement of Special Branch and Crime Branch under the command of a single Assistant Chief Constable. Five months later, in September of 2002, the Police Service consolidated the two branches into Crime Department, with the former Special Branch's activities divided into Intelligence and Specialist Operations. In July of 2003 a further organisational change resulted in the creation of two new departments, Crime Operations and Criminal Justice, with Intelligence and Crime Support assigned to Crime Operations.

In November of 2003 the oversight team was provided with an Implementation Plan explaining how the Police Service would now deal with implementing the remaining recommendations on Special Branch, while also incorporating to the extent possible recommendations made by other, outside reviews impacting on Special Branch and criminal investigations processes. These reviews had been conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary Crompton and Blakey, and by Sir John Stevens. The Implementation Plan meets the intent of the Independent Commission with respect to specific changes to the structure and function of Special Branch. In addition, the Plan clearly spells out the new purpose and organisation of the amalgamated Crime Department, as well as the availability to criminal operations of policing resources previously dedicated solely to Special Branch.

The Plan sets out clear time lines for achieving objectives, and as at August of 2004 it was reported that the majority of the 18 objectives had been achieved, many of them before their target dates. This will be reviewed during the upcoming Oversight Evaluation. Overall, the



Implementation Plan is recognised by the oversight team as a solid, good faith effort at re-focussing the organisation's criminal intelligence function toward fighting organised and violent crime, principally by streamlining the way in which the PSNI gathers and disseminates criminal intelligence. The Implementation Plan was also accepted by HMIC, which inspects for progress on 18 objectives on a quarterly basis; the next progress inspection will occur in October of 2004. In addition, based on recommendations made in one of the independent reviews, the Police Service conducted an organisational risk assessment and fundamental review of its informant handling; due to this the Police Service has separated a number of police informants. The Police Service also issued revised policy and procedures for the dissemination of criminal intelligence to serious crime investigators, thereby improving the likelihood of criminal convictions in court. The key now will be the plan's full implementation as well as the achievement of its intended results. These will be the subject of ongoing monitoring by oversight.

The NIO, Chief Constable and the Policing Board continue to progress the Independent Commission's recommendation that the Police Service achieve a complement of 7,500 regular police officers within a 10-year period. The Independent Commission projected that by fiscal year 2004/2005 the Police Service would have 7,349 regular police officers available for duty, and that it would have phased out the Full Time Reserve (FTR), which of course has not yet occurred. As reported by the Policing Board, the Police Service had approximately 7,500 regular police officers at its disposal in March of 2004, meaning that its quantitative objectives had been achieved in just five years. In addition, approximately 1,619 members of the FTR were still in place in March 2004 (see also Areas of Concern.)

The Police Service contracted the Consensia Partnership in January of 2001 to help recruit police officers on a 50:50 Catholic/other than Catholic basis. Consensia, in conjunction with the Police Service, has thus far produced excellent results. Over the five completed and two ongoing recruitment competitions Consensia have received a total of 38,098 recruit applications as at April of 2004. Almost 36% have been from Catholics and 37% from females. The goal of the Police Service is to appoint 540 police officers annually, and preliminary data indicate that the recruitment competitions six and seven now in progress will produce merit pools of approximately 900 and 800 qualified applicants respectively. This would be more than the Police Service is able to accept into training, but allows the Police Service to select only the most qualified applicants. Our own policing experiences confirm that this is an enviable position for any police organisation to be in.

In June of 2002 the Police Service contracted Grafton Recruitment to assist in the recruitment of civilian support staff. Grafton's programme for recruiting civilians is well designed and innovative, and meets contemporary policing and human resource standards. It includes the participation of independent community observers to evaluate the adequacy of testing facilities, and whether assessment processes follow established protocols. A quality assurance programme is also in place. The Police Service has appointed 117 civilian support staff from the eight merit pools generated by Grafton (see also Areas of Concern regarding civilianisation).

The respective legislative frameworks allowing police personnel exchange are now in place in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Negotiations with staffing associations regarding



respective benefits are reported to be ongoing but at the time of writing, had not achieved significant results (see also Areas of Concern below). Operational and other cooperation continues, and legislation is in place allowing for joint PSNI/Garda Síochána investigative teams for cross-border incidents. This is a central component of integrated European policing. The loan of PSNI water cannon to the Garda for the Dublin G-8 summit in May of 2004, and the preceding training of Garda officers in their use, is a recent example of viable cooperation. The third PSNI/Garda conference is scheduled for November of 2004, in the Republic of Ireland.

### **Areas of Concern**

Ongoing efforts by certain individuals and groups to threaten and intimidate DPP members and others who volunteer to serve their communities remain a concern. The Independent Commission recognised that the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships would be cornerstones of police accountability and community representation. This effective level of cooperation now threatens existing criminal organisational power bases, and serves to frustrate their attempts to terrorise their own communities into quiescence and submission. Aside from denying the considerable progress that has been made on policing reform to date – an objective supported by the majority of people in Northern Ireland – these acts are also profoundly contrary and damaging to any principle of democracy and open society. Nonetheless, it is our view that these incidents will ultimately fail to achieve their perverse objectives, not least because of the resolve and courage shown by ordinary men and women who wish a different future for their communities and their families.

There are three issues regarding the goal-setting process. While all local policing plans for 2004 – 2005 include references to locally developed objectives in addition to those established by the Policing Board, there was evidence of variation in the degree of collaboration between the Police Service and community partners. Interviews and documents provided confirm certain communication challenges during the setting of objectives. However, police commanders can make use of this first year's experience to assess opportunities for improvement for the next planning cycle.

While the primary efforts of the Policing Board and the Police Service focus on reducing crime and improving crime clearance rates, local community interests tend to reflect concerns based on quality of life issues. These include noise complaints, vandalism and underage drinking. While such views are not necessarily mutually exclusive, DCU Commanders will need to find an appropriate balance among these competing perspectives and demands.

Progress and challenges on the PSNI collaborating more effectively with DPPs to establish local objectives, with both parties taking responsibility for outcomes, has already been reported. Another step in the process will require the Policing Board, in collaboration with the Police Service, to ensure greater recognition of commonly emerging local goals in the annual Policing Plan. The Policing Board inherited a planning structure heavily dependent on indicators of efficiency for measuring success. Success of the policing with the community model is best measured by a combination of measures of efficiency and effectiveness. Objectives and performance indicators in the Policing Plan 2004 – 2005 are beginning to recognise this need for balance.

The adequate resourcing of Neighbourhood Policing Teams is a continuing concern to the Policing Board, District Policing Partnerships and the Oversight Commissioner. In the DCUs visited, Commanders were uncertain as to their ability to staff neighbourhood patrols and provide consistent walking beats, particularly given the requirements flowing from parades and public order. Where a DCU has not fielded a crime team, neighbourhood patrol teams were found to be involved in targeted enforcement and surveillance operations. There is still no formal Service Level Agreements between DCUs and Training Branch, which if in place, might provide a framework for Beat Officer and Investigator training for front line personnel.

The Independent Commission recognised the unique situation in Northern Ireland, and the need for effective crowd control measures to protect both the public and police officers. They recommended urgent research into an alternative to the Plastic Baton Round (PBR). The NIO's Steering Group has conducted research into a viable alternative to the PBR, and has published its findings in four thorough and comprehensive research reports. The fourth report was released in January of 2004 and identifies the Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) as a replacement to the PBR. This replacement is scheduled to take effect in the Summer of 2005, assuming all testing is completed and logistical requirements are addressed.

This raises two concerns: first, while the selection of the AEP is a positive development, the AEP is of course simply a safer projectile round, in other words a replacement rather than an alternative. There are caveats to this concern however: 1) the police still need an effective "tool box" of means and methods for effective crowd control, until such time as societal tensions and protest can manifest themselves non-violently; 2) the AEP is undoubtedly a less lethal, more effective projectile than the PBR and is welcomed in that sense; and, 3) there are at present no identifiable alternative means in the world that can deal effectively and in a less than lethal manner with the public order needs of Northern Ireland.

The second concern revolves around the length of time it has taken for the Government and the Police Service to conclude their research and make a determination as to the existence and viability of an alternative to the PBR, and to subsequently communicate to the public whether a viable alternative exists. Essentially, as we have previously expressed, the research initiative should not continue indefinitely, given that circumstances on the ground have not changed in any meaningful way during the search for an alternative, and that interested parties and the public still believe that alternatives to the PBR are available. To their credit, the NIO Steering Group has taken an international leadership role in the ongoing advocacy and search for less than lethal alternatives.

The Independent Commission reflected concerns about the high level of sickness absence, and made recommendations to address this concern. Since coming into effect in 2003 the Managing Attendance Policy, designed to reduce sickness absence, has resulted in a steady decline in the number of officers on long-term sick leave; this is due in part to increased medical retirements. DCU Commanders interviewed note that since Headquarters made the reduction of absenteeism a priority, personnel have responded well, although Commanders view the sanctions available to them as inadequate. Overall PSNI sickness absence figures continue to compare unfavourably with similar figures for the UK generally, and there are indications that reductions in sickness absence may be "plateauing". If so, this area will need to be monitored closely by the Police Service and Policing Board. Oversight will continue to monitor results achieved.



The pace of civilianisation, some five years after the release of the Independent Commission's report, remains a concern. This has also been recognised as a concern by the Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in his report released in August of 2004. Although 335 police posts have been civilianised since 2001/2002, the ambitious goals established in the Human Resources Planning Strategy remain unrealised. Continuing uncertainties around funding for and organisational commitments to further civilianisation remain. The Human Resources Planning Strategy estimates the potential reclassification of some 650 positions from police to civilian before April of 2005, however this will not be accomplished. A pending review of the security situation in Northern Ireland has resulted in any further progress being suspended until the results of the review are known. The recruitment of 260 Station Enquiry Assistants is part of the Planning Strategy, and presents an excellent opportunity to impact on the representational make up of the civilian workforce. As a result, civilianisation goals remain in question, which is a continuing concern.

An ongoing concern relates to the representative nature of the future civilian workforce. The Government's August 2001 Implementation Plan committed to developing a "package of measures" which would ultimately create a more representative PSNI civilian workforce, and one which would also be more effectively integrated into the Police Service. However, even though the Police Service has progressed some of these measures in an effort to move toward a workforce representative of the whole community, no formalised plan or strategy with goals and time lines to accomplish these objectives has been developed.

Although the Police Service faced certain unique challenges in addressing the representativeness of its civilian workforce, challenges different from those faced in the recruitment of police officers, the opportunities that presented themselves to the Police Service were not maximised. As a result the community background of the Police Service's civilian workforce has not changed significantly: between 1999 and April of 2004 the percentage of Catholic civilian staff rose from 12.3% of the total number of civilian staff, to 14.4%, an increase of 2.1% over a four-year period. Clearly, the package of measures currently being employed is not producing the results intended by the Independent Commission, or at least at a rate similar to that of regular police officers. The consequence for the future is that the PSNI will have a statistically representative body of police officers, however a statistically unrepresentative civilian workforce.

The Police Service has provided the oversight team with numerous documents to demonstrate the completion of a comprehensive audit of the police estate, as well as a strategy for achieving an effective and efficient police estate to meet policing objectives. Following a close review and evaluation of these documents by the oversight team, it was determined that there was still no evidence of a comprehensive audit or an estate strategy. This calls into question the Police Service's ability to gain maximum efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the sizeable estate under its control. The Police Service advised that, following an estate strategy session in November of 2003, Regional ACCs and DCU Commanders were tasked to conduct an estate audit. This audit would constitute an integral component of the estate strategy, however this was still under review by the Police Service at the time of writing.

The risk factor on the full implementation of the IT strategy remains high. While a revised Information and Communications Services (ICS) Strategy Implementation Plan is detailed and confidently presented, its weakest link remains the design for integrating the systems architecture, as well as actual implementation. The PSNI has yet to demonstrate ICS's capacity to perform at

the world class level envisioned by the Independent Commission. At the user end, Commanders admit that in some instances even very basic technology is under-utilised, and that many officers require further computer training. HMIC's Baseline Review of the PSNI, released in August of 2004, reached a similar conclusion.

In 1999 the Independent Commission noted that there should be a slimmer structure at Headquarters, one that reflects a shift of focus towards policing with the community. However, consistent progress on reducing the size of Headquarters with a view to putting more police officers on patrol has proven difficult to achieve, particularly as the Police Service continues to restructure, reallocate and devolve functions and authorities to lower command levels. As reported by the Policing Board's independent observer on human resources in January of 2004, despite the reductions of personnel at Headquarters the number of police officers actually reallocated to DCUs is 73.

An emerging concern relates to the uncertainty surrounding the future number of DCUs. The Independent Commission recommended 29 DCUs, and their concomitant District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) so that their boundaries were coterminous with local government. This would serve to strengthen ties and relationships between the police and the community. This would also serve to enhance police responsiveness to the community's concerns and policing priorities. The Independent Commission also recommended that the number of DCUs should be rationalised when the number of districts was reduced. It also recognised that, in the interim, smaller DCUs share resources – or are brigaded – for the sake of efficiency. A great deal of effort and expense has gone into realising the goals spelled out above, and our concern is that the principle of local accountability and police-community identity could be undermined in the absence of: 1) actual political and Government progress on reducing the number of districts; and 2) a detailed and community-consultative plan on exactly how the Independent Commission's principles of local accountability and community partnership will be maintained.

A decision has been made to phase out the Full Time Reserve (FTR) commencing in April of 2005, subject to a security review by the Chief Constable which is due in September of 2004. The uncertainty surrounding the final status of the FTR, coupled with ongoing negotiations regarding FTR severance and employment opportunities with other police forces, has caused a great deal of concern for both Reserve members and the communities in which they serve. The result of this uncertainty, the failure to bring the Part Time Reserve up to its recommended strength, and the "operational gap" that could be created by removing FTR members from their more operational roles (see also Recommendation 103), means that this state of anxiety will continue. Our primary concern in this regard, some five years after the Independent Commission made its recommendations, is that unless decisions are made and implemented, this state of unease will increase and affect both operations and the communities served by the PSNI.

There continues to be a lack of support for FTR members who seek other employment in policing, as recommended by the Independent Commission, or having their service in the FTR recognised by other UK police services. In addition, it is clear that approximately half of all FTR members remain deployed in operational duties, or perform critical operational support functions. The consequences of not having a transitional plan in place to deal with this, should the decision be made to phase out the FTR beginning in 2005, is an 'operational gap' that has not as yet been addressed. Any phase out needs to be synchronised with a build-up of the Part Time Reserve, 13 as originally envisioned by the Independent Commission.



A decision was publicly announced on 9 September 2004 and widely covered. The details of the decision will be examined during the upcoming evaluation to ensure that it advances the Independent Commission's recommendation of eventually phasing out the Full Time Reserve, that it deals with the operational gap issue we have identified, and that the welfare of the men and women affected has been taken into account.

The four pilot sites selected by the Police Service to recruit Part Time Reserve officers do not fully meet the intent of the Independent Commission's recommendations. The intent was that PTR members be recruited from areas in which there are few PTR members or none at all. While the Police Service's revised PTR programme is in and of itself a success, three of the four pilot sites selected are in predominantly non-Catholic areas. In addition, the test sites do not meet the criteria of being areas from which there are currently few PTR members.

Although the release of Police Service General Order 17/2004, Registration of Notifiable Interests, in April of 2004 indicates long-delayed progress on the registration of notifiable interests, this process has since been halted. In this instance the suspension of the process is in response to a judicial review launched recently. While the legal review must run its course, it remains disappointing that some five years after the Independent Commission made this recommendation, designed to reflect openness and transparency within the Police Service, it has still not been implemented.

With respect to exchanges of personnel between the Garda and the Police Service, it is disappointing that after five years no actual results have been delivered on this recommendation. These recommendations were not only designed to enhance cooperation, but allow the police service to experience an infusion of different ideas and experience. Given the lack of results beyond a legal framework and protocols, the level of commitment to "putting people on the ground" will be a matter for respective governments, the Garda Commissioner, Chief Constable and the Policing Board to pursue more actively.

▶▶ **human rights**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

Quoting the 1998 Belfast Agreement, the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland noted that the fundamental purpose of policing should be the: “protection and vindication of the human rights of all”. In order to achieve this goal, the Independent Commission recommended that the Police Service develop a: “comprehensive programme of action to focus policing in Northern Ireland on a human rights-based approach”, and that the performance of the Police Service in implementing such a programme be monitored closely by the Policing Board. The Independent Commission recommended several specific actions that the Police Service should take to bring about a greater emphasis on human rights in Northern Ireland policing. They were:

- promulgation of a new oath for all serving officers;
- development of a code of ethics;
- expansion of human rights training for all police officers, recruits as well as serving officers, and civilian staff;
- incorporation of human rights awareness and practice in the performance evaluation of individuals; and,
- appointment of a lawyer to advise the Police Service about the human rights implications of its activities.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The PSNI’s Human Rights Plan was published in May of 2004. It had been approved by the PSNI in early 2003 after extensive consultation inside and outside the PSNI, however publication was delayed in order to allow the Policing Board’s Human Rights Advisor to review and comment on the draft. The Human Rights Plan published in May of 2004 meets the oversight team’s performance indicators.

The Policing Board’s human rights advisory team have developed an exhaustive plan for evaluating the human rights performance of the PSNI, including an action plan for collecting information, interviewing key persons, and observing police operations. The first monitoring report is scheduled for publication in the Autumn of 2004.

### Areas of Concern

The oversight team will continue to monitor the PSNI’s training, education, and development activities very closely. This is not because of the lack of progress, but because of the centrality of training, education and development activities with regard to creating a human rights culture within the Police Service. The staff of training Branch have achieved administrative compliance for most our human rights-related performance indicators, something which should not be overlooked.



However, we remain concerned that there is no clear qualitative standard to be achieved with respect to human rights instruction and impact. In such instances systematic evaluations done both by the PSNI and outside bodies, including the Policing Board and relevant NGOs, may prove constructive in monitoring for a changing ethos and culture. Upgrading the human rights training of serving instructors is also important, as is the effective delivery of the human rights material that the curriculum auditing process has called for. As our performance indicators stipulate, persons from outside the Police Service should play a role in both enterprises.

#### **Future Directions**

Because most of the administrative structures for implementing the Independent Commission's recommendations on human rights are in place, oversight will focus on continuing an evaluation of performance. Particular attention will be paid to PSNI human rights training, the process for evaluating the human rights performance of individual officers, and the Policing Board's first human rights monitoring report. This is due to be published in the Autumn of 2004. Oversight will also confirm that monitoring human rights performance is an ongoing activity for the PSNI, and that the current Human Rights Plan is reformulated at regular intervals, with specification of new objectives and timetables for achievement. Oversight will also confirm how much responsibility the PSNI is accepting for evaluating the impact of human rights training.

## **B. Recommendation Summary**

### **Recommendation 1: Human Rights Based Approach to Policing**

Patten Recommendation:

1. There should be a comprehensive programme of action to focus policing in Northern Ireland on a human rights-based approach.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

A human rights programme of action has been developed and published by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. It creates clear command responsibility with respect to compliance with human rights. It sets forth both short and longer-range goals, with a schedule for implementation as appropriate. Some of the planned activities have in fact already occurred. The published version was circulated for commentary by people outside the Police Service and was responsive to the "best practices" of other police services.

### **Recommendation 2: New Police Oath**

Patten Recommendation:

2. There should be a new oath, taken individually by all new and existing police officers, expressing an explicit commitment to upholding human rights.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**



Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved with respect to recruit officers as well as serving officers. The Police Service provided evidence regarding the number of serving police officers who have acknowledged the new oath by means of a signed statement.

### **Recommendation 3: Code of Ethics**

Patten Recommendation:

3. A new Code of Ethics should replace the existing, largely procedural code, integrating the European Convention on Human Rights into police practice. Codes of practice on all aspects of policing, including covert law enforcement techniques, should be strictly in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### **Recommendation 4: Training in Human Rights**

Patten Recommendation:

4. All police officers, and police civilians, should be trained (and updated as required) in the fundamental principles and standards of human rights and the practical implications for policing. The human rights dimensions should be integrated into every module of police training.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

A substantial number of serving police officers are being trained in courses whose curricula have been audited for human rights content. A programme is now in place for monitoring the delivery of instruction, however the PSNI should encourage non-police personnel to participate in the monitoring of delivery. In addition, in order to ensure that best value is being achieved, and that human rights training is helping to achieve organisational objectives, the PSNI's own assessments as to the effectiveness of human right training would prove beneficial.

Concerns have been raised that new instructors are not being trained sufficiently in human rights, especially with respect to their creating a culture of human rights sensitivity within the PSNI. In addition, that the human rights knowledge of serving instructors is not being updated as needed. This requires further examination during upcoming evaluations and will be an area of concern if confirmed. Although the Policing Board has undertaken a thorough evaluation of human rights knowledge within the PSNI, it is unclear how much responsibility the PSNI will assume for evaluating the impact of human rights training on the behaviour of police officers.

### **Recommendation 5: Appraisal of Human Rights Performance in Individuals**

Patten Recommendation:

5. Awareness of human rights issues and respect for human rights in the performance of duty should be an important element in the appraisal of individuals in the police service.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation (see also Recommendation 77).

**Recommendation 6: Appointment of Human Rights Lawyers**

Patten Recommendation:

6. A lawyer with specific expertise in the field of human rights should be appointed to the staff of the police legal services.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

**Recommendation 7: Monitoring Human Rights Performance**

Patten Recommendation:

7. The performance of the police service as a whole in respect of human rights, as in other respects, should be monitored closely by the Policing Board.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable**

The Policing Board's human-rights monitoring team have developed an exhaustive programme of evaluation, including a detailed action plan for the collection of information. The first monitoring report is scheduled for publication in the Autumn of 2004.



▶▶ **accountability**



## **A. Chapter Summary**

### **Background**

The Independent Commission devoted 35 of its 175 recommendations to providing oversight mechanisms designed to ensure the accountability of policing to the public and the law. Its recommendations cover the role of the Police Ombudsman and the creation of a Policing Board, District Policing Partnerships, a Commissioner and complaints tribunal for covert law enforcement operations, and the strengthening of financial accountability.

### **Progress and Accomplishments**

As noted in our Report No. 10, released in April of 2004, all the institutions called for by the Independent Commission for ensuring accountability of the Police Service are now in place and performing at a high level of professionalism. The District Policing Partnerships (DPP), which were the last element to be created, have finished their first year of operation; the lone exception is the Dungannon and South Tyrone DPP. Although this was not formed as at 30 April 2004, the anticipated formation date is now October of 2004.

The activities of those DPPs visited meet with our performance indicators. DPPs have developed a sense of identity and purpose appropriate to each district, and both public and private meetings regularly take place. Local strategic policing plans have been developed in cooperation with respective District Command Units. In addition, administrative activities are occurring as called for and relations between elected and independent members appear generally harmonious.

### **Areas of Concern**

Ongoing efforts by certain individuals and groups to threaten and intimidate DPP members, as well as others who volunteer their time to serve their community and prevent crime, remain a concern. Aside from denying the significant progress that has been made to date on policing reform, such irresponsible acts are not only contrary to the principles of an open society, but to any notion of democratic participation and accountability.

Media and other reports show that the Police Service would prefer 12 – 15 DCUs rather than the 29 that currently exist. While this will ultimately be a matter for the Chief Constable, the Policing Board and Government to resolve, it must be remembered that in the interim 29 District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) have also been formed in order to allow local communities to engage with the Police Service in some meaningful way. Evidence clearly shows that most DPPs function as intended and are seen by both the community and the Police Service as necessary and beneficial. It would seem pointless to have created these 29 bodies only to have most of them made redundant before they can begin to serve their purpose. There is no evidence to date of any community consultative plan to deal with this eventuality.

### **Future Directions**

Oversight will focus primarily on the performance of DPPs, especially the quality of their interaction with DCUs. Oversight will also look at the relationship of DPPs to both Community-Police Liaison Committees and the newly created Community Safety Partnerships. A closer examination of the human rights and accountability recommendations, which will include the effect of the DPPs, will take place in December of 2004 and be reported in May of 2005.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendations 8 and 9: Creation and Responsibilities of the Policing Board

Patten Recommendations:

8. An entirely new Policing Board should be created, to replace the present Police Authority.
9. The statutory primary function of the Policing Board should be to hold the Chief Constable and the police service publicly to account.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### Recommendation 10: Police Planning Process

10. The Policing Board should set objectives and priorities for policing over a 3 to 5 year period, taking account of any longer term objectives or principles set by the Secretary of State or successor. It should then be responsible for adopting a 3 to 5 year strategy, prepared by the Chief Constable through a process of discussion with the Board, which should reflect the objectives and priorities set by the Board.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

### Recommendation 11: Annual Policing Plan

Patten Recommendations:

11. The Board should be responsible for adopting an Annual Policing Plan, developed by the Chief Constable, through a process of discussion with the Board, on the basis of objectives and priorities set by the Board, and within the agreed 3 to 5 year strategy.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

### Recommendation 12: Annual Policing Budget

Patten Recommendations:

12. The Board should be responsible for negotiating the annual policing budget with the Northern Ireland Office, or with the appropriate successor body after devolution of policing. It should then allocate the police service budget to the Chief Constable and monitor police performance against the budget.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.



