



This is the third report of the Oversight Commissioner for the year 2002. The objective is to report publicly on the progress in implementing the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, as well as on any delays. The scope and magnitude of the changes recommended by the Independent Commission are unparalleled in modern-day policing, and recommendations will require a significant application of resources and effort. The Independent Commission also advised in the strongest terms against “cherry picking” from its report, and against trying to implement certain elements or recommendations in isolation from others.

This report differs in style and format from previous oversight reports, in that it provides a more comprehensive overview of progress, from the Autumn of 2001 to the present. The reason is to provide the reader with an overall sense of how reforms are progressing as a whole. The underlying methodology of the oversight process remains unchanged.

This report also contains comprehensive easy-to-read tables at page 69, which chart progress according to a number of specific categories. These are: recommendation completed, substantial progress, moderate progress, limited progress and minimal progress. The tables are based on the oversight team's informed judgement, and should be read and interpreted both in the context of the main narrative segments of this report, as well as previous oversight reports. Although some of the recommendations were achieved in a relatively short period of time, such as those covering the Policing Board, the Ombudsman, police uniforms and symbols, others will of necessity occur in stages, and only over an extended period of time. As a result, the visible impact of many of the policing reforms will not be immediately apparent.

The Oversight Commissioner, in his Introduction, notes favourable overall progress. In the Overview section the Oversight Commissioner notes a number of specific areas of progress. A major step forward was the establishment of the Policing Board. Since its inception in November of 2001 the Policing Board has been presented, and has effectively dealt with, a number of significant challenges, including changes to the name, badge and uniform of the Police Service. It has committed itself publicly and professionally to its role of ensuring police accountability. The Police Ombudsman has also evolved into an integral and professional component of the policing structure of Northern Ireland. The Police Service deserves credit for having sincerely and diligently undertaken a change process of unprecedented scope and magnitude in policing. The Police Service has successfully established a District Command Unit (DCU) structure, and has appointed a talented and committed group of DCU Commanders. In addition, the Police Service has delivered a successful cross-community recruitment programme that continues to attract large numbers of talented and dedicated young people from across Northern Ireland.

However, the Oversight Commissioner also notes a number of ongoing concerns. These issues have been identified in several of the Oversight Commissioner's previous reports, but remain uncorrected. Certain management practices and delays on the part of the Police Service continue to hold up the full implementation of the Policing with the Community strategy, particularly when combined with increased demands on police resources over the past year. Lack of progress on civilianisation, the management of sick leave, and the internal reassignment of uniformed police officers have all combined to reduce available patrol strength. Other concerns include delays in addressing recommendations on Special Branch, particularly as these relate to the exchange of intelligence information within the Police Service in an effort to combat organised and violent crime. Concerns in the area of training include the lack of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis, the lack of completed Service Level Agreements with DCU Commanders, the instruction of Police Service employees in new constitutional and legislative arrangements, and human rights, and particularly the construction of a new training