### **Recommendation 13: Monitoring Strategic Trends**

Patten Recommendation:

13. The Board should monitor police performance against the Annual Policing Plan and the 3 to 5 year strategy. It should watch crime trends and patterns, and police performance in public order situations. It should also follow such things as recruitment patterns and trends, including fair employment and equal opportunities performance, and training needs. It should assess public satisfaction with the police service and, in liaison with the Police Ombudsman, patterns and trends in complaints against the police.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Police Ombudsman**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

### **Recommendation 14: Powers of Appointment**

Patten Recommendation:

14. The Board should have the responsibility for appointing all chief officers and civilian equivalents and for determining the length of their contracts. All appointments should be subject to approval by the Secretary of State (and successor after devolution) and the Chief Constable should be consulted in relation to the appointment of subordinate chief officers and civilian equivalents. The Board should have the power to call upon the Chief Constable to retire in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness subject to the approval of the Secretary of State (and successor) and to the right to make representations as at present. Similarly, the Board should have the same power in relation to other chief officers and civilian equivalents exercisable subject to the approval of the Secretary of State (and successor) and the same right to make representations and after consultation with the Chief Constable. The Secretary of State should have the power to require the Policing Board to call upon the Chief Constable to retire on the same grounds but this power should be exercisable only after consultation with the Board and subject to the same right to make representations already referred to. Additionally, after devolution the relevant Northern Ireland minister should have power to call for the retirement of the Chief Constable on the same grounds but this should be subject to the agreement of the Policing Board and the approval of the Secretary of State with an equivalent right to make representations. The Board should be the disciplinary authority for chief officers and civilian equivalents.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.



**Recommendations 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19: Co-ordination with Other Agencies, Composition of the Policing Board, Background of Board Members, Appointment of Independent Members, Appointment of the Chairman of the Policing Board**

Patten Recommendations:

15. The Policing Board should co-ordinate its work closely with other agencies whose work touches on public safety, including education, environment, economic development, housing and health authorities, as well as social services, youth services and the probation service, and with appropriate non-governmental organisations.
16. The Policing Board should have 19 members, 10 of whom should be Assembly members drawn from the parties that comprise the new Northern Ireland Executive, selected on the d'Hondt system, who should not at the same time hold ministerial office in the Executive.
17. The nine independent members of the Board should be selected from a range of different fields - including business, trade unions, voluntary organisations, community groups and the legal profession - with the aim of finding a group of individuals representative of the community as a whole, with the expertise both to set policing priorities and to probe and scrutinise different areas of police performance, from management of resources to the safeguarding of human rights. Their appointments should be for four years; but if it were necessary for the purpose of continuity to ensure that not all Board positions fell vacant at the same time as elections to the Assembly, some of these appointments could be for an initial period of two years.
18. The independent members should be appointed by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, until such time as responsibility for policing is devolved, at which point the appointments should be made by the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister acting together. Until devolution, the Secretary of State should also determine the remuneration and expenses of Board members, in consultation with the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.
19. A Board member of high quality and standing in the community should be appointed by the Secretary of State to be the first chairman of the Board, with the agreement of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, for an initial term of four years.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Compliance with these recommendations has been achieved.

**Recommendation 20: Devolution of Responsibility for Policing**

Patten Recommendations:

20. Responsibility for policing should be devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive as soon as possible, except for matters of national security.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Northern Ireland Executive**

Administrative compliance for this recommendation has not been completed. Responsibility for policing currently rests with the Policing Board and the Government, as represented by the Secretary of State. Devolution continues to be an area of active political interest and debate.



### **Recommendation 21: Devolution of Responsibility for Policing**

Patten Recommendations:

21. The powers of the Policing Board proposed in this report, in relation to both government (as now represented by the Secretary of State) and the Chief Constable, should in no way be diminished when the government role in the tripartite arrangement passes to the Northern Ireland Executive.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Northern Ireland Executive**

Administrative compliance for this recommendation has not been completed. Responsibility for policing currently rests with the Policing Board and the Government, as represented by the Secretary of State. This issue continues to be an area of active political interest and debate.

### **Recommendation 22: Simplification of Roles in Tripartite Arrangements**

Patten Recommendation:

22. The provisions of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 should be simplified so that the respective roles of the Secretary of State (or successor), the Policing Board and the Chief Constable are clear.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### **Recommendation 23: Repeal of Power to Issue Guidance to the Police**

Patten Recommendation:

23. The provision, in Section 39 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, that the Secretary of State may issue guidance to the police as to the exercise of their functions, should be repealed.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### **Recommendation 24: Operational Responsibility**

Patten Recommendation:

24. The Chief Constable should be deemed to have operational responsibility for the exercise of his or her functions and the activities of the police officers and civilian staff under his or her direction and control.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

The development of written policy with respect to this recommendation is the joint responsibility of the Policing Board and the Police Service. The Northern Ireland Office's responsibility has been discharged with the enactment of section 33 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. The Policing Board and the Police Service have decided not to develop written policy at this time. Nevertheless, they are explicitly aware of the issue and are discussing appropriate practices on an ongoing basis.

**Recommendation 25: Powers of Policing Board to Require Reports**

Patten Recommendations:

25. The Policing Board should have the power to require the Chief Constable to report on any issue pertaining to the performance of his functions or those of the police service. The obligation to report should extend to explaining operational decisions. If there is a disagreement between the Board and the Chief Constable over whether it is appropriate for a report to be provided on a particular matter, it should be for the Chief Constable to refer the question to the Secretary of State for a decision as to whether the Board's requirement should stand.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendation 26: Powers of Policing**

Patten Recommendations:

26. The Policing Board should have the power, subject only to the same limitation set out in paragraph 6.22, to follow up any report from the Chief Constable by initiating an inquiry into any aspect of the police service or police conduct. Depending on the circumstances, the Board should have the option to request the Police Ombudsman, the Inspectorate of Constabulary or the Audit Office to conduct or contribute to such an inquiry, or to use the Board's own staff, or even private consultants for such a purpose.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendation 27: Establishment of District Police Partnerships**

Patten Recommendation:

27. Each District Council should establish a District Policing Partnership (DPP), as a committee of the Council, with a majority elected membership, the remaining independent members to be selected by the Council with the agreement of the Policing Board. The chair of the DPP should be held by an elected member, with rotation between parties from year to year.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/District Councils**

With the exception of the Dungannon and South Tyrone District Policing Partnership, compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. The oversight team was informed that the Dungannon and South Tyrone District Policing Partnership would now be formed, however it is unlikely that this will take place before October of 2004.



#### **Recommendation 28: Arrangements for Belfast**

Patten Recommendation:

28. The District Policing Partnership in Belfast should have four sub-groups, covering North, South, East and West Belfast.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Belfast District Policing Partnership/Chief Constable**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

#### **Recommendation 29: Meetings between DPPS and District Commanders**

Patten Recommendation:

29. There should be monthly meetings between the DPP and the police District Commander, at which the police should present reports and answer questions and the Board should reflect community concerns and priorities to the police. The views expressed by DPPs should be taken fully into account by the police and by the Policing Board in the formulation of policing plans and strategies at the central level.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. Although meetings between the DPPs and DCU Commanders do not always occur monthly, in the DPPs reviewed by the oversight team meetings with Commanders are frequent, and the views of the DPPs are being taken into account. To confirm similar arrangements and relationships in all DCUs, this recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation (see also Recommendation 44).

#### **Recommendation 30: Annual Report of District Police Partnerships**

Patten Recommendations:

30. The DPP should submit an annual report to the District Council and publish it.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/District Councils**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. The first 20 DPP Annual Reports have now been provided to the Board for analysis, with the remainder to follow. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Recommendation 31: Administration Costs of District Police Partnerships**

Patten Recommendations:

31. The approved administration costs of the DPP should attract a 75% grant from the Policing Board, the remaining 25% to be funded by the District Council.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/District Councils**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

**Recommendation 32: Expenditures by District Police Partnerships**

Patten Recommendation:

32. District Councils should have the power to contribute an amount initially up to the equivalent of a rate of 3p in the pound towards the improved policing of the district, which could enable the DPP to purchase additional services from the police and other statutory agencies, or from the private sector.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Executive Committee**

This recommendation was not adopted, and therefore not provided for in legislation.

**Recommendation 33: Consultative Forums at Local Level**

Patten Recommendation:

33. It should be the aim of every police beat manager to have a consultative forum in his or her patrol area.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/DPPs/Chief Constable**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. Some uncertainty remains regarding the coordination of the activities of DPPs, Community Safety Partnerships, Community Police Liaison Committees and Consultative Forums. Unless these institutions can complement each other's work, a duplication of efforts may result. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendation 34: Contacts between Policing Board and DPPs**

Patten Recommendation:

34. The Policing Board should maintain regular contact with the DPPs, through periodic meetings of chairpersons, annual conferences, seminars, training courses and by including them in the circulation of information.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/DPPs**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendation 35: Meetings of the Policing Board**

Patten Recommendation:

35. The Policing Board should meet in public once a month, to receive a report from the Chief Constable.

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.



### **Recommendation 36: Meetings of the District Policing Partnerships**

Patten Recommendation:

36. District Policing Partnerships should meet in public once a month, and procedures should allow for members of the public to address questions to the Board and, through the chair, to the police.

#### **Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/DPPs/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

### **Recommendation 37: Openness of the Police Service**

Patten Recommendation:

37. The police service should take steps to improve its transparency. The presumption should be that everything should be available for public scrutiny unless it is in the public interest - not the police interest - to hold it back.

#### **Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

As noted in previous oversight reports, the PSNI approved its Transparency Policy in April of 2003 following consultation with a number of organisations. These included the Policing Board, Police Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Committee for the Administration of Justice, among others. The Policy clearly spells out the need and reasons for transparency and openness, and notes the importance of this approach in ensuring a successful policing with the community strategy. Critical to sound community policing will be the PSNI's willingness and ability to engage in active and meaningful consultation. The consultations undertaken to develop the Transparency Policy are a good example of this.

The public information leaflet produced by the Police Service regarding the Freedom of Information Act (2000) is an excellent example of a clear and concise way to disseminate information; it is important to remember however, that organisational transparency goes beyond the mechanics of Freedom of Information legislation, crucial though such legislation is. Public input into areas such as training, as well as ensuring the greatest possible degree of public access to police properties, are equally important in demonstrating an ethos of openness and transparency (see also Recommendations 52, 53, 133 and 148).

The Police Service has developed a comprehensive and sophisticated website that provides information on internal structures, objectives and statistics, PSNI internal policies, and DPP policing plans among other things. The website represents a leading practice with respect to information now freely made available, particularly when compared to the more reluctant approaches of the past. Some of the policies of potential interest to the public, including those on police use of force, the wearing of name badges and the Transparency Policy itself, are not easy to locate on the website, nevertheless the Transparency Policy marks a significant step forward for the Police Service. This recommendation will now be subject to verification and ongoing monitoring to ensure that transparency is effective and continues to progress as intended by the Independent Commission.

**Recommendation 38: Police Ombudsman**

Patten Recommendation:

38. The Police Ombudsman should be, and be seen to be, an important institution in the governance of Northern Ireland, and should be staffed and resourced accordingly. The Ombudsman should take initiatives, not merely react to specific complaints received. He/she should exercise the power to initiate inquiries or investigations even if no specific complaint has been received. The Ombudsman should be responsible for compiling data on trends and patterns in complaints against the police, or accumulations of complaints against individual officers, and should work with the police to address emerging issues from this data. He/she should have a dynamic co-operative relationship with both the police and the Policing Board, as well as other bodies involved in community safety issues. He/she should exercise the right to investigate and comment on police policies and practices, where these are perceived to give rise to difficulties, even if the conduct of individual officers may not itself be culpable, and should draw any such observations to the attention of the Chief Constable and the Policing Board. The Ombudsman should have access to all past reports of the RUC.

**Lead Responsibility: Police Ombudsman**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendations 39, 40, and 41: Covert Law Enforcement**

Patten Recommendations:

- 39. New legislation on covert policing should be fully compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights and should have the same application in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the United Kingdom.
- 40. There should be a commissioner for covert law enforcement in Northern Ireland.
- 41. There should be a complaints tribunal, comprising senior members of the legal profession, with full powers to investigate cases referred to it (either directly or through the Police Ombudsman) involving covert law enforcement operations.

**Lead Responsibility: Home Office/NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.

**Recommendation 42: Strengthening of Financial Accountability**

Patten Recommendation:

42. There should be a substantial strengthening of financial accountability, including a fully costed Annual Policing Plan; a strong audit department within the Policing Board, staffed by experts in budgeting, financial management and value for money programmes; and more systematic use of the Audit Office to study police resource management, either at the behest of the Policing Board or on its own initiative.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**



Administrative compliance with this recommendation has been completed, and it will be subject to ongoing monitoring (see also Recommendations 90, 91 and 92, as well as HMIC's Baseline Review of the PSNI, released August of 2004).

#### **Recommendation 43: Designation of Chief Constable as Sub-Accounting Officer**

Patten Recommendation:

43. The Chief Constable should be designated a sub-accounting officer, in addition to the Chief Executive of the Policing Board, so that either or both may be called, together with the Permanent Under Secretary as principal accounting officer, to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

There is no new information to report. This recommendation will be subject to ongoing monitoring.



▶▶ **policing with the community**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission recommended that policing with the community be the core function of the Police Service and of every police station. Crucial to the new beginning envisioned by the Independent Commission, the theme of policing with the community has implications for the structure of the Police Service, for its management, culture, recruitment and training. The long term goal was to deliver truly effective, locally-based policing that would not only address some of the current issues unique to Northern Ireland, but put it at the leading edge of policing in the United Kingdom, Ireland and internationally.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service published District Policing Plans for all 29 DCUs in April of 2004. This initial annual planning cycle afforded District Policing Partnerships the opportunity to collaborate in the development of local policing objectives, and represents a promising beginning to a crucial relationship. Local plans are available to the public in booklet form or on the PSNI website.

A rigorous user needs assessment resulted in an electronic problem solving folder for use by neighbourhood policing teams. This capability will enable the efficient recording and management of local community priorities for crime and disorder; scrutiny of open files by all levels of operational managers, and identification of good practices for sharing across organisational lines. The folder is integral to an electronic briefing system also made available in early 2004. Local supervisors can now deliver consistent, informative daily briefings and de-briefings to front line police officers. These two utilities constitute a best practice in contemporary policing circles.

A new, annual "Policing with the Community Awards" programme was launched in May of 2004. This recognises individual police officers and police-community partnerships for outstanding achievements. The Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships were involved in the nomination process. The Department of Media and Public Relations is helping District Commanders manage both their public information releases and their responses to the media on emerging incidents. With regard to the broader recognition of the PSNI's efforts, Castlereagh DCU was recently honoured by the International Association of Chiefs of Police as one of two finalists for its prestigious Community Policing Award.

Some District Commands are now supplementing foot patrols with bicycle patrols. These police officers, riding on urban streets, in housing estates and in parks, are highly visible and mobile and create an excellent impression of accessibility and rapid response. The Police Service also deployed motorised quad bikes for patrolling some walking trails and other less accessible public areas.

The Analysis Centre helped organise and host its second conference designed to educate front line police officers about the National Intelligence Model (NIM). This took place in May of 2004. The NIM prescribes the core principles and practices of operational management in the Police Service, consistent with established policing practices in the rest of the UK.

### Areas of Concern

While all local policing plans for 2004 – 2005 include references to locally developed objectives in

addition to those established by the Policing Board, there was evidence of variation in the degree of collaboration between the Police Service and community partners. Interviews with representatives of both parties confirm certain communication problems during the setting of objectives. However, police commanders can make use of this first year's experience to assess opportunities for improvement for the next planning cycle. While the primary objectives of the Policing Board and the Police Service focus on reducing crime and improving crime clearance rates, local community interests tend to reflect concerns based on quality of life issues such as noise complaints, vandalism and underage drinking. Such differences are not necessarily mutually exclusive; nevertheless DCU Commanders will need to find an appropriate balance between these competing perspectives and demands.

The adequate resourcing of Neighbourhood Policing Teams is a continuing concern to the Policing Board, District Policing Partnerships and the Oversight Commissioner. In the DCUs visited Commanders were uncertain as to their ability to staff neighbourhood patrols and provide consistent walking beats, particularly given the onset of the parades and public order issues. Where a District Command Unit has not fielded a crime team, neighbourhood patrol teams were found involved in targeted enforcement and surveillance operations. There is still no Service Level Agreement between DCUs and Training Branch that would provide a framework for the training of front line personnel in things such as the Beat Officer's Course and the Investigator's Course.

Our earlier reports have recognised the considerable achievements of the Police Service in evolving to a policing with the community model, through structural changes and patrol practices. What the Independent Commission recommended was a style of policing where the police worked in partnership with the community, the community participated in its own policing, and both work together to mobilise resources to solve problems affecting public safety. To paraphrase the words of the Commission, partnership between the police and the community goes well beyond formal arrangements, and beyond the less formal community committees. Policing with the community is at least as much a matter of philosophy as it is one of method, and it amounts to a profound shift in police and community thinking. At present it is not clear to what degree this shift has in fact occurred, and developments will be examined in greater detail during upcoming oversight visits and in the thematic report on policing with the community.

Progress on the Police Service and District Policing Partnerships collaborating more effectively in establishing local objectives, with both parties taking responsibility for achievement, has already been reported. Another step in the process will require the Policing Board, in collaboration with the Police Service, to ensure greater recognition of commonly emerging local goals in the annual Policing Plan. The Policing Board inherited a planning structure heavily dependent on indicators of efficiency for measuring success. Success of a policing with the community model is best gauged by a combination of measures of efficiency and effectiveness. Objectives and performance indicators in the Policing Plan 2004-2005 begin to recognise this need for balance.

#### **Future Directions**

Data will be collected during the evaluation visit in September of 2004, concerning overall progress in policing with the community efforts. A more detailed review and assessment will be reported in a thematic attachment in December of 2004.



## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 44: Community Policing as a Core Function

Patten Recommendation:

44. Policing with the community should be the core function of the police service and the core function of every police station.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

District Policing Plans were completed for all DCUs and made available to the public in April of 2004. Many district plans reflect close collaboration with the local District Policing Partnership (DPP), with detailed objectives, performance indicators and targets included. Interviews with Policing Board staff and DPP members suggest that not all DCU Commanders observe the need for close and continuing collaboration equally. Ongoing revisions to and updating of annual plans will ensure the increasing refinement of objectives and the sustainability of the relationship over the long term.

The Police Service launched a common electronic template for recording local problem solving projects in April of 2004. Users interviewed indicate that this new tool will be accepted readily by neighbourhood policing teams. The problem solving folder is an integral component of the new electronic duty briefing system recently introduced in all DCUs. In addition, the Intranet links police officers with crime reduction tools available on the UK Home Office website. Recent PSNI publications now made available to the public include 29 individual District Policing Plans for 2004-2005, as well as hate crime publications dealing with racial and homophobic incidents. Finally, Castlereagh DCU was named as one of two finalists for the International Association of Chiefs of Police's community policing awards, a notable achievement.

### Recommendation 45: Dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams

Patten Recommendation:

45. Every neighbourhood (or rural area) should have a dedicated policing team with lead responsibility for policing its area.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders**

There has been no significant change in the balance of resources allocated to the neighbourhood policing function and other priorities. Some DCUs have adopted minimum staffing policies for their response units, which at times resulted in resources being drawn away from neighbourhood policing teams. While reassignments to security duties were reported to be minimal for the last evaluation period, the imminent reassignment of front line police officers to new centralised major crime units was perceived in some DCUs as a threat to the full staffing of neighbourhood policing teams. There were also concerns about fulfilling neighbourhood policing responsibilities as a result of anticipated reassignments to cover the Summer parades season. The veracity of these concerns will be examined in more detail during our September evaluation.

Members of the Full Time Reserve (FTR) comprise between 25-30% of the larger neighbourhood policing teams. DCU Commanders are aware that there would be an impact on policing with the

community should the Chief Constable recommend that the FTR be phased out commencing in April of 2005. DCU Commanders report strong support for the neighbourhood policing teams from the community and DPP members. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between Training Branch and four DCUs are being piloted, with a further rollout scheduled for October of 2004. SLAs will provide a framework for the training of front line police personnel in things like neighbourhood policing and investigations (see also recommendation 132).

#### **Recommendation 46: Service in Neighbourhood Policing Teams**

Patten Recommendation:

46. Members of the policing team should serve at least three and preferably five years in the same neighbourhood. They should wear their names clearly displayed on their uniforms, and their uniforms should also bear the name of the locality for which they are responsible.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The provisions of General Order 13/2003 provide guidance on the wearing of name badges in a variety of duty circumstances. Practice was observed to be in accord with policy, however local interpretation of the security situation results in the varied application of this policy across the Police Service.

#### **Recommendation 47: Police Probationary Training**

Patten Recommendation:

47. All probationary police officers should undertake the operational phases of their probationary training doing team policing in the community.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

DCU Commanders are applying pragmatic solutions to meet the intent of this recommendation. Over 600 positions are established and allocated to neighbourhood policing teams, a number more than adequate to ensure that probationers are able to serve a portion of their time learning community policing skills. Interviews have established that in the DCUs consulted, the intent of this recommendation is being met.

#### **Recommendation 48: Patrolling on Foot**

Patten Recommendation:

48. Where practical, policing teams should patrol on foot.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders**

A number of DCUs are now supplementing foot beats with bicycle patrols, affording a high degree of visibility and mobility, particularly in some urban neighbourhoods and housing estates. The Police Service also deployed motorised quad bikes to patrol walking trails in some forested areas and beachfronts.



#### **Recommendation 49: Role of Neighbourhood Policing Teams**

Patten Recommendation:

49. Neighbourhood policing teams should be empowered to determine their own local priorities and set their own objectives, within the overall Annual Policing Plan and in consultation with community representatives.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders**

Local goals relating to community quality of life issues were included in DCU policing plans for 2004/2005. A new “Policing with the Community Awards” system combining recognition of individual officers and community partnerships was launched in May of 2004, the objective being the celebration of notable successes and the enhancement of partnerships. The Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships were involved in the nomination process.

#### **Recommendation 50: Crime and Complaint Pattern Analysis**

Patten Recommendation:

50. The Northern Ireland police should, both at a service-wide level and at patrol team level, conduct crime pattern and complaint pattern analysis to provide an information-led, problem-solving approach to policing. All police officers should be instructed in problem-solving techniques and encouraged to address the causes of problems as well as the consequences (the priority being to train beat managers and their teams); and they should be regularly appraised as to their performance in doing so.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The leadership of the Analysis Centre continue to display professionalism and creativity in training and in developing the crime analysis capacity of the Police Service. Analysts trained by the Centre, who now serve in DCUs and in Crime Department, totalled 72 as at 30 April 2004. There is a robust framework for training and continuous learning, a plan to develop career paths to encourage retention and an active foreign experience programme. This ensures that analysts are informed of new and innovative practices in other police services.

The Centre accepted a major role in the introductory phase of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), with a second conference held in May of 2004. Local planning and priority setting was included in the agenda. NIM training within the PSNI is consistent with the Intelligence Management Model for the UK. The Centre is also providing intelligence analysis training to Australian and Estonian police services.

**Recommendation 51: Attendance at Police Training Courses**

Patten Recommendation:

51. DPP members and other community leaders should be able to attend police training courses in problem-solving techniques.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The Policing Board, in cooperation with the Police Service, has assumed responsibility for providing DPP members with information about and training in collaborative problem solving. DPP managers attended the PSNI Leadership Conference in March of 2004. An invitation has been extended to DPP managers to join the seven-day Police Leadership Skills (PLS) programme, which has reserved two places in each PLS session for members of the community. A Leadership Grid course was held in June of 2004.





▶▶ **policing in a peaceful society**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission made several recommendations covering the appearance of police stations, appropriate types of patrol vehicles, and the need to increase devolved authority to District Commanders. In addition, recommendations included those on Army support, the use of emergency powers, administration of detention facilities, and other issues affecting the ability of the Police Service to deliver the kind of law enforcement service a peaceful society would require.

### Progress and Accomplishments

A Police Service press release published in May of 2004 shows that statistically, the security situation in Northern Ireland continued to improve for 2003/2004. For example, security related deaths have dropped by 50%, while shooting incidents are down by 40% and bombing incidents by 60%. The number of Armoured Landrovers (ALRs) used for regular patrol duties has decreased by 32% in one year. Over the same period the number of ALRs assigned to Tactical Support Groups has also decreased by 32%. Both the Oversight Commissioner and the Independent Reviewer of the Terrorism Act (2000) have analysed the use of emergency powers by the Police Service and report a significant decrease in the number of persons stopped under section 89 of the Terrorism Act. Reductions in the use of emergency stop and search powers, as well as measures including those listed above, indicate that the overall security situation continued to improve over time. This is to be welcomed.

Grosvenor Road has been selected by the Police Service as an alternative to Gough Barracks for the detention of terrorist suspects, in the event that the facility at Antrim is not available. This is considered good progress towards the ultimate goal of permanently closing the facility at Gough Barracks. Likewise, progress was made when the Police Service recently decided to reduce the number of custody suites from 22 to 17. This decision should permit the effective utilisation of available detention space necessary to process and detain both PACE and terrorist suspects, and allows the installation of CCTV in custody suites to proceed as intended.

The Police Service continues to make progress in the employment of Station Enquiry Assistants (SEAs). These are civilian staff intended to replace police officers currently assigned to receptionist duties at police station enquiry offices. An initial 86 SEAs have been selected, and a funding request for an additional 96 positions has been approved by the NIO and sent to the Treasury for approval.

### Areas of Concern

Our concerns with respect to estate resource management, noted in previous reports, remain. As of 30 April 2004 the oversight team had not been provided with a comprehensive estate strategy for the design and construction of new police stations, or the renovation of existing stations that will remain operational (see also Recommendations 52, 53 and 92, as well as HMIC's Baseline Review of the PSNI, released in August of 2004). Progress in this area is extremely important, both in terms of the normalisation of policing and advancing the Police Service's policing with the community objectives. The continued lack of a clear and comprehensive strategy makes the tracking of progress very difficult.

### Future Directions

The oversight team will continue to monitor the utilisation of SEAs as replacements for police officers, and examine the increased use of section 89 of the Terrorism Act (2000) by the Army and a concomitant decrease by the PSNI. The oversight team will look for progress on the development and implementation of a comprehensive estate strategy, consistent with the requirements of Recommendations 52 and 53. Progress on plans provided to reduce dependency on the Army will also be examined. The actual functioning of devolved authority will continue to be monitored.

### B. Recommendation Summary

#### Recommendations 52 and 53: Appearance of Police Stations

##### Patten Recommendations:

52. Police stations built from now on should have, so far as possible, the appearance of ordinary buildings; they should have low perimeter walls, and be clearly visible from the street; but they should have security features, which may be activated or reinforced as necessary.

53. Existing police stations should - subject to the security situation in their areas and to health and safety considerations - be progressively made less forbidding in appearance, more accessible to public callers and more congenial for those working in them. The public reception areas inside police stations should be made more welcoming, and civilian receptionists could replace police officers.

##### Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable

In November of 2003 the Chief Constable directed that a full and fundamental review of the police estate take place. As yet we have not been provided with the results of this review nor a comprehensive estate strategy. Such a strategy would include among other things short and long-range plans, timetables, costs and proposed financing for the design and construction of new police stations, or the renovation of existing police stations. In addition, it would incorporate more sensitive issues and questions involving station closures, the number of DCUs, location and number of custody suites, hours of opening to the public, employee health and safety standards, and a de-fortification scheme to make the police estate as a whole less forbidding in appearance. The comprehensive strategy would also identify locations where the current security situation would permit the immediate renovation of stations to make them less forbidding to the public and to police staff. However, the Police Service advised that it is preparing a revised strategy, which will be provided to the oversight team for review during upcoming oversight evaluations.

In April of 2004 the Police Service advised that an Estates Committee had been formed to address issues concerning the police estate. DCU Commanders have submitted their recommendations concerning the future needs of the police estate. The two Regional ACCs prepared a summary of these recommendations, which should benefit the Estates Committee in the preparation of a comprehensive estate strategy. Input and concurrence from the NIO, Policing Board and the respective communities will be required to permit successful implementation.



To date members of the oversight team have personally visited over 60 of the 126 police stations in Northern Ireland, for the purpose of inspecting condition and appearance. Two new police stations in Moira and Coleraine have been built using impact resistant design standards, with a further two currently under construction. Progress has been made on renovating several enquiry offices, making these areas more welcoming to members of the public. However, our observation is that several of the enquiry offices scheduled for renovation already appear to be in satisfactory condition. On the list of enquiry offices to be renovated are several police stations that are open only a few hours a week. Only 55 stations, or 44% of the total, are open to the public during normal police business hours, this being either 8:00 a.m. to midnight or a full 24 hours. Several buildings are in poor condition and are unpleasant places to work in or to visit (see also paragraph 5.5 'Resource Management', in HMIC's Baseline Review of the PSNI, released in August of 2004).

Interviews with police supervisors and officers confirmed that threat levels and the security situation generally are not the same throughout Northern Ireland, meaning that police stations in specific communities could progressively take on a less forbidding appearance. This would both enhance policing with the community objectives and improve police morale. The Police Service and the Policing Board made progress on closing police stations on 3 March 2004, when the sales of Castledawson and Cullybackey police stations were approved. Both stations had been closed for some time.

With the initial selection of 86 civilian station assistants (SEAs) through funding provided by the NIO, the Police Service has made progress in replacing police officers that perform receptionist duties at the police stations. Grafton Recruitment identified 52 outside candidates for SEA positions and 34 additional candidates were selected through an internal trawl. The merit list provided by Grafton permitted the Police Service to employ an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic candidates. The training programme for new SEAs has been established and is underway.

A second business case, prepared by the Police Service and approved by the NIO, has been submitted to the Treasury seeking funding to employ an additional 96 SEAs, for a total of 182 SEA positions. A timetable for the staffing of all 260 positions has not been provided, however the Police Service did provide documents describing how 60-94 of the 260 SEAs would be distributed across the various DCUs. A policy statement has been sent to DCU Commanders directing that police officers replaced by SEAs are transferred to patrol or investigative duties. The oversight team will continue to monitor and verify that new SEAs actually replace police officers that had previously been assigned to receptionist duties.

#### **Recommendation 54: Devolved Authority of District Commanders**

**Patten Recommendation:**

54. District police commanders should have discretion to decide in consultation with their local community how best to balance their resources between static posts and mobile patrols.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders**

between static posts and mobile posts has been initiated but not fully implemented. Full implementation, however, will be limited as several DCUs are still waiting for their full complement of civilian administrative staff required to manage DCU administration and budgets (see also Recommendations 76 and 96). Although the Police Service has established a sound mechanism for hiring these civilian employees, it is no longer actively seeking to recruit from outside the Police Service for these positions.

As noted by one Regional ACC devolved authority as proposed by the Independent Commission is beginning to work, and operational funds have been shifted from Headquarters to the DCUs. The Police Service is redefining in writing the meaning of devolved authority, as the exact nature of their new responsibilities and authorities was never explained fully to DCU Commanders; unfortunately a recent workshop designed to explain devolved authority did not completely resolve these uncertainties.

The District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) can provide local DCU Commanders with the necessary consultation for obtaining community support when attempting to balance available resources. However, evidence of the extent to which DPPs accept or decline invitations to consult, DCU plans that take information gathered into account, and evidence of actual patrol deployment in each DCU among other things, have not yet been received. This prevents the verification of full implementation. Implementation of devolved authority will be monitored during upcoming visits by the oversight team.

#### **Recommendations 55, 56 and 57: Police Vehicles**

Patten Recommendations:

55. Police cars should continue to be substituted as patrol vehicles in place of armoured Landrovers, and the use of armoured Landrovers should be limited to threatening situations.
56. As soon as possible (that is, as soon as the incidence of deployment ceases to be regular) armoured Landrovers should be moved to depots, to be kept in reserve for use in public order policing for as long as this contingency may be required.
57. The word 'Police' should be painted onto the sides of all Landrovers.

#### **Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The Police Service has completed painting the word "Police" on the sides of all Armoured Landrovers (ALRs), continues to increase the number of ALRs in reserve status, and is making progress with substituting ALRs with regular patrol vehicles. With 252 ALRs assigned to strategic reserve as at August of 2004, the Police Service has passed its target of having 225 ALRs, or 50%, in reserve depots. A significant improvement is the decrease in the number of ALRs used by the DCUs for regular patrol assignments. In April of 2003 for example, 113 ALRs were assigned to station patrol duties. One year later, or by April of 2004, this number has been reduced again to 77 ALRs, or a 32% reduction. During the same one year period the number of ALRs assigned to Tactical Support Groups had also been reduced by 32%, from 152 to 103 vehicles. The remaining ALRs are presently assigned to the Training Branch, Specialist Support Branch, or are in workshops for maintenance.



During several visits to police stations, the oversight team found general concurrence among DCU Commanders and police supervisors that districts did not have a shortage of regular police vehicles necessary to fulfil the day-to-day patrol assignments. Until the Police Service increases the number of police officers assigned to uniform patrol duties, the need for additional patrol vehicles in districts outside the urban area may not be a problem for the short term. The Police Service has successfully implemented this set of recommendations. Oversight will continue to monitor and report on these recommendations.

#### **Recommendation 58: Army Support, Security Demands**

**Patten Recommendation:**

58. The role of the army should continue to be reduced, as quickly as the security situation will allow, so that the police can patrol all parts of Northern Ireland without military support.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/GOC**

As reported previously, the Police Service has provided a plan for reducing its dependence on the Army's support, including a description of the areas where or circumstances in which the Army provides support. Further, the Policing Plan 2003-2006 included an objective to examine ways to reduce dependence on military support. The Policing Plan for 2004-2007 does not include this or a similar objective. A recent analysis of the use of emergency powers under the Terrorism Act (2000) revealed that the Army was responsible for 89% of the persons stopped under section 89 of the Act, with the remaining 11% being stopped by police officers. The same analysis noted a 49% reduction in the number of persons stopped by the Police Service. The fact that the overwhelming majority of reported stops under the Terrorism Act are performed by the Army will need to be examined more closely, since it does not accord easily with the objective of reducing the PSNI's reliance on the Army to perform certain police functions. It should be pointed out that possible administrative errors in recording incidents, or statistical anomalies, would need to be eliminated before this becomes an area of concern.

A review of the available statistical reports, plus reports from both the Police Service and the Army, indicates a reduction in security support by the Army in recent years. Nonetheless, the results of the 2004 parades season will determine if this reduction can continue, permitting the police to patrol all parts of Northern Ireland without military support. As reported in a recent Police Service news release covering the period between April of 2003 and March of 2004, the security situation continues to improve statistically. For example, during 2003/2004 there were seven security deaths, eight less than in the previous year. There was also a 40% decrease in shooting incidents and a 60% decrease in bombing incidents during 2003/2004 compared to the previous year. A slight reduction in the number of casualties that resulted from paramilitary style attacks was also reported. Although the improved security situation has reduced the need for support from the Army, the Police Service will continue to require support when investigating bomb and other explosive incidents. The oversight process will continue with verification.

### **Recommendation 59: Army Support, Public Order Demands**

Patten Recommendation:

59. For as long as the prospect remains of substantial public order policing demands on the scale seen at Drumcree in recent years, the army should retain the capacity to provide support for the police in meeting those demands.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/GOC**

The Police Service provided its operational plan for dealing with public order situations, including circumstances that must be present and procedures to be followed when utilising the Army's support. Periodic reports containing extensive data are provided to the oversight team as evidence that the Army is assisting during public order incidents. The Army has retained its capacity to provide support to the Police Service, and the General Officer Commanding and the Chief Constable continue to coordinate changing military support levels. As a part of the plan to coordinate their responses to public order policing incidents, the Police Service will demonstrate for the Army the functions and capabilities of the new vehicle-mounted water cannon and determine the role of the Army, if any, should the water cannon be deployed. Oversight has now proceeded to the evaluation and verification phases.

### **Recommendation 60: Emergency Legislation**

Patten Recommendation:

60. Provided the threat of terrorism in Northern Ireland diminishes to the point where no additional special powers are necessary to combat it, legislation against terrorism should be the same in Northern Ireland as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Home Office**

The NIO has successfully implemented this recommendation. The Terrorism Act (2000) stipulates that, depending on the security situation, the Secretary of State can phase out Part VII of the Act. This in turn stipulates the special powers specific to Northern Ireland. As of this report no decision had been made with respect to the continuation or phasing out of emergency powers under Part VII. The Independent Reviewer of the Terrorism Act (2000) conducted an examination of the Act and published a "Report on the Operation in 2003 of Part VII of the Terrorism Act (2000)". This was released on 15 January 2004. The extensive analysis contained in the report covers the use of emergency powers by the Police Service and the Army during 2002/2003, and supports a previous determination by the Oversight Commissioner that the use of emergency powers by the police has been decreasing year on year (see also Recommendation 61).

### **Recommendation 61: Records on the Use of Emergency Powers**

Patten Recommendation:

61. In the meantime, with immediate effect, records should be kept of all stops and searches and other such actions taken under emergency powers.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/GOC**



The Police Services has successfully implemented this recommendation by distributing General Order 37/2001, The Terrorism Act (2000), Human Rights and Monitoring Issues, and conducting the preliminary audits to ensure its successful implementation. Except for the period between October of 2003 and March of 2004, the Police Service has provided statistical reports for the past three years. These reports show some inconsistencies in application of the Terrorism Act (2000), and while some DCUs report a significant decrease in the use of emergency powers, other DCUs report a high level. Overall, the data indicate a general decline in the use of emergency powers across the Police Service.

The evaluation of Part VII of the Terrorism Act (2000) by the Independent Reviewer of the Terrorism Act (2000) reported a similar finding to that of the Oversight Commissioner, in that a general decline in the use of emergency powers by the Police Service was observable. The Independent Reviewer reported a 49% reduction in the number of persons stopped under section 89 between January and September of 2003, when compared with the same period for 2002, or from 1,841 to 936. This report also notes that the Army was responsible for 89% of persons stopped in 2003, under Section 89, with the remaining 11% stopped by the PSNI. This high percentage of stops by the Army, as compared with the Police Service, will be examined during the upcoming oversight evaluation. As of 30 April 2004 an administrative review of stops, searches and other actions taken under emergency powers, and appropriate follow-up or corrective measures, had not been conducted.

#### **Recommendation 62: Holding Centres**

**Patten Recommendation:**

62. The three holding centres at Castlereagh, Gough barracks and Strand Road should be closed forthwith and all suspects should in future be detained in custody suites based in police stations.

#### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

Although the three holding centres were originally reported as closed, Gough Barracks did not remain closed, but was used to temporarily house terrorist suspects on three different occasions in 2003. This was reported as being caused by the lack of detention space at the designated facilities in Lisburn and Antrim. The Police Service now describes Gough Barracks as a “mothballed” facility, which will continue to be used as an alternative site until Grosvenor Road can be renovated to house terrorist suspects. Supporting the need for adequate detention space, the recent report issued by the Independent Commissioner for Detained Terrorist Suspects noted that a total of 366 terrorist suspects were detained at Lisburn and Antrim in 2003, a 55% increase over the number detained in 2002.

Based on a decision by the Police Service, the NIO approved funding to renovate Grosvenor Road and to install CCTV to serve as a back up in case the Antrim custody suite was closed for some reason or its capacity was exceeded. Grosvenor Road would be used for terrorist suspects until a new build for the Musgrave Street DCU was completed. The NIO has advised the Police Service that a cost effective, long-term strategy on the matter of custody suites and CCTV is required. The NIO does not plan to fund or support a piece meal approach to detention space and installation of CCTV (see also Recommendations 52, 53, 63 and 92).



In March of 2004 the Police Service announced a reduction in the number of designated custody suites from the current 22 to 17. The 13 regular and 4 enhanced suites are intended to better serve both the Police Service and the general public. The four enhanced or 'super' suites are scheduled to be located at Antrim, Craigavon, Foyle and Musgrave Street stations.

**Recommendation 63: Video Recording in PACE Custody Suites**

Patten Recommendation:

63. Video recording should be introduced into the PACE custody suites.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

As of 30 April 2004 the Independent Commission's 1999 recommendation that video recording, or CCTV, should be introduced in the PACE custody suites has not been fully implemented. CCTV systems have been installed at four of the 22 existing custody suites: Antrim, Coleraine, Enniskillen and Musgrave Street. It is noted that only two of these facilities, Antrim and Musgrave Street, have been designated as enhanced custody suites. Coleraine and Enniskillen were not selected to serve as enhanced suites (see also Recommendation 62).

The delays in implementing this recommendation are due to several factors. For example, the Police Service made a final decision in March of 2004 to reduce the number of custody suites from 22 to 17. Also, the NIO had declined to fund further projects until the Police Service decided on the final number of custody suites. The Police Service reported that a business case is being compiled for the NIO based on the 13 + 4 model, seeking funds for the full installation of CCTV in the remaining facilities (see also Recommendations 52 and 53).

On 1 December 2003, the Police Service issued General Order 47/2003, Custody CCTV Standing Orders, a comprehensive policy statement on the use of CCTV, including the forms necessary to manage the project. The General Order provides information on the custody CCTV system and sets policy for its operation. The General Order includes an excellent mission statement for the CCTV system: "to create a safe environment for officers, prisoners and all individuals in the custody suite, to provide evidence to substantiate or rebut any allegations made in relation to offences either within or without the custody suite, and for the improvement of performance and quality of service".

**Recommendation 64: Inspection of Custody and Interrogation Suites**

Patten Recommendation:

64. Responsibility for inspecting all custody and interrogation suites should rest with the Policing Board, and Lay Visitors should be empowered not only to inspect the conditions of detention (as at present), but also to observe interviews on camera subject to the consent of the detainee (as is the case for cell visits).

**Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable/NIO**

Full implementation of this recommendation has not taken place due to a request for a legal opinion. As a result the issuance of the necessary guidelines, as well as a legal opinion on the potential compellability of lay visitors should they be privy to certain information, have been



placed on hold. The oversight team continues to confirm that unannounced inspections have been occurring as required, and the Policing Board is receiving and reviewing monthly reports submitted by the lay visitors. The Board is working with the Police Service to develop training for custody visitors to ensure they understand the basic rules of sound interview practices.

#### **Recommendation 65: Objective of an Unarmed Police Service**

Patten Recommendation:

65. The question of moving towards the desired objective of a routinely unarmed police service should be periodically reviewed in the light of developments in the security environment.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

This recommendation has not been implemented. The Chief Constable reviews the recommendation twice yearly, on 1 April and 1 October, and issues a determination to the Oversight Commissioner regarding the security situation. The Chief Constable reported that, as of 13 May 2004, the security situation had not yet reached the peaceful environment envisaged by the Independent Commission, which would permit implementation of this recommendation.

▶▶ **public order policing**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission recognised that the public order policing experience of Northern Ireland's Police Service differed significantly from that of any other police force. It therefore saw the need for research into other tactical and strategic ways with which to address recurring public order situations. In addition, the Independent Commission made several recommendations that covered the role of the Army, the establishment of a parade partnership and marshal training, and for identifying equipment that might be utilised by the Police Service to better deal with public order situations and other emergencies.

### Progress and Accomplishments

With the release of the Phase 4 research report in January of 2004, the NIO Steering Committee has decided to move forward with the Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP) as the best opportunity to replace the L21A1 plastic baton round (PBR). It is reported that the AEP will be available for deployment and use by June of 2005. The existing PBR would then be taken out of Police Service use.

The six vehicle-mounted water cannon recently purchased are now available for deployment and use. This follows satisfactory medical testing and preliminary training of crew members. Implementation of the three recommendations concerning police performance in public order situations has now been accomplished. It is also notable that as at August of 2004 no plastic baton rounds had been fired in Northern Ireland since September of 2002.

### Areas of Concern

As a result of the improved security situation, the mission of the Tactical Support Groups (TSGs) has been expanded to provide proactive policing support to the DCUs. Assigning the TSGs to provide policing and investigative assistance is an effective use of available resources, however without the proper level of training TSG officers re-assigned to other policing duties may not assist to the fullest degree possible. That being said, it is unclear at present whether Training Branch has the capacity to provide the necessary training (see also Recommendation 132).

The Steering Group has now conducted research and published its findings in four thorough and comprehensive research reports. The last report was released in January of 2004. It remains important that the Government and the Police Service conclude their research and make a determination as to the existence and viability of an alternative to the PBR, advising the community if an alternative is available. It should be clearly understood that the AEP remains a projectile weapon, albeit safer, and is a replacement not an alternative.

### Future Directions

The oversight team will continue to monitor progress on implementing an acceptable alternative, or alternatives, to the PBR. The operational capacity of TSG members to provide routine patrol and other support to DCUs will also be monitored.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 66: Public Order Emergencies

Patten Recommendation:

66. The Northern Ireland police should have the capacity within its own establishment to deal with public order emergencies without help from other police services and without more than the present level of support from the army.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**

The Police Service has made moderate progress on implementing this recommendation. A comprehensive operational plan is in place and the PSNI have the capacity to deal with public order emergencies and contentious parades without increasing the existing level of support from the Army. This ability has been demonstrated on several occasions in response to public order emergencies. At the same time, since the Independent Commission published its report the military had decreased from approximately 16,200 in September of 1999 to approximately 14,750 by May of 2004, as published by the Independent Monitoring Commission in July of 2004. The Police Service reports that for the Summer of 2003 fewer public order units were made active by the Army, and then for shorter periods. Figures for the Summer of 2004 are not yet available.

Because the number and frequency of public order emergencies have steadily decreased in recent years, the 489 regular police officers assigned to Tactical Support Groups (TSGs), who are organised, trained and equipped to respond to public order emergencies, are being increasingly assigned to assist DCUs with proactive policing. This assistance includes crime scene searches, vehicle thefts, city centre patrols, surveillance and assisting with serious crime investigations. While this is an effective use of police resources, TSG officers will likely require upgrading to their training, to include surveillance and interviewing techniques among other things. However, it is not clear that Training Branch has the capacity to deliver on this requirement.

### Recommendations 67 and 68: Conditions for the Approval of Parades

Patten Recommendations:

67. It should be a condition for the approval of a parade that the organisers should provide their own marshals, and the organisers and the police should work together to plan the policing of such events. This should involve as appropriate the representatives of the neighbourhoods involved in the parade route.
68. Marshal training should be further developed, with an appropriate qualification on successful completion of the training. All parades should be marshalled and, as soon as practicable, it should be a requirement that all potentially contentious parades requiring a decision or determination by the Parades Commission should be marshalled by qualified personnel.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Parades Commission**

The Police Service has issued two General Orders requiring the recording of police efforts to work with parade organisers in the development of a plan for policing parades, which represents a good faith effort to implement this recommendation. Evidence that the Police Service is



cooperating effectively with parade organisers, encouraging the use of parade marshals and the involvement of neighbourhood representatives along parade routes was also provided. Over the Summer of 2004 issues have arisen relating to Parade Commission rulings, parade handling on the part of the PSNI, and community reaction, which will require reasoned analysis over time. Nevertheless, there are no immediate concerns with respect to the Independent Commission's recommendations in this area. As the lead agency for implementing this recommendation, the NIO provided evidence that several hundred parade marshals participated in a training course provided by the College of Further Education in Dungannon.

An evaluation of the marshal training course is underway, and results will be submitted to the NIO and to the Parades Commission. With regard to qualified personnel marshalling all parades, including contentious parades, the Government and the Parades Commission view the current approach and training as yielding successful results. However, the core recommendations made in a review of the Parades Commission published in November of 2002, that two organisations be created, one specialising in mediation and another to decide on contentious parades, were not implemented. No further action on the recommendation is anticipated until 2005.

#### **Recommendations 69 and 70: Public Order Equipment**

##### **Patten Recommendations:**

69. An immediate and substantial investment should be made in a research programme to find an acceptable, effective and less potentially lethal alternative to the Plastic Baton Round (PBR).
70. The police should be equipped with a broader range of public order equipment than the RUC currently possess, so that a commander has a number of options at his/her disposal which might reduce reliance on, or defer resort to, the PBR.

##### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**

The NIO Steering Group continues to conduct a research programme seeking an alternative to the Plastic Baton Round (PBR), and on 29 January 2004 released its Phase 4 report entitled: "A Research Programme into Alternative Policing Approaches Towards the Management of Conflict". This report is well written and the research presented is extensive. It includes an in-depth discussion and assessment of the Attenuating Energy Projectile (AEP), the Discriminating Irritant Projectile (DIP), the 12 gauge sock round, the vehicle mounted water cannon, CS spray and the Taser, all of which are less lethal technologies. The report advises that development of the AEP and DIP will continue, and these two projectiles represent the best opportunities to get an alternative to the current plastic round into service as rapidly as possible. The NIO anticipates the AEP will be available for deployment by Tactical Support Groups in public order emergencies by June of 2005. As stated in the Phase 4 report, the objective is for the AEP to deliver an impact which is not intended to cause serious or life threatening injury, but is of sufficient force to dissuade or prevent a potentially violent person from their intended course of action. The AEP may be deployed in a variety of operational situations, however the objective will remain the same. Upon adoption and deployment of the AEP, the current L21A1 plastic round would be taken out of use. If the testing and evaluations are successful, the DIP will serve as a complement to the AEP and will become available by the Summer of 2006. Research also continues at an international level, with Northern Ireland playing a lead role in the International Law Enforcement Forum (ILEF)

on Minimal Force Options and Less Lethal Technologies. An ILEF conference was held in Washington D.C. in August of 2004, to advance the programme for less lethal technologies.

Based on the research conducted to date, the Police Service purchased six vehicle-mounted water cannon specifically designed for use in Northern Ireland. Testing and initial training has been completed, and a statement on the medical implications of the use of the water cannon has been provided by the Defence Scientific Council overseeing the tests. In addition, ACPO guidance on the deployment and use have been approved and issued. ACPO guidance is comprehensive and includes deployment considerations, authorisation procedures, record keeping requirements and a review of legislation relating to the use of force. The required PSNI General Order 29/2004, The Deployment and Use of the Water Cannon, was issued on 20 May 2004. As a result the new vehicle-mounted water cannon are available for operational use.

It is anticipated that personal CS spray will be issued to each police officer by July of 2004 following a mandatory training course. The hand-held CS spray will not be introduced as an alternative to the PBR, but as a piece of personal protection equipment carried by all officers, including TSG officers, during regular police activity. On 19 May 2004 the Police Service issues General Order 28/2004, CS Incapacitant Spray, outlining the operational guidelines in the use of CS spray.

#### **Recommendations 71, 73 and 74: Police Performance in Public Order Situations**

Patten Recommendations:

71. The use of PBRs should be subject to the same procedures for deployment, use and reporting as apply in the rest of the United Kingdom. Their use should be confined to the smallest necessary number of specially trained officers, who should be trained to think of the weapon in the same way as they would think of a firearm, that is as a weapon which is potentially lethal. Use of PBRs should in the first instance require the authorisation of a district commander. This should be justified in a report to the Policing Board, which should be copied to the Police Ombudsman. Wherever possible, video camera recordings should be made of incidents in which the use of PBRs is authorised.
73. The Policing Board and, as appropriate, the Police Ombudsman should actively monitor police performance in public order situations, and if necessary seek reports from the Chief Constable and follow up those reports if they wish.
74. Guidance governing the deployment and use of PBRs should be soundly based in law, clearly expressed and readily available as public documents.

#### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**

As stated in our Report No. 10, compliance with Recommendations 71, 73 and 74 has been achieved. The only outstanding issue is the public availability of the guidance governing the deployment and use of the plastic baton round (PBR). The Police Service is waiting for a corporate decision on making the policy document available on the PSNI's website (see also recommendation 37). As at August of 2004 no PBRs had been fired in Northern Ireland since September of 2002. The oversight team will continue the verification phase and report any changes or modifications.



### **Recommendation 72: Police Officers' Identification Numbers**

Patten Recommendation:

72. Officers' identification numbers should be clearly visible on their protective clothing, just as they should be on regular uniforms.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

As noted in our previous reports compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. Verification that identification numbers have been adopted will be ongoing.



▶▶ **management and personnel**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission called for extensive change to the management style of the Police Service, including devolving authority to district levels, enhancing the internal accountability structure, reducing lengths of tenure in specialised positions such as public order and security duties, and a more comprehensive sickness absence programme. Further recommendations proposed a rigorous programme of civilianisation to release uniformed police officers for patrol duties, as well as various other efficiency measures.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service's Corporate Development & Change Management Directorate produced an annual plan for pursuing change management with objectives, performance indicators and targets. The Policing Board will receive progress reports every six months. The Directorate also issued guidelines for the uniform drafting of Police Service policy. Uncertainty relating to the assessment of the performance of chief officers and equivalents was addressed when the Chief Constable decided to bring the PSNI into conformity with existing Home Office and ACPO practices.

An executive level operational review system is now firmly in place. Twice annually Regional ACCs conduct rigorous reviews of each DCU Commander. This process is applied in successive cycles, and should serve to drive the organisation towards adopting more of a culture of performance. Assessing progress on devolution is now the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Constable, who carries out twice-yearly assessments of the business plans of Regional ACCs and department heads. The Police Service reports that the deployment of business managers and personnel managers to DCUs is now complete. The complement of staff support in DCUs may vary as the Police Service identifies opportunities for efficiencies. Also worth noting is that the Police Service performed within budget during fiscal year 2003/2004.

In January of 2004 the Policing Board received a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General on key issues arising from an audit of the Best Value Performance Plan, and possible actions that might be required. In March of 2004 the Policing Board received an HMIC assessment of PSNI's Best Value programme. The Policing Plan 2004 - 2007 includes a detailed summary of Best Value Reviews undertaken in 2003/2004. Indications are that both the Policing Board and the Chief Constable are intent on improving efficiency. Best value and continuous improvement objectives established for 2004/2005 include: better management of the police vehicle fleet, better estate management, staff retention, legislation enforcement, and also four DCU reviews.

### Areas of Concern

One important aspect of policy governing the devolution of authority to DCU Commanders remains incomplete: as yet there is no definitive policy describing the authority of Commanders over the deployment of police officers and civilian staff within their district. Similar uncertainty exists relative to written authorities for the two Regional ACCs. While the devolution of budgets

to Commanders was accomplished efficiently and relatively quickly, some Commanders interviewed maintain that the actual impact on their ability to manage is limited due to the many strict spending controls still in existence. As seen by some, what was devolved was the bureaucratic work rather than real authority and flexibility. One example of a positive improvement was a “local initiatives” budget delegated by the Chief Constable to DCU Commanders.

Information permitting the trending and tracking of complaints against police has been available to DCUs for some time, however the completion of a proper management system awaits publication of a General Order. This would provide managerial guidance to local DCU Commanders responsible for acting on the trending information received. The ability of the Police Service to deal proactively with internal accountability issues therefore remains a concern. The Independent Commission recommended that the use of trend information should be followed up by management, with discipline meted out as appropriate. It is now five years since the Independent Commission’s recommendations were published, and although slow progress has been made in this area, the results initially hoped for have not yet come about. Intelligence-led integrity tests on suspected wrong-doing by police officers are occurring, however the random checks on quality of service envisioned by the Independent Commission have not been confirmed in policy, nor implemented in an ongoing manner.

Since coming into effect, new processes designed to better manage sickness absence have resulted in a steady decline in the number of officers on long-term sick leave; this reflects in part an increase in medical retirements. DCU Commanders interviewed note that since Headquarters set reduction of absenteeism as a priority, personnel have responded well, however Commanders view available sanctions as having minimal impact. Overall PSNI sickness absence figures continue to compare unfavourably with similar figures in comparable UK jurisdictions, and there are indications that reductions in sickness absence may be “plateauing”.

With respect to the Independent Commission’s recommendations on the efficiency of estate management, a close review and evaluation of these documents provided to the oversight team show no evidence of a comprehensive audit or an estate strategy. This calls into question the Police Service’s ability to gain maximum efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the sizable estate under its control. The Police Service advised that, following an estate strategy session in November of 2003, Regional ACCs and DCU Commanders were tasked to conduct an estate audit. This audit would constitute an integral component of the estate strategy, however this was under review by the Police Service and was not provided during the evaluation visit in April of 2004.

#### **Future Directions**

Oversight will continue to monitor police progress on the management of sickness absence, as well as progress on overall efficiency and Best Value studies, particularly as these concern the more effective management of the police estate.



## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 75: Police Management of Change

Patten Recommendation:

75. The Northern Ireland police leadership team should include specialists in change management. These may be either civilians or police officers, preferably both. The leadership team should produce a programme for change, to be presented to the Policing Board and reviewed periodically by the Board. The efficiency and effectiveness of each chief officer should be judged on the basis of, among other things, their capacity to introduce and adapt to change.

#### Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board

The PSNI's Corporate Development & Change Management Department is committed to a departmental plan for 2004/2005 which provides for continuance of the change management process with objectives, performance indicators and targets. Formal progress reports will be provided to the Policing Board every six months. The performance management objectives currently pursued by Regional ACCs are now reinforced by performance inspections of Regions and Departments by the Deputy Chief Constable twice-yearly.

Corporate Planning issued a new directive establishing terms, conditions and guidelines for the drafting of Police Service policy, excepting operational policy. All new policy will be prepared on a template designed to ensure compliance with human rights and freedom of information legislation, the Policing Plan, PSNI transparency policy, and the Code of Ethics. The Police Service established a performance evaluation process for the assessment of Assistant Chief Constables and above, as well as civilian equivalents, in accordance with Home Office policy and adapted ACPO competencies. Accountability meetings take place on a twice-yearly basis. Each chief officer has a business plan linked to the Policing Plan 2004 - 2007. The Policing Board has assumed responsibility for assessing the performance of the Chief Constable and the Deputy Chief Constable, in collaboration with HMIC.

### Recommendation 76: Devolved Authority of District Commanders

Patten Recommendation:

76. District commanders should have fully devolved authority over the deployment of personnel (officer and civilian) within their command, devolved budgets (including salary budgets), authority to purchase a range of goods and services, and to finance local policing initiatives. They should reach service level agreements with all headquarter support departments.

#### Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders

The assessment of the progress of devolution is now the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Constable, through twice-yearly assessments of the business plans of Regional ACCs and department heads. A revised policy on devolution was to be reviewed by senior management in June of 2004. This policy will be reviewed during upcoming oversight evaluations. Finance Department has Service Level Agreements in place with DCUs, and has also put in place a continuous consultation and feedback system to help identify potential problems. Service Level Agreements between Crime Operations and DCU Commanders governing a number of areas,

including serious crime, are in the process of completion. DCU Commanders are evaluated by Regional ACCs by means of an annual appraisal system, supplemented by interim assessments and twice-yearly accountability reviews.

The deployment of business managers and personnel managers to DCU is now complete. Satisfaction of administrative compliance for this recommendation rests on issuing a policy or Service Level Agreement stating the limits to the authority devolved to DCU Commanders to deploy police and civilian personnel under their command.

**Recommendation 77: Police Appraisal System**

Patten Recommendation:

77. It should be a high priority of management to ensure that the appraisal system is fully effective. This system should be used as part of the promotion and selection process. An officer's capacity for change should be assessed and should also be taken into account in the promotion and selection process.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The Policing Plan 2004 - 2007 describes three distinct areas established by the Policing Board and Police Service for application of the new performance appraisal system introduced in 2003. These three areas are: 1) a police officer's attendance record and contributions towards policing objectives; 2) performance against the competency standards and the human rights assessment guide; and 3) creation of a development plan with the officer's line manager if performance is deemed to fall below a satisfactory level. Police officers can also specifically request development.

Work is progressing to migrate the current appraisal process to an electronic reporting format. Human Resources Department is conducting a review of returns from the first cycle of appraisals to identify any potential training needs. DCU Commanders are encouraged to use the appraisal process as a leadership tool, directly related to performance improvement and career development. Personnel Branch is responsible for a structural review of the new appraisal system, and the analysis of results, in the system's first year of operation. The review now in process will report later in 2004.

**Recommendation 78: Accountability of District Commanders**

Patten Recommendation:

78. District commanders should be required regularly to account to their senior officers for the patterns of crime and police activity in their district and to explain how they propose to address their districts' problems.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/District Commanders**

An executive level operational review system is now firmly in place, which satisfies this recommendation. In addition to imposing accountability, Regional ACCs are also encouraging proactive practices and preventative strategies in a number of areas, including problem-oriented policing and traffic law enforcement.



### **Recommendations 79 and 80: Trend Information on Complaints**

Patten Recommendations:

79. An automated trend identification system for complaints should be introduced.
80. The use of trend information should be followed up by management, and as appropriate by the department responsible for discipline, and guidance should be drawn up to help managers use this information effectively.

**Lead Responsibility: Police Ombudsman/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Basic police requirements for complaint trending and tracking are fulfilled through cooperation with the Office of the Ombudsman, and reliance on an internal computer-based system. The PSNI's Internal Investigations Branch held workshops with DCU Commanders on trending and tracking in December of 2003 and January of 2004. Publication of a General Order providing managerial guidance to local Commanders for dealing with the information received will satisfy administrative compliance for this recommendation. An evaluation of results will follow (see also Areas of Concern). Information and Communication Services has earmarked funds for a more comprehensive case management system. The Ombudsman publishes police complaint statistics by DCU on its website.

### **Recommendation 81: Random Checks on Officers' Behaviour**

Patten Recommendation:

81. Police managers should use random checks as a way to monitor the behaviour of their officers in dealings with the public and their integrity.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Police Ombudsman**

Intelligence-led integrity tests that follow up on suspected wrongdoing by police personnel are now institutionalised. However, the random integrity checks that the Independent Commission had envisioned, which might include quality service checks and random "mystery caller/client" checks, have not been recognised in policy or implemented in an ongoing manner.

### **Recommendation 82: Ensuring High Ethical Standards**

Patten Recommendation:

82. Police management should use all the tools at its disposal, including when necessary the administrative dismissal process, to ensure that high professional and ethical standards are consistently met.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Provision for administrative dismissal is contained in the Unsatisfactory Performance Regulations 2000. This provision has been used on two occasions, although managers contend that limitations on investigative methods and other restrictions on employer rights render dismissal a lengthy and difficult process. Alternate methods of managing performance and behaviour problems, including re-assignment, are currently being pursued.

**Recommendation 83: Tenure Policy on Police Postings**

Patten Recommendation:

- 83. There should be a tenure policy, so that officers do not have inordinately long postings in any specialist area of the police.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The Independent Commission identified extended tenure in some areas of the Police Service as a problem. The draft tenure policy developed by the Police Service, and endorsed by the Policing Board in 2003, is consistent with the Independent Commission's intent and satisfies this recommendation. The draft policy provides for exceptions and extensions in post, and the implementation date is 1 November 2001, with a 5-year lead-in time. This means that the policy would come into effect in November of 2006 for most positions, and November of 2008 for positions specifically exempted. The policy now only requires dissemination by General Order. An assessment of potential impacts will be undertaken during upcoming oversight visits. It was estimated that since January of 2001 over 3,000 staffing transactions have taken place, which indicates that in practice the tenure issues raised by the Independent Commission are being addressed.

**Recommendations 84, 85 and 86: Management of Sickness Absence**

Patten Recommendations:

- 84. Officers injured on duty should be treated as a separate category for sickness recording purposes.
- 85. A new policy should be formulated for the management of long-term sickness absence, incorporating appropriate arrangements for medical retirement, career counselling and welfare support. A system of rewards, as well as sanctions, should be introduced as part of the sickness management policy.
- 86. There should be a more detailed review of sickness absence, to establish underlying causes and to make recommendations to address them.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Activity and trend reports on a full range of sickness absence statistics are provided to the Chief Constable and the Policing Board on a quarterly basis. The independent monitor engaged by the Policing Board also provides regular assessments on sickness absence and its management. The Board continues to take a firm stand on the Police Service improving its absence figures. The Policing Board target for reducing sickness absence was 18.5 days per officer per year by the end of 2003/04, and 17 days by the end of 2004/05. Starting from a baseline in February of 1999, the trend for regular police officers is positive, however this must be contrasted with a 2002/2003 average for England and Wales calculated by HMIC at 10.5 days per officer per year.

Civilian sickness absence figures have been variable over this period. There has also been a steady decline in the number of officers on long-term sick leave, reflected in part in an increase in



medical retirements. The influence of an organisational priority placed on health and safety is increasingly recognised in Police Service policy and practice in other areas, with the issuance of protective clothing to police motorcyclists being one example.

#### **Recommendations 87 and 88: New Police Fund, Funding for Widow's Association**

Patten Recommendations:

87. A substantial fund should be set up to help injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families, as well as police widows.
88. The Widows' Association should be given an office in police premises, free of charge, and a regular source of finance adequate to run their organisation.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

In December of 2003 it was disclosed that two staff members administering the Police Fund were alleged to have been involved in financial irregularities. Legal proceedings are currently underway, as well as a police investigation. The Government is also undertaking a full audit of the Fund. While administrative compliance with this recommendation has already been completed, events will continue to be monitored. The Government has assured the stability of the Fund's resources and operation, and the Security Minister has undertaken a review of the future of the Police Fund.

#### **Recommendation 89: Replacement of Assistant Chief Constables**

Patten Recommendation:

89. The Assistant Chief Constables currently responsible for support services should be replaced by two civilian Assistant Chief Officers, one responsible for personnel issues and one for finance and administration.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.



### Recommendations 90, 91 and 92: Efficiency Initiatives

#### Patten Recommendations:

90. There should be a rigorous program of civilianisation of jobs which do not require police powers, training or experience, exceptions being made only when it can be demonstrated that there is a good reason for a police officer to occupy the position.
91. The Policing Board and the police service should initiate a review of police support services with a view to contracting out those services where this will enhance the efficient management of resources. Consideration should be given to allowing 'management buy-outs' of support services by police or civilian employees interested in continuing to provide those services as a private sector company, and in such cases management buy-out contractors should be offered a secure contract for at least three years to enable them to establish themselves before having to tender for renewal.
92. The police should commission a comprehensive audit of the whole police estate, to include outside experts, and develop a strategy for achieving an effective and efficient estate to meet the objectives for policing as outlined in this report.

#### Lead Responsibility: Policing Board/Chief Constable

The Policing Plan 2004 – 2005 re-states goals for an extensive programme of civilianisation. In February of 2004 the Policing Board called for an updated Human Resources Planning Strategy, including civilianisation, with June of 2004 as a target date. However, the Police Service now reports that the updated Planning Strategy will be delayed until the Chief Constable's review of security is delivered to the Policing Board in early September of 2004. Among other goals, the Policing Plan estimates the potential to civilianise 350 posts within the scope of the programme, resulting in the more efficient use of resources. Including unarmed guards, 335 posts have been civilianised since 2001/2002. Subject to available Government funding the Police Service plans to recruit an additional 300 civilian staff. As at 30 April 2004 the funding issue had not yet been resolved, however the business case is now with the Treasury for review. The establishment of civilian posts across the Police Service was reduced from a total of 3,546 to 3,375, in order to remain within budget for fiscal year 2003/2004.

In January of 2004 the Policing Board received a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General on key issues arising from an audit of the Best Value Performance Plan. The report also detailed actions required. The Board received a presentation from HMIC assessing the PSNI's Best Value Programme in March of 2004. The Policing Plan 2004 – 2007 includes a detailed summary of Best Value Reviews undertaken in 2003-2004, with every indication that the Policing Board and the Chief Constable are focussed on increased efficiency. Best Value and continuous improvement objectives established for 2004/2005 include: better management of the police vehicle fleet, better estate management, staff retention, legislation enforcement, and also four DCU reviews. Under the rubric of Best Value the Police Service and the Government also undertook to contract out non-police services where possible. This included reviewing the contracting out of services to former police employees, in the form of management buyouts. As of 30 April 2004 this



recommendation had not been progressed to any meaningful degree, however the Police Service has developed an internal document regarding the feasibility of such an approach, which will be reviewed during the upcoming oversight visit.

Finally, with respect to efficiency, the Police Service has provided the oversight team with numerous documents to demonstrate the completion of a comprehensive audit of the police estate and a strategy for achieving an effective and efficient estate to meet the objectives for policing. The oversight team has closely reviewed and evaluated these documents, but by August of 2004 no evidence of a comprehensive audit or an estate strategy has been received. The Police Service has advised, however, that following an estate strategy session held in November of 2003, the Regional ACCs and DCU Commanders were tasked with conducting a comprehensive estate audit. The audit, which will serve as an integral component of the estate strategy, was still under review by the Police Service in April of 2004 and was therefore not provided to the oversight team (see also Recommendations 52 and 53).

▶▶ **information technology**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission recommended an urgent, independent and in-depth strategic review of the use of information technology in policing. Ambitious and far-reaching objectives were proposed to devise a properly resourced plan that would place the Police Service at the forefront of law enforcement technology within 3 to 5 years.

### Progress and Accomplishments

Projects relating to infrastructure development and operational policing are well advanced. The technology is in place to serve basic operational and administrative needs, with access to legacy systems and new business applications such as an intranet and the recently introduced electronic briefing system and problem solving folders. DCU Commanders and front line police officers at district level view these developments positively, and there are already long lists detailing required future enhancements.

### Areas of Concern

The Independent Commission recommended steps to place the police service at the forefront of law enforcement technology within 3 to 5 years. Although there has been progress, clearly the goal will not be achieved and the risk factor on the full implementation of this strategy remains high. While a revised Information and Communications Services (ICS) Strategy Implementation Plan is detailed and confidently represented, its weakest link remains the design for integrating the systems architecture, as well as actual implementation. The PSNI has yet to demonstrate ICS's capacity to perform at the world class level envisioned by the Independent Commission. At the "user" end, Commanders admit that in many cases even very basic technology is under-utilised and that many officers require further computer training. HMIC's Baseline Review of the PSNI, published in August of 2004, reached a similar conclusion.

The Independent Validator originally involved is no longer employed with the project. Instead, HMIC will provide programme review and the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) will perform the validation process. Clearly the effectiveness of this change and the capacity to deliver will have to be closely monitored by the Policing Board considering the expense and risk of this critical modernising effort.

### Future Directions

Oversight will continue to monitor progress and change within this critical but high-risk and expensive endeavour.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 93: Development of Police IT Strategy

Patten Recommendation:

93. There should be an urgent, independent, and in-depth strategic review of the use of information technology (IT) in policing. It should benchmark the Northern Ireland police against police services in the rest of the world and devise a properly resourced strategy that places them at the forefront of law enforcement technology within 3 to 5 years. It should be validated by independent assessment. The strategy should deliver fully integrated technology systems that are readily accessible to all staff, and should take advantage of the best analytical and communications systems currently available. Users of the technology should play a key part in devising the strategy, and in assessing its implementation.

### Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board

Reports from the Independent Validator received by the Policing Board to the end of 2003 described significant barriers to progress, which cast serious doubt on the prospects for a full and complete implementation of this critical recommendation. Among the options for placing the project back on a firm footing, the Validator recommended outsourcing, or alternately the creation of a new organisation within ICS to implement the strategy. This would leave existing staff free to maintain ongoing systems. In an effort to evaluate this advice, PSNI engaged a consulting firm to assess relative options. Consultants ultimately concluded that full outsourcing raised serious practical and security concerns, while agreeing that the “status quo” option was also unlikely to deliver the ICS strategy as intended.

In April of 2004 the Police Service submitted an updated information system strategy to the Policing Board, which proposed elements of a “hybrid” solution. This was supported conceptually by the consultants. Under this plan a revised organisation with new elements would take on the task of systems architecture and would report to the Head of Information Management.

A joined-up decision making process is fundamental to resuming meaningful consultation with user groups. The Information Management Steering Group assumed functional responsibility for the information systems programme in October of 2003. In its report to the Policing Board in April of 2004 the Police Service listed the respective responsibilities of group members, all of whom are chief officers or civilian equivalents, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Through the Patten non-severance process all IT/IS projects are categorised as high priority. When a project reaches a suitable stage a business case is presented to the NIO for consideration.

The Independent Validator previously engaged by the Police Service to monitor progress in this area is no longer involved in the project. The Police Service proposes to rely on consultation with the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) to perform the validation process and on HMIC for a programme review. PITO is a non-departmental public body funded by grant-in-aid and charging for services provided. The PSNI will also liaise with information systems staff of the London Metropolitan Police.



▶▶ **structure of the police service**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission recommended restructuring to encourage and facilitate policing with the community, including de-layering of the operational command organisation and a slimmer structure for Headquarters. Recommendations also called for the significant delegation of authority to District Commanders, including control over a devolved budget and all police resources within their district. Particularly important was the proposal of an amalgamated command for Special Branch and Crime Branch, in order to improve the organisation's ability to deal with rising levels of violent and organised crime. Also recommended was a substantial reduction in the number of officers engaged in security work. Other recommendations proposed the phasing out of the Full Time Reserve and the concomitant enlargement of the Part Time Reserve.

### Progress and Accomplishments

Local policing plans 2004/2005 from the 29 DCUs all contain evidence of collaboration with existing District Policing Partnerships in recognising local objectives. There were varying degrees of success in these efforts, however this was the first formal experience with collaborative priority setting for most districts. Future planning cycles provide opportunities for closer consultation and also the demonstration of greater awareness on the part of the Police Service to local concerns. The Policing Board is extending increasing support, assistance and training to District Policing Partnerships.

The Police Service has made several organisational changes in an attempt to implement the Independent Commission's recommendations concerning Special Branch. Changes were made in April of 2001, with the placement of Special Branch and Crime Branch under the command of a single Assistant Chief Constable (ACC). Five months later, in September of 2002, the Police Service consolidated the two branches into Crime Department, with the former Special Branch's activities divided into Intelligence and Specialist Operations. In July of 2003 a further organisational change resulted in the creation of two new departments, Crime Operations and Criminal Justice, with Intelligence and Crime Support assigned to Crime Operations.

The Independent Commission made its recommendations regarding Special Branch with the knowledge that decreases in paramilitary activity might perversely result in a growth in other types of organised and violent criminal activity. These predictions have proven all too accurate, and the need for a well resourced, trained and directed criminal and security intelligence capacity within the Police Service remains. In November of 2003 the oversight team was provided with an Implementation Plan explaining how the Police Service would now deal with implementing the remaining recommendations on Special Branch, while also incorporating to the extent possible recommendations made by three other outside reviews impacting on Special Branch and criminal investigations processes; these were by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary Crompton and Blakey, and by Sir John Stevens.

Overall, the Implementation Plan is recognised by the oversight team as a solid, good faith effort at re-focusing the organisation's criminal intelligence function toward fighting organised and violent



crime, principally by streamlining the way in which the PSNI gathers and disseminates criminal intelligence. The Police Service issued revised policy and procedures for the dissemination of criminal intelligence to serious crime investigators, thereby improving the likelihood of criminal convictions in court. It goes without saying that the key now will be the plan's full implementation as well as the achievement of its intended results.

Since the release of the Independent Commission's report in 1999, and the division of Special Branch into different components in September of 2002, the established number of police officers assigned to Intelligence (C-3) has been reduced by approximately 21%. The combined establishment number of police officers engaged in Intelligence (C-3) and Crime Support (C-4), formerly the Special Branch, has decreased by approximately 17%.

In 1999 the Independent Commission also recommended that the Police Service should not in future include a Full Time Reserve (FTR), the existing one to be phased out over time. In 1999 there were approximately 2,900 members of the FTR. As of 12 December 2003 this number had dropped to 1,659. Of these 1,447 members are assigned to DCUs, with the remainder assigned to Headquarters and the two Regions. The Policing Board and the Police Service have agreed to an 18-month phase out of the FTR starting in April of 2005, the objective being to have the FTR fully phased out by the Autumn of 2006. This will be subject to a security review by the Chief Constable, the results of which are expected to be announced in September of 2004. These efforts demonstrate progress in implementing the Independent Commission's recommendations in this regard (see also Areas of Concern). The impact of the Chief Constable's decision of 9 September of 2004 will be reviewed during our upcoming oversight evaluation and reported in December of 2004.

#### **Areas of Concern**

In 1999 the Independent Commission noted that there should be a slimmer structure at Headquarters, one that reflects a shift of focus towards policing with the community. However, consistent progress on reducing the size of Headquarters with a view to putting more police officers on patrol has proven difficult to achieve. As reported by the independent observer on human resources in January of 2004, despite the reductions of personnel at Headquarters the number of police officers actually reallocated to DCUs is 73.

An emerging concern relates to the uncertainty surrounding the future number of DCUs and the consequential ability to meet heightened local community expectations. The Independent Commission recommended 29 DCUs so that their boundaries were coterminous with local government and DPPs, and a strengthening of ties and relationships between the police and the community could take place. This would also serve to enhance police responsiveness to the community's concerns and policing priorities. The Independent Commission also recommended that the number of DCUs should be rationalised, however only when the number of council districts was also reduced. It recognised that, in the interim, smaller DCUs could share resources, or be "brigaded", with larger ones for the sake of efficiency. A great deal of effort and expense has gone into realising the goals spelled out above, and the concern is simply that the Independent Commission's principle of local accountability and developing police-community relationships could be undermined in the absence of: 1) actual political and Government progress on reducing the



number of council districts; and, 2) a detailed, consultative plan on how principles of local accountability and community partnership will be maintained in any revised district council structure.

There continues to be a lack of support for FTR members who seek other employment in policing, as recommended by the Independent Commission, or having their service in the FTR recognised by other UK police services. In addition, it is clear that approximately half of all FTR members remain deployed in operational duties, or perform critical operational support functions. The consequences of not having a transitional plan in place to deal with this, should the decision be made to phase out the FTR beginning in 2005, is an 'operational gap' that has not as yet been addressed. Any phase out must also be synchronised with a build-up of the Part Time Reserve, as originally envisioned by the Independent Commission.

Finally, the four pilot sites selected by the Police Service to recruit Part Time Reserve officers do not appear to fully meet the intent of the Independent Commission's recommendations that PTR members be recruited from areas in which there were few PTR members or none at all. While the Police Service's revised PTR programme is a success in and of itself, three of the four pilot sites selected are in predominantly non-Catholic areas. In addition, the test sites do not meet the criteria of being areas from which there are currently few PTR members. Our concern is to ensure that future recruitment efforts reflect the underlying intent of the Independent Commission, which was that a representative group of Part Time Reserve members police their own communities.

### **Future Directions**

Oversight will monitor progress on clarifying devolved authorities to DCU Commanders, and the continued re-assignment of police officers away from Headquarters to patrol duties. Oversight will also look for continuing progress on the full implementation of the Police Service's plan for Special Branch, as well as on recruiting for members of the Part Time Reserve.

## **B. Recommendation Summary**

### **Recommendations 94, 95 and 96: Creation of New District Commands**

Patten Recommendations:

94. There should be one district command for each District Council area.
95. In general, each district command should be headed by a Superintendent and resourced sufficiently to be self-contained for day-to-day policing purposes and capable of marshalling strength to cope with most unexpected demands. However, in the districts with small populations the commander should be a Chief Inspector, and the districts should draw on assistance from larger neighbouring district commands for functions in which it is not feasible for a small command to be self-sufficient.
96. The divisional layer of management and the regional headquarters should be removed, and there should be a direct reporting line from each district commander to the appropriate Assistant Chief Constable at central police headquarters. District commanders in smaller

council areas, whatever their rank, should have such a direct reporting line, reflecting the accountability arrangements we have recommended. There should be much greater delegation of decision-making authority to district commanders than is the case now with sub-divisional commanders, including control over a devolved budget and all police resources in their district.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

A revised policy defining the responsibilities and authorities for human resource allocation and staffing had not been finalised as at 30 April 2004, although the revised policy was to be reviewed by senior management in June of 2004. Progress will be monitored during upcoming oversight evaluations. Transitional policy in the form of General Order 13/2001 provides a policy “bridge” between the pre-2001 organisational structure and the current one, however this order does not definitively specify the authorities of DCU Commanders to allocate personnel, both police officers and civilians, in the devolved structure. Similarly, there is no written policy establishing the authority of the two Regional ACCs for resource allocation. Business managers and personnel managers are now in place within DCUs. HMIC’s Baseline Review of the PSNI, released in August of 2004, notes that 29 DCUs are inefficient, which accords with media reports of Police Service plans to reduce the number of DCUs (see also Areas of Concern).

**Recommendation 97: Reorganisation of Police Headquarters**

Patten Recommendation:

97. There should be a slimmer structure at police headquarters - one that reflects the shift of focus towards community policing and the delegation of responsibility to district commanders, and permits a more rigorous and strategic approach to management. There should be no more than one Deputy Chief Constable. The number of Assistant Chief Officers should be reduced to six from the present twelve. The position of ‘Deputy Assistant Chief Constable’ should be deleted forthwith. The rank of Chief Superintendent should be phased out.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/NIO**

The intent of this recommendation was to shift police resources from bureaucratic and support functions toward operational policing. It was also intended to realise and reinforce the new system of delegated authority. In April of 2000 the employee complement of Headquarters was 2,071 posts, including Full Time Reserve members. By March of 2004 that figure stood at 1,688. Many of these reductions are attributable to severance and natural attrition. The Policing Board’s independent observer on human resources reported in January of 2004 that, despite the reductions of personnel at Headquarters, the number of police officers actually reallocated to DCUs was 73.

Plans originally designed to comply with this recommendation have been superseded by organisational changes including the creation of Criminal Justice Department, the assumption of responsibility for major crime by Crime Operations Department, and the resulting re-allocation of



detectives from DCUs back to Headquarters control. However, the policing resources currently allocated to Major Crime, Traffic and Tactical Support Groups, either at Headquarters or within the Regions, are arguably operational and serve and contribute to the policing goals of the DCUs. The Policing Board's independent observer will continue his comprehensive and thorough analysis of these issues in his detailed reports to the Board.

#### **Recommendations 98, 99 and 101: Special Branch**

Patten Recommendations:

- 98. Special Branch and Crime Branch should be brought together under the command of a single Assistant Chief Constable.
- 99. There should be a substantial reduction in the number of officers engaged in security work in the new, amalgamated command.
- 101. The support units of Special Branch should be amalgamated into the wider police service.

#### **Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/NIO**

The recommendation by the Independent Commission to bring together the Crime Branch and Special Branch under a single Assistant Chief Constable was accomplished on 1 April 2001, and on 1 September 2002 it became a part of the Crime Department. After considerable delays, in November of 2003, following two separate, earlier HMIC reviews as well as several by Sir John Stevens, the Police Service developed a responsive strategy and Implementation Plan linked to the adoption of the UK-wide National Intelligence Model. The Plan intended to address all of the issues these reviews raised by amalgamating the former Special Branch and Crime Branch into a new Crime Operations Department, under the command of an Assistant Chief Constable. The transfer of responsibilities and staff to this single unified command, which includes seven sub-branches, was scheduled for completion by June of 2004. The sub-branches are:

C-1	Organised Crime	C-5	Analysis Centre
C-2	Serious Crime	C-6	Scientific Support
C-3	Intelligence	C-7	Serious Crime Review
C-4	Crime Support		

The former Special Branch is now designated as C-3 Intelligence. Formerly under the control of Special Branch only, Crime Support or C-4 is now under the direct control of Crime Operations, which establishes priorities for the tasking of technical and other support resources to the wider Police Service. It is worthy of note that with the exception of one branch, all of the new branches under Crime Operations Department, including C-3, are headed by officers with backgrounds in areas other than the former Special Branch. The Implementation Plan is seen as a solid, good faith effort by the oversight team, intended to re-focus the PSNI's criminal intelligence function toward fighting organised and violent crime, principally by streamlining the way in which the PSNI gathers, analyses and disseminates criminal intelligence. For example, the Police Service has issued new policy determining how criminal intelligence information is to be shared with senior investigators. In addition, a recent organisational risk assessment and review of informant handling has resulted

in a number of changes, and the Police Service issued revised policy and procedures for the dissemination of criminal intelligence to serious crime investigators, thereby improving the likelihood of criminal convictions in court. Implementation of the Plan developed in November of 2003 is ongoing and will be a matter of continued monitoring and verification by the oversight team. The Plan's implementation is also closely monitored by HMIC, which has looked for quarterly progress reports from the Police Service. The next progress report will be due in October of 2004.

As recommended by the Independent Commission, there has been a reduction in the number of officers engaged in "security work" in the new, amalgamated command structure. Since 1999 the combined establishment number of police officers engaged in security work, which includes both Intelligence (C-3) and Crime Support (C-4), has decreased. As of 31 April 2004 the overall decrease was approximately 17%. The establishment number of officers assigned to C-3 alone has decreased by approximately 21%. However, the restructuring of Special Branch and Crime Branch, the intelligence needs of officers investigating serious and organised crime, and changing national security needs will all have an impact on the staffing needs of the new Crime Operations Department for the foreseeable future.

Approximately 80% of support work done by C-4 is now devoted to serious and organised crime at DCU level. The remaining 20% is in support of national security or criminal intelligence. The Police Service has not provided the percentage of C-3 resources devoted to serious and organised crime. Evidence has also been provided that police officers assigned to the new Crime Operations Department are required to attend a four-day Serious Crime Investigations course, as well as a course designed to prepare officers for the new organisation and change in mission.

**Recommendation 100: Informing District Commanders about Security Operations**

Patten Recommendation:

100. Security officers should be required to keep their district commanders well briefed on security activities in their districts, and district commanders should be fully consulted before security operations are undertaken in their district.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The Implementation Plan adopted by the Police Service in November of 2003 specifically requires C-3 Intelligence briefings to Regional ACCs and DCU Commanders. The Plan directs intelligence officers to keep their respective DCU Commanders well briefed on security activities within the DCU, and that Commanders be fully consulted before security operations are undertaken in the district. Likewise, Service Level Agreements describing the relationship between DCUs, C-3 Intelligence and C-4 Crime Support will be adopted. DCU Commanders have verified during the past four evaluation visits that intelligence sharing is a more routine process than in the past, and that there has been an increase in both the quantity and quality of intelligence information being shared. Specific examples of intelligence sharing in support of serious criminal investigations were provided. DCUs are aware of the availability of and procedures for requesting specialised assets from C-4 Crime Support, though availability is prioritised and therefore often limited in practice.



### **Recommendation 102: Police Postings in Security Work**

Patten Recommendation:

102. Officers should not spend such long periods in security work as has been common in the past.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

In October of 2003 the Policing Board approved the Police Service's draft tenure policy, which affects among others postings in security work (see also Recommendation 83). The draft policy categorises C-4 Crime Support positions as "Specialist Policing" posts and C-3 Intelligence as "Core Specialist" posts. Core Specialist posts will have flexible tenure policy applied. At the end of the fixed five-year tenure period, the chief officer or head of department may extend the period of tenure by a maximum of two years. Specialist Policing posts will have a fixed five-year tenure period. When a chief officer or head of department believes that the post requires a longer period of fixed tenure, a longer period may be agreed with the Director of Human Resources. The maximum fixed tenure in any post will be seven years.

The policy does not address retrospective application, which means that the intent of this recommendation will not have any effect until 2006 for Specialist positions, and 2008 for Core Specialist positions. The Police Service previously advised that the implementation of this recommendation was linked to the Policing Board's ongoing review of the Human Resource Planning Strategy, and had therefore been delayed. Due to this delay, documented evidence of an exception and appeals policy was not provided.

### **Recommendation 103: Phasing Out of Full Time Reserve**

Patten Recommendation:

103. The future police service should not include a Full Time Reserve.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

In 1999 the Independent Commission recommended that the future Police Service should phase out the existing Full Time Reserve (FTR). At that time there were approximately 2,900 members of the FTR. By August of 2004 there were approximately 1,480 members left, with 1,327 assigned to DCUs, and the remainder assigned to Headquarters and the Regions. The Policing Board and the Police Service have agreed that future contracts for the FTR will be renewed with common end-dates of 31 March 2005. A report on the prevailing security situation and recommendations on the future of the FTR is expected to be presented to the Policing Board in September of 2004. This was done on 9 September of 2004 and will be reviewed and reported in our next evaluation report, to be released in December of 2004.

The phasing out period is currently scheduled to commence in April of 2005 and run over the next 18 months, meaning that the FTR should be fully phased out by the Autumn of 2006. As at 30 April 2004 members of the FTR continued to be assigned to regular patrol and neighbourhood policing duties. This raises a concern regarding the operational gap that would occur if the decision to phase out the FTR were finalised. For example, of the FTR members last reported to be assigned to DCUs, 50% are assigned to station security, while the remaining 50% are assigned

to the delivery of routine police services. In addition, up to 20% of Tactical Support Group personnel are FTR members, and as yet no transitional plan has been provided which indicates that the Police Service is addressing these potential shortfalls in resources.

The NIO and the Police Federation have been in continuing negotiations for over one year concerning severance arrangements for those FTR members not eligible for early retirement or severance packages. Other plans to provide employment counselling, assistance and entitlements similar to those of regular police officers have also not been finalised. Given the continuing uncertainty surrounding FTR members, surprisingly little has been done to assist FTR members to find employment with other police organisations.

#### **Recommendation I04: Enlargement of the Part Time Reserve**

Patten Recommendation:

I04. There should be an enlarged Part Time Reserve of up to 2,500 officers, the additional recruits to come from those areas in which there are currently very few reservists or none at all.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**

The Independent Commission envisaged that a Part Time Reserve (PTR) of 2,500 officers would substitute for regular officers who may need to be redeployed temporarily to deal with public order demands. The Commission also noted that the PTR suffered low recruitment from Catholic and nationalist areas, and was overwhelmingly Protestant in composition. The Government accepted the recommendation that a new PTR be locally recruited from every neighbourhood, and that appointments come from those areas where there are very few reservists or none at all. Implementation of this recommendation was initially delayed. In January of 2003 the Police Service, with concurrence from the NIO and the Policing Board, engaged the Consensia Partnership to begin a pilot recruiting programme in four DCUs: Banbridge, Coleraine, Lisburn and Newtownabbey. Consensia received approximately 2,400 applications for the position, of which 45% were from female applicants and 19% from Catholic applicants. All of the 176 offers of employment to eligible candidates were accepted and the required training commenced in February of 2004.

Applicants are assessed against six behavioural competencies, and Consensia administers a set of exercises to measure each applicant against the standards. The Association of Northern Ireland Colleges has been selected as a partner in offering three flexible training options to prospective and existing PTR members: a four week full time course, evening classes, or a blended learning concept. Training will take place during 2004 and 2005 for all newly selected recruits, as well as selected officers from the existing PTR. There are procedures in place for candidates to appeal decisions with respect to suitability, but there is no appeal process for rejections based on medical grounds, or for performance in the exercises or tests.

In the judgement of the Police Service, the DCUs selected as pilots were four areas where recruiting was likely to succeed. However, upon review the oversight team finds that this initial effort falls short of the recommendation to recruit officers from under-represented areas. Three of the four pilot DCUs selected are predominantly non-Catholic areas and do not meet the



criteria of being areas from which there are currently few PTR officers. The Police Service advised on 30 April 2004 that during upcoming phases of recruitment it intends to adhere to the Independent Commission principle of targeting areas from which there are currently few reservists or none at all. Decisions as to which DCUs should be included in upcoming recruitment will be taken in consultation with the Policing Board. The Policing Board has completed a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot project, and recommendations contained in its evaluation will be used to move the PTR programme forward. As of 30 April 2004 no progress had been reported concerning the initiation of phase two or the selection of additional DCUs from which to recruit.



▶▶ **size of the police service**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission compared the strength of Northern Ireland's Police Service with those in the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and recommended that if the security situation did not significantly deteriorate the Police Service be reduced in size over the next 10 years. The model proposed included an initial downsizing over three years through an early retirement or severance programme, and a phasing out of the Full Time Reserve.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The NIO, Chief Constable and the Policing Board continue to progress the Independent Commission's recommendation that the Police Service achieves a complement of 7,500 regular police officers within a 10-year period. The Independent Commission projected that by fiscal year 2004/2005 the Police Service would have 7,349 regular police officers available for duty and that the Police Service would have phased out the Full Time Reserve (FTR). As reported by the Policing Board, in March of 2004 the Police Service had approximately 7,500 regular police officers at its disposal, as well as 1,619 members of the FTR, meaning that its objective of having 7,500 regular police officers was achieved in just five years. However, with the Full Time Reserve included the number of police officers is approximately 9,119, to police a population of approximately 1,686,270.

Having taken into account the difficult period that Northern Ireland would go through following the signing of the Belfast Agreement, the Independent Commission recommended police service of 7,500 regular police officers, plus an enlarged Part Time Reserve of up to 2,500 officers. The regular service of 7,500 alone would put the PSNI at a significantly higher strength than Police Services in the rest of the UK, where the equivalent police strength for a population the size of Northern Ireland's in 1999 would have been approximately 4,300 police officers. In other words, the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland had already been taken into account when the Independent Commission made its recommendations. By way of comparison, the Greater Manchester Police have approximately 7,700 police officers for a population of approximately 2.5 million. Thames Valley Police have approximately 4,100 police officers, and are responsible for policing a population of approximately 2.1 million.

Finally, the early retirement or severance scheme has been successfully implemented. Since its inception in January of 2001 a total of 1,904 regular police officers and FTR members have accepted voluntary severance or early retirement. The Police Service has now commenced phase five of the severance programme.

### Areas of Concern

A decision has been made to phase out the FTR commencing in April of 2005, subject to a security review by the Chief Constable which is due in September of 2004. The uncertainty surrounding the final status of the FTR, coupled with ongoing negotiations regarding FTR severance and employment opportunities with other police forces, has caused a great deal of concern for both Reserve members and the communities in which they serve. The result of this uncertainty, the failure to bring the Part Time Reserve up to its recommended strength, and the

operational gap that could be created by removing FTR members from their more operational roles (see also Recommendation 103), means that there will continue to be a state of apprehension. Our primary concern in this regard, some five years after the Independent Commission made its recommendations, is that unless decisions are made and implemented, this state of unease will increase and affect both operations and the communities served by the PSNI.

#### Future Directions

The oversight team will continue to monitor progress in meeting multi-year recruitment, severance and other targets intended to reach and maintain a Police Service of 7,500 regular police officers. The willingness of the Police Service to increase the number of civilian members with a view to releasing police officers for patrol duties will also be monitored.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 105: Future Size of the Police Service

Patten Recommendation:

105. Provided the peace process does not collapse and the security situation does not deteriorate significantly from the situation pertaining at present, the approximate size of the police service over the next ten years should be 7,500 full time officers.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

In response to the Independent Commission's recommendation that the Police Service consist of 7,500 police officers within ten years, the Policing Board adopted a Human Resource Planning Strategy to achieve this goal by 2005. The Strategy included the continued appointment of an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic recruits for each recruit class. The Policing Board reported in March of 2004 that the Police Service had achieved an establishment of just under 7,500 regular police officers five years ahead of schedule. A key element of the Human Resource Planning Strategy is the deployment of regular police officers from Headquarters and the two Regions to the District Command Units (DCUs), thereby increasing the number of officers in DCUs to 5,400 by 2005. By February of 2004 only 4,504 police officers were assigned to DCUs. In addition, the 5,400 target may now be adjusted downward to account for the additional 213 officers required for the new Crime Operations Department. Nevertheless, an independent observer, appointed to monitor the implementation of the Human Resources Planning Strategy, noted that the building up of DCU police staffing resources had "almost stalled" and that corporate "refocus" was required. The oversight team would concur with this finding most emphatically (see also Recommendation 97).

The Independent Commission projected that in Year 5 of its calculations, or by fiscal year 2004/2005, the Police Service would have 7,349 regular police officers available for duty and at the same time it would have phased out the Full Time Reserve (FTR). As of 31 March 2004 the Police Service reported 7,424 police officers at its disposal, including student officers, as well as approximately 1,619 FTR members, for a total complement of just over 9,000 police officers available for duty. Current service contracts for FTR members have been extended until 2005 when, subject to a review of the security situation, the Police Service will begin to phase out the



FTR over an 18-month period. Including FTR members and civilian staff, the Police Service has a total employee complement of approximately 12,349.

The Oversight Team has identified good progress with the recruitment of police officers on a 50:50 basis. The Board's independent observer reached a similar conclusion, describing the recruitment campaign as: "the most successful aspect of the Human Resource Strategy." Once an assessment of the Human Resource Planning Strategy and its impact has been completed and provided to the oversight team, compliance with this recommendation can be considered as having been achieved.

#### **Recommendations I06 and I07: Severance Arrangements**

##### **Patten Recommendations:**

I06. The early retirement or severance package offered to regular officers and full time reservists aged 50 or above should include a generous lump sum payment according to length of service, pension commutation up to five years, early payment of pension commutation entitlement and payment in lieu of pension until pensionable age is reached. Full time reservists should be treated as far as possible in the same way as regular officers.

I07. Regular officers with more than five years service and all full time reservists, leaving the police service before the age of 50, should receive a substantial lump sum payment.

##### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

As recommended by the Independent Commission, starting in January of 2001 the NIO, the Police Service and the Policing Board successfully implemented an early retirement or severance package for eligible regular police officers and Full Time Reserve (FTR) members. Between January of 2001 and April of 2004 a total of 1,904 regular police officers and FTR members accepted voluntary severance or early retirement. During the same period an additional 1,287 police officers and FTR members resigned from the Police Service for various reasons. Due to the negative impact caused by the large numbers of police officers leaving on severance, the Policing Board approved the suspension of the severance programme in year four (i.e. 2003/2004).

The programme for year five began again in April of 2004 and included a severance target of 330, with 307 applications received and accepted. The severance programme is being carefully managed to prevent the loss of regular officers in critical positions, including the use of "red circling", or protecting, certain positions for a fixed period of time. The NIO has agreed to extend the severance programme until 2010 unless its objectives are met before then.

The issues of an improved severance programme and retraining for FTR members who are still working and are not eligible for early retirement remains the subject of negotiations between the NIO and the Police Federation. The lack of progress in implementing this aspect of the FTR programme prevents the remaining FTR members from making timely decisions critical to their futures, and requires speedy resolution. Finally, we note that the Police Federation as well as other organisations advocate the reduction of the Full Time Reserve through natural attrition only, thereby achieving the intent of the Independent Commission over time, rather than through a programme of disbandment.

### **Recommendation 108: Retraining Programme for Police Officers**

Patten Recommendation:

108. The Training and Employment Agency should develop measures for police officers (and civilians) seeking other employment, in consultation with police management and the staff associations. The Police Retraining and Rehabilitation Trust should have a role in this programme, and should have enhanced staffing and funding to enable it to deal with a substantially larger workload.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Training and Employment Agency/PRRT**

The PSNI Voluntary Severance Support Unit (VSSU) handles enquiries, produces severance programme information, and provides pension and career advice for regular police officers and FTR members consistent with the intent of this recommendation. There is no similar programme envisaged for civilian employees.

As previously reported, during the first three years of the programme 670 police officers were approved to participate in external training. Of this number 146 actually attended the training courses. Although the Police Service indicated that it plans to increase the role and usage of the Police Retraining and Rehabilitation Trust, no data or documents indicating that this had taken place were provided.

### **Recommendation 109: Opportunities in GB Police Forces for Reservists**

Patten Recommendation:

109. Police recruiting agencies in Great Britain should take full account of the policing experience of former RUC reservists in considering applications for employment in police services in Great Britain.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Home Office**

In October of 2002 a decision was made to phase out the FTR over an 18-month period commencing in April of 2005, however subject to the security situation. The NIO has contacted the Associations of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) seeking an agreement to deliver a presentation about FTR members to ACPO members and agencies. However, over the past several months considerable interest in retaining the FTR due to police staffing needs and other interests has developed. As a result the objectives of this recommendation have not been significantly progressed. Further action regarding the gauging of interest within police forces in England, Wales and Scotland, and determining if opportunities for FTR members exist, has been suspended. Therefore, evidence of continued implementation, including a detailed plan and time lines, has not been provided to the oversight team.



### **Recommendation 110: Opportunities with the UN for Reservists**

#### **Patten Recommendation:**

110. The British government should offer former reservists the opportunity to participate in British policing contingents in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/FCO/Home Office/Chief Constable**

The Police Service advised that further action on this recommendation is contingent on the Chief Constable's recommendations on the future status of the FTR, which is due in September of 2004. Neither the NIO nor the Police Service provided documents or evidence pertaining to the outstanding performance indicators (See also Recommendation 109).

▶▶ **composition and recruitment**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission envisaged a Police Service that is representative of and supported by the community it serves. A key component of achieving a representative Police Service is a sound and successful recruitment programme that reaches, attracts and is supported by all segments of the population, especially those segments that are under-represented. Several recommendations address the various components of a sound recruitment programme that will attract, fairly test, objectively vet, and select applicants in a way that results in a diversified Police Service that is representative of, and can be supported by, the community.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service contracted the Consensia Partnership in January of 2001 for the recruitment of police officers on a 50:50 basis. Consensia, working in conjunction with the Police Service, has produced excellent results. The recruitment and selection process is sophisticated and consistent with contemporary human resource practices, and involves both lay observers and lay assessors who are an essential component of the recruitment programme.

Over the five completed and two ongoing recruitment competitions, Consensia have received a total of 38,098 police officer applications as at April of 2004. Almost 36% have been from Catholics and 37% from females. The goal of the Police Service is to appoint 540 police officers annually. Since March of 2001 the recruiting and selection process has provided merit pools of 3,413 qualified applicants, from which 1,254 Catholics and those other than Catholic have been selected for appointment to police training on a 50:50 basis. Preliminary data indicate that competitions six and seven now in progress will produce merit pools of approximately 900 and 800 qualified applicants respectively. This would be more than the Police Service is able to accept into training, thereby providing the Police Service with an opportunity to select only the most highly qualified applicants. This is an enviable position in any of today's policing environments.

In June of 2002 the Police Service contracted Grafton Recruitment to assist in the recruitment of civilian support staff. Grafton's programme for recruiting civilians is also well designed and innovative, and meets contemporary policing and human resource standards. It includes the participation of independent community observers to evaluate the adequacy of testing facilities, and whether assessment processes follow established protocols. A quality assurance programme is also in place.

Grafton Recruitment has conducted eight recruitment competitions for civilian support staff where the 50:50 recruiting requirement applies. The most significant competition was for Station Enquiry Assistants, envisaged by the Independent Commission as replacing police officers assigned to enquiry desks. During this competition Grafton produced a merit pool from which the Police Service was able to appoint 86 Station Enquiry Assistants. The remaining seven competitions also produced merit pools of qualified applicants from which appointments could be made consistent with the 50:50 requirement. The Police Service has appointed 117 civilian support staff from the eight merit pools.

The Independent Commission recommended the registration of interests and associations consistent with its recommendations addressing transparency and openness. After several delays,



including legal issues and the requirement to prepare guidance books, the Police Service issued General Order 17/2004, Registration of Notifiable Interests, on 2 April 2004, and has commenced its implementation. This policy requires that police officers register their memberships in seven specified organisations and any other “organisation proclaiming/holding views on race, ethnicity or national identity which may be perceived to be in conflict with Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998”. The order prohibits the disclosure of registration information except for specific official reasons. As of 30 April 2004 the Police Service reported that returns from police officers are being received, however in light of a judicial review the Police Service suspended the registration process in June of 2004 until such time as the judicial review of the process has run its course (see also Areas of Concern).

#### **Areas of Concern**

Previously reported, an ongoing concern relates to the representative nature of the future civilian workforce. The Government’s August 2001 Implementation Plan committed to developing a “package of measures” which would ultimately create a more representative PSNI civilian workforce, and one which would also be more effectively integrated into the Police Service. However, even though the Police Service has progressed some of these measures in an effort to move toward a workforce representative of the whole community, no formalised plan or strategy with goals and time lines to accomplish these objectives has been developed. In addition, although the Police Service faced certain unique challenges in addressing the representativeness of its civilian workforce, challenges which were different from those faced in the recruitment of police officers, those opportunities that were presented to the Police Service were not taken advantage of aggressively. As a result the community background of the Police Service’s civilian workforce has not changed significantly. For example, between 1999 and April of 2004 the percentage of Catholic civilian staff rose from 12.3% of the total number of civilian staff, to 14.4%, an increase of 2.1% over a four-year period. Clearly, the package of measures currently being employed is not producing the result intended by the Independent Commission, or at a rate of change achieved for regular police officers.

The Human Resources Planning Strategy estimates the potential reclassification of some 650 police officer positions to civilian positions before April of 2005. The recruitment of 260 Station Enquiry Assistants is part of this strategy, and presents an excellent opportunity to impact on the makeup of the civilian workforce. Although the business case supporting the strategy is making its way through the approval and funding process, civilianisation goals relating to community representation remain in question. This is a continuing concern.

Finally, although the release of Police Service General Order 17/2004, Registration of Notifiable Interests, on 2 April 2004 indicates long-delayed progress on the registration of notifiable interests, this process has since been halted. In this instance the suspension of the process is in response to a judicial review launched recently. While the legal review must run its course, it remains disappointing that some five years after the Independent Commission made this recommendation, designed to reflect openness and transparency within the Police Service, it has still not been implemented,



### Future Directions

The oversight team will continue to monitor progress on developing a more representative civilian workforce within the PSNI. We will also review the implementation of the registration of interest requirement for police officers.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation III: Transfer of Police Civilian Staff

Patten Recommendation:

III. The Northern Ireland Civil Service management should facilitate transfers of civilian members of the police service to other Northern Ireland departments and should co-operate with the Policing Board and the Chief Constable in achieving a balanced and representative civilian workforce.

### Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board/NIO

The Independent Commission noted that it was illogical to argue for diversity among police officers while leaving the Police Service's civilian staff unchanged. The Government agreed and in its August 2001 Implementation Plan it committed to developing a "package of measures" to bring about a more representative and integrated civilian workforce. Among the measures were:

- 1) the direct recruitment of police support staff by the Chief Constable (i.e., Direct Recruits) through a new recruitment agency;
- 2) the requirement that members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service accepting promotion within the PSNI give up their civil service status, and become Direct Recruits;
- 3) the requirement that an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic applicants be appointed where recruitment is for six or more civilian positions at the same level; and,
- 4) the development of a management-led programme to enhance the integration of police officers, support staff and traffic wardens.

The Police Service has been able to make progress in many areas addressed by the package of measures spelled out above. For example, the recruitment of civilian staff by Grafton Recruitment is progressing well and every external recruitment drive conducted by Grafton has been successful. Sufficient merit pools have been produced to fill several positions on a 50:50 basis, including Station Enquiry Assistants, press officers, IT specialists, intelligence analysts, business managers and personnel managers. The number of Direct Recruits rose from 791 in 1999 to 1,764 by 2004.

In addition, the Police Service contracted Deloitte MCS Limited to conduct a Support Staff Pay and Grading Scoping Study, which was completed in April of 2004. The study makes several recommendations that should serve to progress the civilianisation of the Police Service further, as well as helping to develop a more diversified workforce.

The Human Resource Planning Strategy estimated the potential replacement of 650 police officers with civilian staff before April of 2005. The supporting business case is now going through the

Treasury approval process. The recruitment of the remaining 260 Station Enquiry Assistants is included in the business case.

Unfortunately the actual change to Catholic representation among civilian staff, a central objective of the Independent Commission, has been negligible, with the percentage of Catholic civilian support staff increasing by only 2.1%, from 12.3% in 1999 to 14.4% at present. It must be acknowledged that the Police Service faced several legitimate obstacles in progressing this initiative, including the lack of full community support, the perceived inability of the Police Service to protect civilians from possible community backlash, and the lower pay levels offered to civilians. In addition, the Government was unable to re-integrate as many Northern Ireland Civil Servants back into the regular civil service as anticipated, meaning that the Police service had considerably less “headroom” for the hiring of Direct Recruits.

Nonetheless, it must also be said that the opportunities offered to the PSNI, to aggressively address the known imbalance within its civilian workforce, were simply not acted nor capitalised upon to the extent possible. For example, the number of recruitment drives identified for more than six positions has been limited, with many civilian positions continuing to be filled by internal trawl, which only distributes the existing pool of resources. As we have pointed out before, while this practice provides advancement opportunities for serving employees, it does little to affect the overall community makeup of the civilian workforce. In addition, positions which should clearly be staffed by civilians continue to be staffed by police officers (see also HMIC’s Baseline Review of the PSNI, published in August of 2004). Finally, the Police Service has yet to provide evidence of a formalised plan or strategy, with goals and time lines that would result in a more representative civilian workforce. Neither has it significantly progressed a programme for enhancing the integration of police officers and civilian staff which encompasses the civilianisation of posts (see also Recommendations 53 and 90), and the training, education, development and management of support staff (see also Recommendation 129).

#### **Recommendation 112: Staff of Policing Board, NIO and Police Ombudsman**

Patten Recommendation:

112. Every effort should be made to ensure that the composition of the staff of the Policing Board, the NIO Police Division (or any successor body), and the office of the Police Ombudsman should be broadly reflective of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole, particularly in terms of political/religious tradition and gender.

#### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Police Ombudsman**

The Northern Ireland Office, the Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman, all of which regularly interact with the Police Service, provide personnel data on a regular basis for review by the oversight team on how their employees are reflective of the population of Northern Ireland. Each agency has established plans and practices to ensure that their respective staffs are diversified to the degree possible and consistent with applicable legislation.



### **Recommendations I13 and I15: Support from Community Leaders, Liaison with Schools**

#### **Patten Recommendations:**

- I13. All community leaders, including political party leaders and local councillors, bishops and priests, school teachers and sports authorities, should take steps to remove all discouragements to members of their communities applying to join the police, and make it a priority to encourage them to apply.
- I15. Liaison should be established between all schools and universities and the police service in Northern Ireland immediately, and work experience attachments and familiarisation days should be organised with active support and encouragement from community leaders and teachers.

#### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The Independent Commission and the Government recognised that the key to making the Police Service more representative of the communities it serves is the broad-based and balanced recruitment of members from all communities. The importance of active involvement by leaders of all communities in removing any discouragements to joining the PSNI cannot be overstated.

The Catholic Church and leading public officials have publicly expressed support and encouragement for young people to join the Police Service, which has contributed significantly to the success of the police officer recruitment programme. Nonetheless, there are examples where police recruits have been openly discouraged from joining and remaining with the Police Service; the Oversight Commissioner in previous reports has noted these. Fear of intimidation or attack on themselves or relatives continues to be a reason given by Catholics for not joining the Police Service. Therefore, while the recruitment programmes to attract police officer and civilian applicants representative of the community have been successful to date, the continued success of the recruitment programmes depends upon the development of broad-based support across the community.

The Government's August 2001 Implementation Plan also wanted to see links established between the Police Service and all schools, colleges and universities. The Police Service implemented and conducted several initiatives in this regard including the development of a Citizen and Safety Education Programme that included representatives from several sectors of education, conducted career conventions, career talks, and distributed literature at several schools. Between September of 2000 and June of 2003 the Police Service took the work experience programme to a number of Protestant, Catholic, and non-designated schools. In January of 2003 existing PSNI Career Advisors were transferred to operational duties as part of the overall Human Resource Planning Strategy. The Police Service then suspended the work experience programme until September of 2003, when it was anticipated that the schools contact programme would become a key community involvement activity in all DCUs.

The Police Service has developed a coordinated work experience programme to commence in September of 2004. In the interim, and in the absence of a more coordinated work experience programme, DCU Commanders interested in maintaining links with local schools have offered work placements to those students interested. In addition, the Police Service continues to visit schools throughout Northern Ireland in order to generate interest in the police and provide information to students, unless specifically asked not to attend. Unfortunately, all too many

schools will ask that police officers not visit, thereby denying their students the benefits of this programme. It is hoped that political developments will soon allow this type of routine interaction between the community and its Police Service. Finally, the recruiting firms contracted to conduct police and support staff recruitment competitions, Grafton Recruitment and the Consensia Partnership, periodically attend Career Fairs at schools and colleges across Northern Ireland.

The importance of these activities is minimised by two factors. First, the recruitment of police officers on a 50:50 basis has been a success from its commencement in 2001 despite the lack of support from all segments of the community envisioned in this recommendation. At the present time the recruitment competitions are resulting in more qualified applicants, both Catholic and other than Catholic, than the Police Service is able to accept into training. In addition, it has been determined that the average recruit ages are 28 for females and 29 for males. This results in an approximate ten-year span between participation in a work experience programme and appointment to the Police Service. While the direct value of these programmes as they relate to recruitment may therefore be minimal at this time, the significance of police personnel moving freely among students from all communities, and discussing issues of mutual importance, cannot be overstated.

#### **Recommendation 114: Gaelic Athletic Association**

Patten Recommendation:

114. The Gaelic Athletic Association should repeal its rule 21, which prohibits members of the police in Northern Ireland from being members of the Association.

**Lead Responsibility: GAA**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

#### **Recommendation 116: Pilot Police Cadet Schemes**

Patten Recommendation:

116. Provided there is active support and encouragement from local political and community leaders, pilot police cadet schemes should be set up.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

Section 42 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides legislative authority for the establishment of a police cadet scheme. The Police Service does not anticipate the development of a Cadet Scheme until 2005.

#### **Recommendation 117: Recruitment Agency, Lay Involvement in Recruitment**

Patten Recommendation:

117. The police should contract out the recruitment of both police officers and civilians into the police service. There should be lay involvement, including community representatives, on recruitment panels.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**



The Police Service contracted the Consensia Partnership in January of 2001 to recruit police officers. Consensia includes extensive lay participation in the observation of its process, and as trained assessors on panels during the actual selection process. The participation of lay observers and assessors clearly adds strength and credibility to the selection programme.

Consensia has conducted seven recruitment drives since 2001. The first six attracted 63,810 requests for applicant information packs, which resulted in 33,298 actual applications being received. Almost 36% have been from Catholics and 37% from females (see also Recommendations 118 and 119). Although the selection process for competition six is not yet complete, the Police Service now projects that the merit pool will be nearly 900. The seventh competition, which is currently ongoing, has resulted in 4,967 additional applications being received, of which those of a Catholic background submitted 35%. In addition, it is noteworthy that 2,100 of the applications were received on-line due to a new practice instituted to make applying easier. The Police Service projects that this will produce a merit pool of approximately 800 additional applicants. At the present rate, the recruitment projections indicate that there will be a greater number of qualified recruits than the Police Service is able to accept into training, thereby providing the Police Service with an opportunity to select only the most highly qualified recruits. This is an enviable position for any police organisation in today's competitive labour markets.

The Police Service contracted with Grafton Recruitment in late 2002 to conduct a similar programme for the recruitment of civilian staff. Consistent with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, when recruiting for six or more civilian posts at the same level, an equal number of Catholics and those other than Catholic must be appointed. When recruiting for less than six posts at the same time, the 50:50 recruiting requirement does not apply.

Grafton Recruitment has completed eight 50:50 competitions for civilian support staff, in addition to those initially conducted by the Police Service. The most significant competition was for 60 of the anticipated 260 Station Enquiry Assistants, envisaged by the Independent Commission to replace police officers at enquiry desks (see also Recommendation 53). Grafton received requests for 6,217 Station Enquiry Assistant application packs, which resulted in 1,890 applications being submitted. This in turn resulted in a merit pool of 227, of which 92 are qualified for appointment on a 50:50 basis. The remaining competitions also produced sufficient applicants and merit pools from which appointments could be made consistent with the 50:50 requirement. Grafton has conducted 33 additional competitions for positions where 50:50 is not applicable. 24% of the applicants in the merit pools were Catholic.

#### **Recommendations 118 and 119: Functions of New Recruitment Agency**

Patten Recommendations:

118. The recruitment agency should advertise imaginatively and persistently, particularly in places likely to reach groups who are under-represented in the police.

119. The agency should advertise beyond Northern Ireland, in the rest of the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Recruitment Agency**

Consensia's advertising programme for the recruitment of police officers is extensive. During the first six competitions it included press, television, billboard, cinema and on-line advertising designed to reach groups currently under-represented in the Police Service. The programme covered Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. The responses from all communities have been positive (see also Recommendations 117 and 121).

The Police Service has estimated that Competition Six, which was launched in September of 2003, would result in nearly 1,000 qualified applicants, although more recent projections have modified this number to approximately 900. These results have exceeded all expectations. Therefore, in an effort to adapt the volume of applicants to the number of recruits that can actually be appointed to training, television advertising has been eliminated, and the number of press insertions reduced for competition seven. Nevertheless, over 4,960 applications were received and preliminary data suggests that a merit pool of approximately 800 qualified applicants will result. The success of the advertising programme is a credit both to the Police Service and to the professional abilities of Consensia.

In much the same fashion Grafton Recruitment, using information gained from focus groups, has developed an innovative and imaginative advertising strategy designed to reach groups currently under-represented in the Police Service. The strategy includes on-line and press advertising in specifically designated professional publications related to the positions being advertised. The strategy primarily covers Northern Ireland, but also the Republic of Ireland. The eight competitions held to date have resulted in merit pools sufficient to allow for the appointment of applicants representative of the broader community. Grafton Recruitment continually evaluates its advertising strategies and makes adjustments as required.

No current information was provided regarding reports, assessments and data specifying the number of police applications received from beyond Northern Ireland. Also not provided was a requested strategy designed to identify and encourage applications from experienced Northern Ireland Catholic officers in other police services, or data specifying the effectiveness of this part of the recruitment programme. However, the overall success of the recruitment programme minimises the need for these initiatives at this time on a purely quantitative basis (see also Recommendations 127 and 128).

#### **Recommendations 120 and 121: Selection of Recruits**

##### **Patten Recommendations:**

120. All candidates for the police service should continue to be required to reach a specified standard of merit in the selection procedure. Candidates reaching this standard should then enter a pool from which the required number of recruits can be drawn.

121. An equal number of Protestants and Catholics should be drawn from the pool of qualified candidates.

##### **Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides legislative authority for the recruitment of qualified applicants on a 50:50 ratio for those identified as Catholic and those identified as other than Catholic. The Consensia Partnership working in cooperation with the Police Service has



developed a comprehensive, job related selection process consistent with these recommendations, which have been outlined in detail by the oversight team in previous reports. Consensia has conducted seven recruitment competitions and has completed the selection of qualified applicants for entry into merit pools for five of the seven. The selection processes are ongoing for competitions six and seven.

Applicants successfully completing the selection process are entered into the merit pool and, except for fulfilling the training requirements, are considered fully capable and qualified to perform the duties of a police officer. Each of five competitions has provided a sufficient merit pool from which an equal number of Catholics and those other than Catholics have been selected for appointment to the police training facility.

Given the strong response to all previous employment competitions, the Police Service and Consensia are exploring ways to adjust the programme in order to more closely match volumes of applicants with number of recruits required for training (see also Recommendations 118 and 119). As previously noted, the success of the recruitment programme is a credit both to the professional abilities of the Consensia Partnership and to the high level of professional support provided by the Police Service.

Similar to the recruitment provisions for police officers, the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires that where there is a recruitment competition for six or more vacant civilian staff posts at the same level, an equal number of Catholics and those other than Catholic should be appointed from the merit pool of qualified candidates. The Police Service contracted with Grafton Recruitment for the selection of civilian support staff. Grafton has designed and requires applicants for civilian support staff positions to meet an established set of job-related competencies.

Through April 2004, Grafton completed eight competitions for six or more posts at the same level. In each case a merit pool was established sufficient to provide for the appointment of an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic civilian staff. The Police Service has selected 117 applicants from these merit pools for appointment. Grafton has also conducted several competitions for positions where there are less than six posts available. The Police Service has selected 39 applicants from these merit pools for appointment. Although each recruitment and selection competition for six or more civilian staff positions have produced merit pools sufficient to fill vacancies, the percentage of Catholics in the civilian workforce has only marginally increased since 1999 (see also Recommendation 111).

#### **Recommendation 122: Opportunities for Part Time Working and Job Sharing**

**Patten Recommendation:**

122. Priority should be given to creating opportunities for part time working and job-sharing, both for police officers and police service civilians, and career breaks should be introduced.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable**



The Police Service has a policy allowing for part time work and job sharing for its civilian support staff. Regular police officers as well as Reserve members are allowed unpaid leave for the purpose of career breaks, but the Police Service has not yet developed a policy authorising such breaks consistent with the intent of this recommendation. The Police Service indicated that when it reached its full establishment level of 7,500 regular officers, and following appropriate research, a new policy would be introduced. Inasmuch as the full establishment level has now been achieved, the objectives of this recommendation may be progressed.

**Recommendation I23: Child Care Arrangements**

Patten Recommendation:

I23. Childcare facilities should be introduced where applicable, or child care vouchers and flexible shift arrangements offered.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

As the Independent Commission pointed out in 1999, every effort should be made to ensure that women are offered as many opportunities for a fulfilling career in policing as men. Levels of female recruitment remain encouraging, however some female officers initially raised the problem of childcare as one of the main reasons why they gave up their police careers. The Independent Commission therefore recommended that childcare facilities be introduced where practicable, or child care vouchers and flexible shift arrangements offered.

However, the Police Service has now developed a detailed and thorough Gender Action Plan, which is aimed at improving the recruitment, retention and progression of female police officers and civilian staff. The Plan is accompanied by an Implementation Plan with target dates, clear lines of responsibility and resource implications. The Gender Action Plan notes the difficulty of balancing child care and work commitments, particularly in cases where both parents are police officers. It also recognises that increasing the number of female officers, a long-established objective of the Police Service, will only increase the demand for more flexible work and childcare arrangements. Although the Action Plan is only an initial step and does not address the issues of child care arrangements specifically, a number of its recommendations are aimed at facilitating the re-integration of new mothers through such things as part time work, modified deployments and restricted duties.

**Recommendation I24: Length of Recruitment Process**

Patten Recommendation:

I24. The recruitment process should be reduced to no more than six months.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Recruitment Agency**

The Police Service and Consensia continue to be in full compliance with the requirements of this recommendation. The process is no more than six months in length, and Consensia and/or the Police Service maintains contact with applicants throughout the selection process.



### **Recommendation 125: Disqualification from Entry into the Police Service**

Patten Recommendation:

125. Young people should not be automatically disqualified from entry into the police service for relatively minor criminal offences, particularly if they have since had a number of years without further transgressions. The criteria on this aspect of eligibility should be the same as those in the rest of the United Kingdom. There should be a procedure for appeal to the Police Ombudsman against disqualification of candidates.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. The Secretary of State appointed an Independent Assessor in May of 2001 for a period of three years, to validate decisions on disqualifications where candidates disagree with the decision. The Police Service periodically provides the oversight team data, which describe the number and reasons why applicants are disqualified during each competition. These indicate that no predisposition to disqualify applicants on the basis of community background exists.

### **Recommendation 126: Registration of Interests**

Patten Recommendation:

126. All officers - those now in service as well as all future recruits - should be obligated to register their interests and associations. The register should be held both by the police service and by the Police Ombudsman.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Police Ombudsman**

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission recommended the registration of interests and associations consistent with the position of transparency and openness it had advocated throughout its report. The Government accepted this recommendation in its August 2001 Implementation Plan. The authority to implement this recommendation is contained in Section 51 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. After several delays, including certain legal issues and a requirement to prepare guidance books, the Police Service issued General Order 17/2004, Registration of Notifiable Interests, on 2 April 2004. This order requires that police officers register their memberships in seven specified organisations, and the Police Service immediately began implementing this recommendation as intended.

Registration is required for any other organisation: "proclaiming/holding views on race, ethnicity or national identity which may be perceived to be in conflict with section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, and section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998". The order prohibits the disclosure of registration information except for specific official reasons. As of 28 April 2004 the Police Service reported that it was beginning to receive completed forms from police officers, however the entire registration process was suspended on 30 June 2004, as the Police Service deals with a judicial review of the process. The fact that the registration of notifiable interests has still not been completed some five years after the Independent Commission's recommendations, intended to encourage openness and transparency within the PSNI, remains a serious concern.

**Recommendations 127 and 128: Functions of New Recruitment Agency**

Patten Recommendations:

127. The recruitment agency should seek to identify Northern Ireland Catholic officers in other police services, including the Garda Síochána, contact them and encourage them - particularly those in more senior ranks - to apply for positions in the Northern Ireland police.

128. Lateral entry of experienced officers from other police services, and secondments or recruitments from non-police organisations should be actively encouraged.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Recruitment Agency/Policing Board**

Section 45 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides legislative authority, for the Policing Board in respect to senior officers and the Chief Constable in respect to other ranks, to seek applicants from other police services including the Garda Síochána. The Police Service reports that it has and continues to make efforts to identify Northern Ireland Catholic officers in other police services, however results to date are few. The actions required by other recommendations relating to a slimmer Headquarters, severance, and the size of the Police Service have significantly changed the makeup of senior staff, and there is no progress reported with regard to an increase in the number of Catholics in the senior ranks at this time (see also Recommendations 97, 105 and 106).

The Independent Commission also recognised that the Police Service could benefit from an infusion of diverse talent and experience from outside Northern Ireland and recommended, regardless of religion, the encouragement of lateral entry and secondments from non-police agencies. The Government has introduced new regulations to facilitate the entry of serving police officers at the rank of constable into the PSNI without having to undergo recruit training, however a progress report had not been provided by the Police Service as of 30 April 2004. Progress on these recommendations will continue to be monitored during upcoming oversight evaluations.



▶▶ **training, education and development**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission addressed the subject of training, education and development and focussed on the restructuring of this critical area as being pivotal for a successful transformation of the Police Service. The Independent Commission recommended the development of a Training, Education and Development (TED) Strategy for both the recruit and in-service training programmes. The TED Strategy was to clearly demonstrate the inter-connection between the overall aims of the recommendations, and the objectives and priorities set out in the future policing plans of the Police Service and the Policing Board. The Independent Commission also emphasised the importance of a new state of the art Police College as critical to the long term success of the training programme and the transformation of Northern Ireland's Police Service. The new Police College was seen as the cornerstone to providing the recruit officer as well as seasoned police and civilian personnel with the environment conducive to modern learning and development techniques.

### Progress and Accomplishments

In January of 2004 the Policing Board engaged a training advisor. This person should prove an important asset with respect to the Board's role in monitoring the implementation of the Police Service's training, education and development strategy. The Monitoring Framework has been refined and accepted by the PSNI and the Policing Board's Human Resources Committee, and integrates the intent of the Independent Commission with the PSNI's Training, Education and Development (TED) Strategy. The revised costed business plan is expected by May of 2004, and the Policing Board will ensure that the value for expenditure is verified and approved.

The approval of the TED Primary Reference Document by the Policing Board in April of 2002 allowed a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to be conducted. The TNA was outsourced and results were reported back to the PSNI in February of 2004. The input from the TNA has now been integrated into the Costed Business Plan and the PSNI Business Training Plan. The TNA will be evaluated during upcoming oversight visits.

The Learning Advisory Council (LAC) continues to function as intended. The LAC provides the PSNI with critical input from approximately 50 members representing a broad base of the community, including business, academic and community groups. The initiative also serves to raise the level of community awareness of both the TED enterprise and the overall objectives of the PSNI. Collaboration between the Police Service and other police training facilities in the UK, the United States and Canada are continuing, with a number of initiatives at the forefront of international collaboration. For example, the Leadership in the Counter Terrorism Environment (LICTE) involves collaboration between the Scottish Police College, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy and the Police College of Northern Ireland. The programme's developers have drawn in academic partners including Harvard University, the University of St. Andrews and Queens University, Belfast. Unfortunately, expected and more formalised links with police training facilities in the Republic of Ireland have been slow to materialise (see also Recommendations 168, 169 and 170).

The establishment of the Police College's Registrar's Office is also a positive development, as it provides TED managers with important data on over 250 learning programmes offered by the Police College. The Police College's four faculties deliver a total of approximately 10,000 annual training days. The Registry manages a database of information on all lesson plans and course training standards, as well as ensuring that the library of lesson plans is integrated with core themes of Human Rights, Equality, and Diversity and will include Health and Safety in the near future.

The evaluation of the 'Course for All' was outsourced to the Chartered Management Institute and feedback provided to the PSNI. This evaluation report is considered important in ensuring that intended results and service-wide impacts have been achieved in view of certain criticisms. Also related are our Report No. 7, released in May of 2003, and a report of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), released in February of 2004.

The new Police College of Northern Ireland is in the planning stages and remains a commitment to the members of the PSNI to provide them with modern facilities in which to develop their professional skills. Environmental assessments of the building site are now under way and an "interactive training centre" using the latest technology has been approved by the NIO, which should significantly enhance training programmes as well as value for money over the long term. The expected completion date remains 2007.

The Police College is developing learning that focuses on providing the knowledge, skills and abilities to front line supervisors, both police and civilian, as well as competency enhancement in Leadership and Business administration for middle management as required under the National Competency Framework. This an area of particular importance to the oversight team, and will be assessed during upcoming evaluation visits.

#### **Areas of Concern**

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made in some areas of TED, significant issues remain to be addressed. Among these is a reported inability to recruit and retain qualified training instructors. The lack of incentives such as acting rank or extra pay for instructors while on staff to the Police College are advanced as a detrimental factor in the future recruitment of instructors. Long range consequences will result if this capacity issue remains. Oversight will need a more detailed examination of this concern in forthcoming evaluations.

Progress in integrating major core themes across all training and learning courses offered within TED is progressing slower than originally envisaged. The integration of major core themes including human rights, equality, and diversity are well advanced in the course standards provided at the PCNI. The inclusion of Health and Safety as a core theme is under development for full interaction. The Registrar's function is designed to ensure that the library of lesson plans include integrated core themes, however the inability to integrate the remaining themes is a concern.

The development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between Training Branch and the DCU Commanders remains unresolved. The results of a pilot of SLAs in four DCUs will be assessed during the next oversight evaluation. Although SLAs have been developed in several other areas within the PSNI, and serve to regulate and confirm the interaction between different components



of the Police Service as intended, the training area appears particularly reluctant to put them into place. No specific rationale for this disinclination has been provided, and it remains disappointing that SLAs are not in place some five years after the Independent Commission's recommended them for the training area.

#### **Future Directions**

The oversight team will focus on progress related to the application of the TNA, the integration of the Registrar System, the civilianisation of positions at the Police College, the impact of the Learning Advisory Council and the results of the Part Time Police Officers training programme, in particular training collaboration with Northern Ireland Colleges, as well as monitoring the continued progress on the new Police College.

## **B. Recommendation Summary**

### **Recommendation 129: Training, Education and Development Strategy**

Patten Recommendation:

129. A training, education and development strategy should be put in place, both for recruit training and for in-service training, which is linked to the aims of this report and to the objectives and priorities set out in the policing plans. These plans should incorporate training and development requirements.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was completed in January of 2004, and the recommendations it contained were subsequently distributed to Police College Faculty Heads for implementation in their respective programmes. The applicable recommendations were incorporated into the TED Training Business Plan and Costed Business Plan. The TNA focuses on approximately 20% of the curriculum, and in particular courses that are not mandated by legislation. At present approximately 80% of the Police College's 10,000 annual training days are devoted to course material that is mandated by legislation. This essentially means that the Police College must limit the development of new or more innovative training approaches against the required PSNI business objective and plans.

The Policing Board's training advisor has been appointed and took up her functions in January of 2004, and will focus on ensuring the effective monitoring of PSNI training. The monitoring framework in place focuses on four key areas: 1) the identification and design of training; 2) delivery of training; 3) outputs and outcomes of training; and 4) budget issues. An Information, Communication, Technology (ICT) Training Committee has been established under the Deputy Chief Constable to provide an ongoing overview of the ICT training being delivered to the PSNI. The Committee has been constituted among other things to ensure major stakeholders are considered in the training priorities.



### **Recommendation I30: Training, Education and Development Budget**

Patten Recommendation:

I30. A total training and development budget should be established, covering all aspects of training, and this should be safeguarded against transfers to other sub-heads.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**

The PSNI has purchased a costing software package that allows for better tracking of data, although complications occurred during the initial rollout. This has resulted in delays to the programme becoming fully functional for the current fiscal year; however existing methods were used to develop a costed business plan that will meet the fiscal requirements for 2004/2005. The initiative to establish a Registrar's Office for the Police College was begun less than one year ago, and is now completed. The College Registry is now functioning and ensures that proper control of vital information on course content is documented and maintained for reference purposes.

### **Recommendation I31: New Police College**

Patten Recommendation:

I31. The Northern Ireland police should have a new purpose-built police college and the funding for it should be found in the next public spending round.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The planning for the new, state-of-the-art Police College continues to progress with the preparation of the European Procurement Competition. The introduction of a wholly interactive training component will ensure that the PSNI's Police College will be on the leading edge of professional police training. The completion date remains projected for 2007.

### **Recommendation I32: Service Level Agreements**

Patten Recommendation:

I32. There should be service level agreements between police districts/departments and the police Training Branch setting out what the Branch is expected to deliver to the district or department concerned.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The implementation of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between District Command Units, Headquarters Departments and Training Branch remains to be finalised. The Police Service developed a draft SLA that was piloted in four DCUs. While this constitutes a degree of advancement, the full implementation of this relatively straightforward recommendation must remain a work in progress and an ongoing concern, at least until such time as the pilot studies are concluded and a final decision is reached.



### **Recommendation 133: Civilian Input into Recruit Training**

Patten Recommendation:

133. There should be a high degree of civilian input into the recruit training programme. The director of the training centre (and the new college when this is opened) should have both academic qualifications and management expertise. Civilian instructors should be employed, or brought in as necessary to conduct as many elements of the training programme as possible. Some modules of recruit training should be contracted out to universities and delivered on university premises, ideally together with non-police students.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The use of civilian instructors to deliver certain components of the recruit training programme continues. The outsourcing of certain aspects of recruit training to universities and community colleges is being tested through a pilot project for new and existing members of the Part Time Reserve (See also Recommendation 104). The introduction of outsourced training by community colleges and university campuses for segments of the induction of Part Time Reserve members will be subject to internal assessment, and if deemed successful this will be broadened to include other areas of the training needs.

### **Recommendation 134: Training of Civilian Recruits**

Patten Recommendation:

134. Civilian recruits to the police service should also attend the police college, and do some of their training together with police officer recruits.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The integration of police officers and civilian staff in joint training programmes is progressing. The one week induction course was a pilot project deemed successful, and there is now a new training module used for inducting new staff. Leadership courses aimed at sergeants and above are now fully integrated.

### **Recommendation 135: Achievement of Academic Qualifications By Recruits**

Patten Recommendation:

135. Recruits who do not already have degrees should be encouraged to acquire appropriate academic qualifications during the first two years of their career. Encouragement should be given to those officers who wish to go on to study further relevant qualifications.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Although compliance with this recommendation is nearing completion, a review of documents recently submitted by the Police Service has identified a potential concern, this being the relatively high number of Probationary Constables leaving the Diploma in Police Studies Programme. In discussions with the PSNI and the University of Ulster the cause was attributed in part to the demands placed on Probationary Constables to address front line policing duties. As well, the

move to a 12-hour shift schedule has made pursuing a diploma more difficult in practice. These observations were confirmed in discussions with Probationary Constables during the most recent oversight evaluation.

The Independent Commission had welcomed the fact that the Police College had become an accredited training centre, and recommended that recruits who do not already have degrees should be encouraged to acquire appropriate academic qualifications during the first two years of their career. The Commission further recommended that officers be encouraged to go on to study for further relevant qualifications. The PSNI and the Policing Board are reviewing this situation to determine how it might be addressed.

#### **Recommendation 136: Timing of Attestations as a Constable**

Patten Recommendation:

136. Attestation as a police officer should take place only upon successful completion of the recruit training course. A sufficiently rigorous standard should be required for success in that course; and completion of the course should be marked by a graduation ceremony.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board/NIO**

The Independent Commission recommended that police recruits should be attested as Constables at the completion of their training, rather than at the beginning. This was intended to ensure that attestation marked an achievement rather than a foregone conclusion. The Independent Commission considered failure rates of approximately 10% to be typical of police training institutions. We have noted that the level of failure for the academic portion of the programme continues to be reported by the PSNI as nil.

The policy on separation from the Police Service is contained in the Police Training Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 paragraph 6: Termination of the Period of Service of a Police Trainee. Evidence was provided showing that the number of successful recruits continues to reflect a very small number of terminations of service of police trainees to date. This appears abnormal and will be reviewed during the next evaluation visit.

#### **Recommendations 137, 138 and 139: Contents of Recruit Training Programme**

Patten Recommendations:

137. The hours spent on drill should be considerably reduced.

138. Problem-solving and partnership approaches should be central to the recruit training course, and scenario exercises should be further developed as training tools.

139. Community awareness training for police recruits should be developed to include representatives of all the main political and religious traditions in Northern Ireland. Community awareness should not be seen as a stand-alone element of recruit training; it should be integrated into all aspects of training.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**



Mediation Northern Ireland is delivering a new three-day community awareness programme to recruits at the outset of the Foundation Programme. Subsequent to an internal review by the PSNI a number of changes have been proposed regarding Foundation Training. These will be subject to oversight review during the upcoming evaluation visit. Further verification of progress on these recommendations will continue.

#### **Recommendation 140: Tutor Officer Scheme**

Patten Recommendation:

140. The Northern Ireland police should introduce a comprehensive tutor officer scheme. Tutor officers should be carefully selected, according to their commitment and adaptability to the new style of policing, and trained.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

A number of interviews were conducted with Probationary Constables, Tutor Officers and DCU Commanders regarding the abilities of Probationary Constables newly arrived from the Police College. There continues to be a high degree of satisfaction with the overall competency levels of Probationary Constables, which stands as a tribute to the PSNI's Foundation Programme.

#### **Recommendations 141, 142, 143 and 144: Training Needs and Priorities**

Patten Recommendations:

141. Every member of the police service should have, as soon as possible, a course on the impact on policing of the new constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland, the new policing arrangements set out in this report, and the reforms of the criminal justice system.

142. As a matter of priority, all members of the police service should be instructed in the implications for policing of the Human Rights Act 1998, and the wider context of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

143. All police managers should have management training, as appropriate, and every manager should at some stage of his/her career do a management course in a non-police environment, such as a business school or university. Use should be made of management workshops, so that managers can discuss and develop with each other how best to reshape the police organisation.

144. Every officer and civilian in the service should undergo adequate training in information technology.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Given the circumstances of the time, the Police Service's Course for All was considered a worthwhile effort at informing and training as many employees as possible within a short time period. Our concerns regarding the Course for All and its ability to address the full intent of these recommendations are detailed in our Report No. 7, released in May of 2003, as well as in subsequent reports. An internal Review and Impact Evaluation Report was provided in March of 2004 and will be reviewed by the oversight team. The Northern Ireland Human Rights

Commission (NIHRC) also produced a more detailed analysis and critique of the ‘Course for All’ published in February of 2004. Nonetheless, by December of 2003 the Police Service had delivered the ‘Course for All’ to approximately 12,000 PSNI employees, an enormous undertaking, which in itself deserves credit.

The Learning Advisory Council (LAC), established to provide independent analysis and support to PSNI training, is comprised of Police Service and community representatives from the business, academic and non-governmental sectors. This broad field of experience and expertise brings a wealth of different perspectives and information to training issues. The LAC not only addresses training issues but also was created to permit transparency and public participation in the training, education and development programme.

#### **Recommendation I45: Joint Training with Civilian Analysts**

Patten Recommendation:

I45. Opportunities should be taken for joint training with civilian analysts, and members of other police services.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

There has been significant progress made in implementing this recommendation. The leadership undertaken by the head of the Analysis Centre is worthy of note for significantly advancing the joint training of civilian analysts and police officers. Analysts trained by the Centre, who serve in DCUs and Crime Operations Department, now total 72.

There is a training, education and learning framework that provides professional skills and encourages continuous learning. The Police Service has incorporated a plan to establish career planning that encourages the long term retention of analysts. An active foreign experience programme with other training centres and police services ensures that analysts are on the cutting edge of innovative practices around the world. The Centre accepted a major role in the introductory phase of the National Intelligence Model (NIM), with a second conference held in May of 2004.

#### **Recommendation I46: Neighbourhood Policing Training Programme**

Patten Recommendation:

I46. The Northern Ireland police should draw on the success of neighbourhood policing in such places as the Markets area of Belfast in developing a neighbourhood policing training programme for all members of the police service. Standard training for neighbourhood officers should include modules on such community problems as domestic violence, child abuse, rape, drugs and youth issues and this training should be updated as necessary.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

This critical course provides instruction on core themes including aspects of the Independent Commission’s report as they relate to Policing with the Community, Community Safety, Community Justice, Human Rights, Ethics and Integrity and Problem Solving. The PSNI has



reported that all officers receive a training programme at district level, which includes these areas. Further material is offered in distant learning modules for self-directed training through the Police Service's Intranet.

The training is provided by outside organisations such as Women's Aid and Include Youth, and by June of 2004 all DCU community beat teams received training by these organisations. An introduction to Community Policing Principles was provided to staff and police officers during the Course For All presentations. The understanding of the philosophy of policing with the community is an issue that will be further evaluated across the PSNI by the oversight team during the upcoming evaluation visit.

#### **Recommendation I47: Publication of Training Curricula**

Patten Recommendation:

I47. The training curricula for the police service should be publicly available, and easily accessible, e.g. on the Internet.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

The Police College Training Curricula will be published on the Police Service's Intranet, however as yet have not been made accessible to the general public as intended. Compliance with this recommendation is linked to broader efforts to increase the transparency of the PSNI. The oversight team will continue to monitor progress on this issue.

#### **Recommendation I48: Public Attendance at Police Training Sessions**

Patten Recommendation:

I48. Some training sessions should be open to members of the public to attend, upon application, priority being given to members of the Policing Board or District Policing Partnership Boards, Lay Visitors, or other bodies, statutory or non-governmental, involved in working with the police.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

A policy detailing public observation has been developed by the Learning Advisory Council and is expected to receive approval by the PSNI and be implemented in the near future. The Policing Board is reviewing the provision of specialised training to members of District Policing Partnerships members and DCU Commanders, in order to determine ways to improve the frequency of the training. A partnership with outside agencies is under development and will introduce concepts from other jurisdictions.

**Recommendation 149: Pilot Citizen's Course**

Patten Recommendation:

149. The new police college should offer a pilot citizens course, to assess demand in Northern Ireland.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

Administrative compliance with this recommendation has not been completed. Work on a Pilot Citizens Course is not expected to begin prior to September of 2005. However, ongoing work with the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges may progress this initiative sooner, and December of 2004 has now been provided as a modified target date. Actual progress will be examined during upcoming oversight visits, since these issues reflect on the critical degree of transparency the community can expect from the Police Service (see also Recommendation 37).





▶▶ **culture, ethos and symbols**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

Lead responsibility for the critical issues of name and symbols was assumed by the Northern Ireland Office, while the Police Service managed the detailed research and consultation challenges of designing and procuring new uniforms. The Police Service has responsibility for defining a neutral working environment. The Policing Board has a critical role to play in interpreting community values and their expression in the change process.

### Progress and Accomplishments

Monitoring of compliance with the Police Service's policy on maintaining a neutral working environment will continue. Funding for the construction of a police museum remains under consideration.

### Areas of Concern

There are no concerns for this report

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 150: Name of the Police Service

Patten Recommendation:

150. While the Royal Ulster Constabulary should not be disbanded, it should henceforth be named the Northern Ireland Police Service.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### Recommendation 151: New Police Badge

Patten Recommendations:

151. The Northern Ireland Police Service should adopt a new badge and symbols which are entirely free from any association with either the British or Irish States.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

### Recommendation 152: Flying the Union Flag

Patten Recommendations:

152. The Union flag should no longer be flown from police buildings.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

**Recommendation I53: Flying of PSNI Flag**

Patten Recommendation:

I53. On those occasions on which it is appropriate to fly a flag on police buildings, the flag shown should be that of the Northern Ireland Police Service and it, too, should be free from associations with the British or Irish States.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

**Recommendation I54: Police Uniform**

Patten Recommendation:

I54. The colour of the current police uniform should be retained, but a new, more practical style of uniform should be provided to police officers.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved.

**Recommendation I55: Police Memorials**

Patten Recommendation:

I55. Police memorials in police buildings should remain as they are and where they are.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

Compliance with this recommendation has been achieved. Funding for the construction of a police museum awaits completion of a feasibility study and business case.

**Recommendation I56: Neutral Working Environment**

Patten Recommendation:

I56. The maintenance of a neutral working environment should become an assessed management responsibility at all levels of management.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

Administrative compliance for and evaluation of this recommendation are completed. Monitoring for verification will continue.

▶▶ **co-operation with other police services**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

The Independent Commission was asked to make proposals concerning the scope for structured cooperation with An Garda Síochána and other police forces. The Independent Commission's discussion in this area recognised the excellent operational cooperation between the (then) Royal Ulster Constabulary and other police agencies around the world. However, it noted that cooperation could be improved. The Independent Commission also noted that the globalisation of crime required police services around the world to collaborate with each other more effectively, and that the exchange of best practice ideas between police services would help the effectiveness of domestic policing.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The respective legislative frameworks allowing exchanges of police personnel are now in place in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Negotiations with staffing associations regarding respective benefits are reported to be ongoing, but have not achieved significant results in terms of facilitating actual exchanges (see also Areas of Concern). Operational and other cooperation continues and is not a concern. The loan of PSNI water cannon to the Garda for the Dublin G-8 in May of 2004, and the training of their officers in their use, is a recent example of cooperation.

The third PSNI/Garda Síochána conference is scheduled for November, to be held in the Republic of Ireland. Although no formal structured training links or exchanges have been accomplished, several encouraging training outreach efforts have taken place. The PSNI's Analysis Centre is currently involved in two cooperation initiatives, one with the Estonian Police Service, through the auspices of the European Union, and another with the Victoria State Police, Australia. Both initiatives involve consultation and assistance on intelligence analysis techniques and, in the case of Estonia, the mutual exchange of analysts.

### Areas of Concern

It is now five years since the Independent Commission recommended that there should be a programme of long-term personnel exchanges, including liaison officer between the Garda and (now) Police Service of Northern Ireland. This was accepted in the governments August of 2001 Implementation Plan. As noted in previous reports, the Independent Commission recommended in September of 1999 a number of ways in which to open the police service to global experiences, including training, UN missions and exchanges of personnel. This last area was focused on the Garda Síochána in particular.

With respect to exchanges of personnel between the Garda and the Police Service, it is particularly disappointing that after five years no actual results have been delivered on this recommendation. These recommendations were not only designed to enhance cooperation, but allow the police service to experience an infusion of different ideas and experience. Given the lack of results beyond a legal framework and protocols, the level of commitment to 'putting people on the ground' will be a matter for respective governments, Garda Commissioner and Chief Constable, and the Policing Board to actively pursue. It is also fair to note that the Policing Board has made a number of notable appointments from outside the PSNI, such as the Chief Constable

himself, the Deputy Chief Constable and other senior appointments. The Police Service has also been able to use the recruiting process to bring in persons who already have significant policing experience and skills. Nevertheless, the deficiency in achieving the Independent Commission's full intent remains.

#### Future Directions

Oversight will continue to monitor for any substantive progress on personnel exchanges and the development of formal training links and exchanges.

### B. Recommendation Summary

#### Recommendations 157 to 164: Cooperation between Police Service and Garda Siochana

Patten Recommendations:

- 157. The Northern Ireland police and the Garda Siochana should have written protocols covering key aspects of co-operation.
- 158. The present pattern of meetings between the police services in Northern Ireland and the Republic should be enhanced by an annual conference, designed to drive forward co-operation in areas of common concern.
- 159. There should be a programme of long-term personnel exchanges, such as fixed-term secondments, between the Northern Ireland police and the Garda, in specialist fields where co-operation between the two services is most needed, such as drugs, and in areas such as training.
- 160. Consideration should be given to posting liaison officers from each service to the central headquarters and/or border area headquarters of the other.
- 161. There should be structured co-operation between the two police services in training.
- 162. There should be joint disaster planning between the Northern Ireland police and the Garda Siochana and the plans should be tested by regular joint exercises.
- 163. Consideration should be given to establishing a provision for an immediate exchange of officers and pooling of investigative teams after major incidents with a substantial cross-border dimension, akin to the arrangements which exist between Kent and police services of France and Belgium.
- 164. Every effort should be made to ensure that fast, effective and reliable communications are established between the Garda and the Northern Ireland police both through improved radio links and through compatible IT systems.

#### Lead Responsibility: British and Irish Governments/Chief Constable/Garda Commissioner

The legislative framework covering both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, along with previously completed exchange protocols between the police are now completed. The only barrier to full implementation relates to current negotiations to ensure equality of benefits for



personnel on exchange. Planning for the third annual conference is in process. This will be held in the Republic of Ireland, in November of 2004. Evidence of formal, structured cooperation in training has not been provided, however the PSNI has shared information regarding its Leadership programme with the Garda. No progress update has been provided on the recommended improved radio link between the Garda and PSNI.

#### **Recommendation 165: Joint Database Development with Garda Siochana**

Patten Recommendation:

165. Joint database development should be pursued as a matter of priority in all the main areas of cross-border criminality, such as drugs, smuggling, vehicle theft and terrorism.

**Lead Responsibility: British and Irish Governments/Chief Constable/Garda Commissioner**

Administrative compliance is not complete and there is little progress to report. The long-term solution now centres on a European Union policing solution based on the Schengen Information System. Evidence of a schedule with objectives and time lines, as well as training requirements on the new system, was provided. The current target date for implementation is March of 2005.

#### **Recommendation 166 & 167: Personnel Exchanges with GB Police Services**

Patten Recommendations:

166. A determined effort should be made to develop exchanges, and long-term secondments, between the Northern Ireland police and police services in Great Britain.

167. There should be training exchanges and some joint training between the Northern Ireland police and police services in Great Britain.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable**

There remain 11 PSNI police officers on secondment in GB and none into the PSNI. In addition, the PSNI has developed a Counter-Terrorism executive programme in conjunction with the Scottish Police College, the FBI Academy, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police among others.

#### **Recommendation 168: Links with Training Establishments in British Isles**

Patten Recommendation:

168. Consideration should be given to structured links between the four principal police training establishments in the British Isles, namely Bramshill (England), Templemore (Republic of Ireland), Tulliallan (Scotland), and Garnerville or the proposed new police college in Northern Ireland.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/NIO/Other Government Departments**

There has been limited progress on this recommendation. Although there are informal links and contacts with the major training institutions in Britain, Ireland and Scotland, formal arrangements have not been made for the exchange of training personnel.

**Recommendation 169: International Training Exchanges**

Patten Recommendations:

169. International training exchanges should be further developed, focusing in particular on matters where the police in Northern Ireland need overseas police co-operation and on best practice developments in policing worldwide. There should be co-operation with other police services in the field of research.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The PSNI has developed a database of “best practices” drawing on the experience of police services in the UK, Ireland, and North America and from studies by NGOs and professional police associations.

**Recommendation 170: International Training Exchanges**

Patten Recommendations:

170. The police should develop opportunities to provide more training for overseas police services in their areas of excellence.

**Lead Responsibility: Chief Constable/Policing Board**

The PSNI has not furnished current information about foreign police personnel who have come to Northern Ireland for training.

**Recommendation 171: UN Peacekeeping Participation**

Patten Recommendation:

171. The Northern Ireland police should be ready to participate in future United Nations peacekeeping operations.

**Lead Responsibility: NIO/FCO/Policing Board/Chief Constable**

As a matter of policy, the PSNI has scaled back its participation in overseas missions. At the present time there are four PSNI officers posted to the UN mission in Kosovo, while four are posted to Iraq. Secondments of PSNI personnel to Central Services have now ended.





▶▶ **oversight commissioner**



## A. Chapter Summary

### Background

It was the belief of the Independent Commission that an independent and eminent person, from outside the United Kingdom or Ireland, should be selected to oversee the implementation of its recommendations. The Governments agreed and Mr. Tom Constantine was selected, accepted the duty and was appointed in May of 2000 for a three-year term. Statutory backing is found in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, at sections 67 and 68, and in Schedule 4. Mr Constantine retired on 31 December 2003, at which time he was replaced by Mr. Al Hutchinson. Mr. Hutchinson will be the Oversight Commissioner for the remainder of the oversight mandate which is scheduled to end on 31 May of 2005.

### Progress and Accomplishments

The Oversight Commissioner has established an office and small staff in Northern Ireland, along with a United States and Canadian team of experienced senior law enforcement and academic experts to evaluate and report on the progress of change. This is the second public report for 2004 and the eleventh in a series of reports. Full details can be located on our web site at: [www.oversightcommissioner.org](http://www.oversightcommissioner.org). A special thematic report on training is attached to this report. Thematic reports on Community Policing and Human Rights/Accountability will be completed for the December of 2004 and May of 2005 reports.

### Areas of Concern

There are no concerns at the present time. Full co-operation from all agencies and organisations has been provided and is expected to continue. Adequate current resourcing and support have been received from the Government, along with respect for our complete independence.

### Future Directions

Reports will be submitted three times per year on an approximate schedule of May, September and December.

## B. Recommendation Summary

### Recommendation 172: Appointment of OC

#### Patten Recommendation:

172. An eminent person, from a country other than the United Kingdom or Ireland, should be appointed as soon as possible as an oversight commissioner with responsibility for supervising the implementation of our recommendations.

#### Lead Responsibility: Oversight Commissioner

Reports and documents are being provided by the different agencies in response to the Oversight Commissioner's requests. In turn, the Oversight Commissioner is reporting publicly three times per year. Early in 2003 the Oversight Commissioner's mandate was extended by the Government until May 2005.

### **Recommendations 173, 174 and 175: Functions of Commissioner**

#### **Patten Recommendations:**

173. The government, the police service, and the Policing Board (and DPPs) should provide the oversight commissioner with objectives (with timetables) covering their own responsibilities, and should report on the progress achieved at the periodic review meetings, and account for any failures to achieve objectives.
174. The oversight commissioner should in turn report publicly after each review meeting on the progress achieved, together with his or her observations on the extent to which any failures or delays are the responsibility of the policing institutions themselves or due to matters beyond their control.
175. The oversight commissioner should be appointed for a term of five years.

#### **Lead Responsibility: NIO**

Reports and documents are being provided by the different agencies in response to the Oversight Commissioner's requests. In turn, the Oversight Commissioner is reporting publicly three times per year. The Oversight Commissioner's mandate was recently extended until May of 2005.



▶▶ **appendix a**



*“We have envisaged a police service dedicated to the protection of human rights and respect for human dignity; a police service that is accountable, responsive, communicative and transparent; a new policing style based on partnerships with the community; a de-centralized police service with decision-making responsibilities devolved to beat teams and to district commanders; more flexible management and personnel practices and many other changes. **These objectives need to be matched by a training, education and development strategy, both for recruits and for officers already in place.**”<sup>1</sup>*

## **THEMATIC REPORT REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON POLICING FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (1999)**

OFFICE OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMISSION  
FOR POLICING REFORM

SEPTEMBER 2004

## Commissioner's Introduction

This special thematic report on training is the first in a series of three thematic supplements that are designed to provide a more qualitative review of progress in three of the important foundation blocks of the Independent Commission's findings. The two remaining building blocks are community policing, and human rights and accountability; the thematic reports on these topics will be published in December of 2004 and May of 2005 respectively. The methodology is straightforward, in that this overview of training represents a synthesis of all our previous oversight work, which in turn is based on the established recommendations of the Independent Commission and our performance indicators. Other sources used include Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), as well as the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Committee for the Administration of Justice.

Training is a critical thread in the change process, one that the Independent Commission carefully and consciously wove throughout the fabric of its comprehensive report. In fact, there are 51 recommendations that touch on training matters either directly or indirectly, and that cover all aspects of the recommended changes. A list of these 51 recommendations is attached to this report. The Independent Commission also noted that the objectives of an accountable, transparent and human rights-oriented policing service are meaningless if they are not matched by a training, education and development strategy for recruits and serving officers, to help achieve these objectives.

Given the centrality of training to the entire change programme, I felt that it was important and timely for both the public and practitioners to have a more qualitative overview of the progress, and lack of progress, that has been made in relation to all of the training recommendations. This report is also intended to address the question of how the Police Service is progressing in terms of its training in support of change, some five years after the release of the Independent Commission's recommendations.

As the following pages will show in more detail, the Police Service has essentially "turned the proverbial corner", and after a disappointing start was able to renew its training efforts with some notable successes. First among these is the Foundation, or recruit training, programme. Also worthy of note is the leadership that has been shown by the management of Training Branch, and the training programme that exists today is far removed from the one encountered by the Independent Commission during its fact finding and consultation endeavour. The Policing Board also displayed excellent guidance in its governance role, by establishing appropriate levels of Board expertise and expectations; the level of scrutiny that now exists at the Board, and the checks and balances that it has put in place to ensure the achievement of Police Service objectives, will increasingly serve to hold the police to account for results in training. The Policing Board was a crucial advocate for the much-needed new Police College, and it will be an ongoing presence in this important, symbolic venture.

As always, leadership is the key ingredient to success. Over the last two years, the Chief Constable and the Director of Training, both new to the organisation, together with their respective management teams, have infused training Branch with a more progressive vision regarding the role of training. This vision will serve the Police Service well over the longer term,





and revised leadership training, community involvement and other initiatives are early examples of the results this vision have brought about.

Not all leadership is from the top, and there are some programmes that have looked after their own training needs. A particularly striking example of success is evidenced by the continued leadership shown by the Criminal Analysis Centre. Enhanced and up-to-date training and learning have been the hallmarks of this programme, to the point where they are not only firmly embedded in the daily operational routine of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, but have begun to export their experience and expertise around the world.

Is there more to do? The answer, unequivocally, is yes. This makes the capacity of the training area to deliver on all of these needs of singular importance. In short, finding the proper balance between the training needs that have already been identified, and the needs that have yet to arise, will remain the biggest challenge for the Police Service and the Policing Board.

## **A. Background**

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement presented the best opportunity for a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland, with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole. Flowing from the Good Friday Agreement was the work of the Independent Commission on Policing For Northern Ireland, which released its report in September of 1999, entitled: "A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland"; this is commonly known as the Patten Report. The recommendations were published in the strong belief that they offered the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to establish an effective and widely accepted police service, for which they would be responsible.

The Independent Commission's report is a comprehensive work of consultations, surveys, analyses, assessments, conclusions and ultimately, 175 extensive and detailed recommendations. These touch on the efficiency, acceptability and accountability of the police service in any imaginable circumstances and some 51 of the recommendations (see attached list) relate to training, indicating the scope and significance of the training issue. The report also consistently noted the challenges facing the Police Service in delivering services to a divided society.

The Independent Commission recognised that attempting to secure such fundamental change would not be easy, and raised a number of important questions: how could professional police officers best adapt to a world in which their own efforts are only one part of overall policing? How could the police ensure that their practices and value upheld the human dignity and rights of individual citizens, while providing effective protection from wrongdoing? Finally, how should human rights standards and obligations be reflected in the delivery of policing on the streets? In addition, while it was understood that the Independent Commission's recommendations were first and foremost about changing structures and processes, they were also about changing attitudes and culture.

This is certainly a tall order for any organisation, however by no means impossible. One of the most obvious responses is to ensure that police and other staff received proper training. As was noted by Her Majesty's Inspector for Training, timely, relevant and effective training is recognised as a fundamental mechanism to prepare police officers to deal with the operational complexities of

the modern world. Just as importantly, a continuing commitment to and investment in training enables a police service to accelerate the personal development of its employees, thereby improving those qualities, skills and abilities that form the bedrock upon which success in policing depends<sup>2</sup>.

Ultimately, the first step in preparing any organisation for the challenges it faces is to have a clear concept of the training and development that are required. As HMIC rightly points out, training is fundamental to any organisation. Ensuring that employees have the skills and knowledge to perform the tasks for which they were recruited should be of the utmost importance, requiring both continuing commitment and investment. Moreover, training is the only way to prepare police officers to handle the complexities of modern policing, and only training can lay the foundations necessary for both the organisation and the career development of the individual<sup>3</sup>.

## B. The Environment

When it published its recommendations in 1999, the Independent Commission hoped for an increasingly stable environment in Northern Ireland, where political, church and community leaders could encourage young men and women, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to join the new police service. Church leaders, as well as some of the more progressive community representatives, quickly endorsed this concept. However, at the time there was a lack of full political support and endorsement for policing change, circumstance which unfortunately exist to this day. It is not known how long these circumstances will remain.

In spite of these barriers and to the great credit of the Police Service, the Policing Board and the Government, a new police recruit training programme was quickly developed and initiated. The success of this programme speaks for itself, and since 2001 over 38,000 applications to join the Police Service of Northern Ireland have been received from Catholic and non-Catholics alike. These courageous and service-minded individuals have quite clearly “voted with their feet”, and exemplify to the entire community how most people in Northern Ireland view their police service. As a result, some 1,200 new police officers, hired on a 50:50 basis, are now providing a policing service to their fellow citizens. In fact, almost since the first recruitment drive the police college achieved its full capacity of 540 new recruits per year, with many eager young men and women having to be turned away. Fortunately, many of them applied again, and were subsequently admitted to the recruit training programme, itself a testament to the attractions of the policing career.

Notwithstanding these successes, the physical environment of the principal training facility at Garnerville, which have been variously described as “appalling” and “third world”, now constitutes a barrier to increasing the yearly recruit intake. This makes the approval of a new, state-of-the-art training facility at Cookstown all the more welcome. Design work is proceeding apace, and it is still projected that the new training college will be completed on time, in 2007. New police stations such as Coleraine and Moira will provide enhanced facilities for training at the district level, while developments in information technology, not without their own challenges as the Police Service has discovered, will also allow for more relevant and flexible training arrangements across Northern Ireland.

Our overall conclusion with respect to the training environment is that, although barriers to efficiency and effectiveness exist, the Police Service has continued to advance its training initiatives in support of the Independent Commission’s recommended changes.

<sup>2</sup> HMIC, “*Managing Learning: A Study of Police Training*”, April 1999, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> HMIC, “*Training Matters*”, January 2002, p. 11.



## C. Governance

The Independent Commission recognised that: “accountability involves creating a real partnership between the police and the community, government agencies, non-government organisations, families and citizens”<sup>4</sup>. This partnership was to be based on openness and understanding, in which policing would reflect and respond to the community’s needs. A key recommendation involved the creation of a new Policing Board, with the primary and statutory function of holding the Chief Constable and the Police Service publicly to account. Performance in training is one of the many things the Policing Board monitors.

We have noted in our reports that, even without full political representation, the Policing Board is performing exceptionally in fulfilling its governance mandate, including its performance with respect to the monitoring of training. The Board acquired appropriate training expertise early in its tenure, along with active monitoring of the police by a representative committee of the Board. It requested and received a costed training plan, developed a set of performance indicators in consultation with the Police Service, and engaged specific expertise to allow it to monitor training generally, as well as training in human rights more specifically. Of critical importance is that the Board continues to strongly advocate a much-needed new training facility, to be completed in 2007.

District Policing Partnerships (DPPs), another of the Board’s responsibilities, also provide a crucial aspect of governance, in terms of local involvement in the policing service. With respect to training DPP members and making their interactions with the Police Service more informed and useful, the Policing Board has arranged for a number of training sessions for DPP managers, on a variety of topics. Included were four training sessions on the PSNI’s Human Resources Planning Strategy, held in January and February of 2004. Other sessions involved training for DPP chairs on the interpretation of District Commander’s reports and, in March of 2004, a series of training events for DPP members on community collaboration and crime prevention.

The Board also monitors and acts on a variety of reports which impact on training and training needs, including those released by the Ombudsman, HMIC and us. The Ombudsman plays a crucial role in identifying potential training needs, whether from public complaints or other types of investigations conducted by her office. These could include areas such as the use of plastic baton rounds, firearms, public order issues, or other areas arising from findings.

Our overall conclusion is that the governance structure in place around training, on the part of the Policing Board and others, is progressive and appropriate, and constitutes an excellent model for others to emulate.

## D. Police Service Delivery of Training

### I. Training in Support of a Human Rights Culture

The Independent Commission recognised the uniqueness of Northern Ireland’s culture and history as the causal basis for compelling the Police Service to embrace human rights as a central doctrine. Human rights considerations constitute a philosophical underpinning, and as they represent an embraced set of values and desired behaviors, transcend organisational change processes. The Independent Commission rightly identified training, education and development as

the key mechanisms for instilling a human rights-based approach into both new recruits and serving police officers. This was to be facilitated by delivering a unique human rights curriculum, and also by importing existing human rights training approaches into the Police Service.

These views also constitute the main reason behind recommending the adoption of policing with the community, with its embedded human rights principles, as the primary means of service delivery. Two important areas of change are contingent on acquiring an acute sensitivity to human rights and related issues: 1) the devolution of management decision making to the DCU level or lower, where decisions and delivery strategies would reflect the input of the community; and, 2) the role of the District Policing Partnerships, as they would replicate at the local level the engagement and oversight of the Policing Board.

The oversight team's most recent findings show that a substantial number of serving officers are now being trained in courses which have been audited for human rights content. A programme is now in place for monitoring the delivery of instruction, with a view to ensuring minimum standards are being met. More general human rights training, intended for all PSNI employees, was provided through specific courses, including a half to full-day seminar on the human rights obligations of the police under the UK Human Rights Act (1998). This was delivered across the organisation in 2000. There was also a half-day seminar on the newly adopted Police Oath, held in 2002. This oath obliges police personnel to observe human rights and treat all persons equally, regardless of background.

More recently the "Course for All", held in 2002/2003, devoted a quarter of its two days to training on and familiarizing employees with the Police Service's new Code of Ethics. This new Code incorporates international human rights standards that flow from the Human Rights Act, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While our reports have noted some difficulties with content and delivery, also noted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, this does not take away from the fact that the Course for All was a major undertaking that clearly evidenced a commitment from the Police Service to train employees in the role and significance of a human rights culture in policing.

The Police Service also inserts human rights material into all courses regularly given to recruits and serving police officers. In the case of the former, human rights are among the nine core themes around which the recruit curriculum is built. Included among the progress achieved by the PSNI is the formal auditing of all recruit and in-service courses for human rights implications, as well as the half-day of human rights instruction given to all newly selected instructors as part of their five-week trainer's course. Interviews with recruits and serving personnel reveal a general openness to discuss human rights issues, as well as the impact human rights considerations have on both the legacy and future of the Police Service.

Ultimately, the successful emphasis on human rights as an organisational value, knowledge base, and "behavioral compass" will have to be evaluated independently, a task, which the Policing Board has taken on. Thus, the retention of a noted human rights lawyer by the Policing Board, engaged to develop a comprehensive evaluation tool, is a welcome development, although this function should not be seen as a substitute for honest self-appraisal on the part of the Police Service itself.



Along similar lines, the retention of a training specialist by the Policing Board is also noteworthy, as this underscores both the Board's commitment to training and its critical role in holding the Chief Constable and the Police Service publicly to account.

As noted by HMIC, the lack of a robust and effective evaluation processes will make it difficult for the Police Service to know whether its training is fulfilling its aims and objectives<sup>5</sup>. In addition, unless such internal measurement protocols are institutionalised as part of a regular process, it will be difficult for the Police Service to redefine training priorities to assure they are appropriately aligned with desired outcomes. We have every confidence in the ongoing, systematic monitoring process established by the Policing Board, and we look forward to receiving the first monitoring report from the Board's human rights advisor in the autumn of 2004.

There are some indicators of change even at this relatively early stage. Speaking at a meeting of the United States/Helsinki Commission on Security Cooperation in Europe, held in Washington D.C. in March of 2004, the Police Ombudsman noted the reduction in the number of serious allegations filed against members of the PSNI, as well as a decrease in complaints of the misuse of batons. The Ombudsman informed the committee that every investigation carried out by her office: "also considers Police Service policy, practice or training issues, which may have been a factor in the alleged incident". The Ombudsman also noted that her recommendations have been welcomed by the Chief Constable, which in turn leads to improved training in various matters; this may explain in part the overall reduction of firearm incidents and related complaints<sup>6</sup>. In any event, these statements certainly provide hope that an increased emphasis on human rights may already be manifesting itself in changes to police behavior.

Our conclusion with respect to human rights training is that the foundation work has been accomplished, and that the Police Service has clearly demonstrated its commitment to achieving a human rights-focused culture of policing. This will need to continue and changes in behaviour will naturally have to be translated into every day policing activity, and permanent mechanisms for evaluating changes to police behaviour will need to be developed.

## **2. Training in Support of Policing with the Community**

The Independent Commission recommended that policing with the community be the core function of the Police Service, and the core function of every police station. This had wide-ranging implications for the structure of the organisation, its management and its culture. It also had profound implication for training. Policing with the community requires both an historic understanding of the human experience and an acute sensitivity to its contemporary realities; this in turn requires a policing culture open to learning and development.

The Police Service's Policing with the Community Policy appropriately recognises the need for the education and training of police personnel and members of the community, to enable the constructive engagement of the Police Service with the community. A successful police-community partnership also requires, among other things, the implementation of operational strategies, the utilisation of analytical tools, the creation and support of ancillary bodies and the evaluation of both programmes and personnel. Accordingly, the changed role of the PSNI and its new core function hinge not only on the ability to train police officers in the practical skills

<sup>5</sup> HMIC, "Training Matters", January 2002, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> "A Change of Culture Within PSNI", Police Ombudsman, Press Release, Tuesday, 16 March 2004.

essential to the performance of their duties, but on an unambiguous understanding of service and of the “consumers” of that service, in other words the citizens of Northern Ireland.

To assure its transition to a policing with the community model, the Police Service produced a Strategic Transition Plan in January of 2002, followed by an Implementation Plan in December of 2002. Beat Officer training courses were held in Belfast in 2003, however frequent conflicts brought about by local service demands worked against effective centralised training, and left responsibility for training delivery to local DCU trainers. While this is preferable to no training at all, the absence of a formal directive on devolving this crucial training away from Headquarters has resulted in a lack of verifiable consistency in the content, quality and delivery of training. This is one example of a “capacity” to deliver issue, which remains an overall concern. The 2002/2003 Course for All provided all police employees with an introduction to community policing principles, and was a positive contribution.

The Independent Commission recognised the significance of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams as an integral part of the transition to a policing with the community model. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) allow for DCUs to identify both the type of training and how this training will be provided to neighbourhood policing teams. Currently there are pilot projects in four DCUs, and the Police Service has developed a draft SLA that is being piloted in several DCUs.

The Independent Commission recommended Service Level Agreements (SLAs) as a means of setting out the respective responsibilities of Training Branch and DCU-level training. A number of factors were reported to us as having impacted their delay, including a lack of staff resources as well as misunderstandings between DCU Commanders and Headquarters regarding the precise role and responsibilities of DCUs with respect to recently devolved training responsibilities. The inability, or unwillingness, on the part of the organisation to finalise SLAs in the training area remains a concern, and is particularly difficult to understand given the wide use of SLAs in other areas of the Police Service.

The Police College is meeting recruit-training needs in terms of introducing policing with the community concepts. Programme managers and some district trainers are developing their own innovative learning and development opportunities, often in partnership with local communities. This is to be commended, and is a good example of the solutions that can be generated in a devolved decision making structure. To underscore this, it should be noted that the Police Service has won or been nominated for several community policing awards, both nationally and internationally.

Our overall conclusion is that training requirements in support of policing with the community are generally being met. While there remain practical issues with respect to community policing training that will need to be addressed, including competition for resources and more appropriate ways of delivering training in the field, this aspect of training is generally considered successful.

### **3. Operational Training**

The Independent Commission did not make any recommendations specific to operational training needs, however it dealt with a number of related issues which had as their focus the establishment



of solid training foundations and processes that could address any emerging challenges that the PSNI might face in the future. In support of this the Independent Commission recommended the development of a thorough Training Needs Analysis, in order to both identify current training needs, and to determine the capacity to address emerging requirements. A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was then contracted for and delivered to the Police Service in January of 2004, with applicable recommendations then incorporated into the Costed Training Business Plan. Of interest is the fact that the TNA focuses on only 20% of the existing curriculum, since 80% of the Police College's 10,000 annual training days are devoted to course material mandated by legislation. This requires further evaluation regarding unrealised operational requirements, as well as the capacity of the Police Service to meet minimum needs.

One example of operational training impact is in the area of public order policing. Among the findings made by the Independent Commission was that a major and controversial feature of policing in Northern Ireland had been public order policing. In our opinion the Police Service has responded well to this challenge, and has demonstrated its sensitivity to the unique circumstances in Northern Ireland. Revised training on the operational use of baton guns is rigid and demanding. It not only includes the technical public order elements and policy guidance, but also incorporates ACPO guidelines, the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement and a police officer's obligations with respect to human rights. Appropriately, the training is applicable to anyone involved in the deployment or use of baton rounds during public order situations, including police commanders, supervisors and officers. A senior internal committee then conducts post-shooting reviews to identify any problems and possible training implications that arose. In addition, the Police Ombudsman reviews all baton gun discharges, and subsequently reports. These reports may also identify any potential training needs.

The changes made to public order training are evidenced by, among other things, the declining use of plastic baton rounds by the Police Service. No baton rounds have been fired in Northern Ireland since September of 2002. Similarly, specialised training needs have been addressed with respect to the newly acquired water cannon, and an operational policy was prepared which is consistent with the provisions of the Human Rights Act (1998), the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms, and the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officers.

Another example of a positive recent development is the integration of Special Branch training into the broader set of police training services. In the past Special Branch had designed and delivered all of its own training to its members. The integration of all training is both more efficient and effective, and is also important symbolically. Criminal and security intelligence training is also being enhanced by taking advantage of training opportunities offered by agencies such as the London Metropolitan Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States.

With respect to training in information technology (IT), the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland made training in this area difficult, as pressing security demands often resulted in a transfer of funds from IT projects to other priorities. More recently, the Police Service has begun to make some progress developing and acquiring sophisticated IT in support of police operations. While Training Branch recognised the importance of committing to IT training, it lacked the capacity to

deliver. As a result the IT area itself has taken on this responsibility, which is regulated in part through an inter-departmental agreement between Training Branch and Information and Communications Services. As noted in our report, some police personnel interviewed reported a lag between the installation of new IT and the delivery of relevant training. This raises again the issue of the capacity to deliver timely training.

Our review of the delivery of operational training is not exhaustive, and is incidental to the main body of the Independent Commission's recommendations. Nevertheless, this may be a useful area for the Policing Board to review in terms of the overall training resources, and the capacity of Training Branch to deliver the training that the Police Service requires. Operations are the lifeblood of a police service. They are high risk by their very nature, and police officers require continual training and updating in a variety of operational areas in order not only to remain effective but to remain safe as well. During the course of our evaluations we have come across more than one "gap" between what is required in terms of operational training, and what can be delivered given the current structure.

## E. Conclusion

As noted by HMIC in 1999, long term success in policing demands that investments in training be maximised. Staff must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities in the proportions necessary to deliver sustainable community benefits in the longer term, within a best value framework. The challenge for the police service is to achieve that outcome. However, HMIC also pointed out that, while training has a major role to play in any organisation's proficiency or transformation, it is neither a cure all nor a quick fix. Although training and staff development are the keys to future performance success, these are long term investments.

From the outset of the PSNI's reform programme, those with an understanding of organisational change understood that in order for a real transformation to occur, change would of necessity be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. For example, in looking at the PSNI's training experience we note a movement away from a training culture towards one of personal learning. We also note a move away from an "in-house only" approach to training to one marked by an increasing level of collaboration and cooperation with all manner of private and public learning institutions. These include the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, the Open University, Ulster University and Queens University Belfast. The delivery of the "Course for All" and the integration of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis into the Costed Business Plan and the PSNI Business Training Plan, reflect an institutional resolve to assure that training, education and development remain inculcated values of the PSNI. The continued close scrutiny of the Policing Board and others is essential to maintaining progress and achieving results.

Training experts<sup>7</sup> recognise that successful organisations are those that enable people to develop to their full potential through a strategy that balances organisational needs with individual development. It includes the manner in which people are trained and developed, and the way in which they are encouraged to apply their training to bring about improved performance. Policing remains increasingly complex, with high public expectations both for effectiveness and efficiency and levels of service. All police services are going or have gone through the continuum of restructuring. Established practices soon become subjects of critical analysis in our increasingly open and transparent societies, with operational performance in particular subject to constant





scrutiny and comment. This will not change in the future, meaning that proper training and staff development assume a far greater significance than was the case in the past.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is clearly at an important juncture. Many historical practices and policies have been modified in response to the Independent Commission's recommendations, while many others have evolved in direct response to an increasingly progressive leadership. The confluence of training, education and assessment, and the engagement of an informed public, will facilitate a partnership that will be of mutual benefit to the Police Service and the wider community.

Our overall conclusion is that the training regime in the Police Service of Northern Ireland is clearly now moving in the right direction, both in satisfying the longer-term needs of the police and in satisfying the Independent Commission's recommendations. The journey is by no means complete and our reports, and others, will continue to point out gaps. The capacity issue relating to satisfying current and emerging training needs is the single largest strategic issue to address. This will require careful examination by the Police Service and the Policing Board, and it will not be easy to balance needs against available resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS WITH EITHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

Recommendation	Issue/Area
4	Human Rights Training
13	Monitoring Police Performance
27	Creation of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)
34	Contacts Between Policing Boards and DPPs
44	Community Policing as a Core Function
45	Dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams
47	Police Probationary Training
50	Crime and Complaint Pattern Analysis
51	Attendance at Police Training Courses
68	Parade Marshal Training
69, 70	Public Order Equipment
71, 73, 74	Police Performance in Public Order Situations
77	Police Appraisal System
93	Development of Police Strategy
98, 99, 100	Special Branch
104	Enlargement of Part Time Reserve
108	Retraining Programme for Police Officers
111	Transfer of Police Civilian Staff
116	Police Pilot Cadet Schemes
129 – 149	Training, Education and Development
161	Cooperation between PSNI and Garda
166, 167	Personnel Exchanges with GB Police Services
168	Links Between Police Training Colleges
169, 170	International Training Exchanges



▶▶ notes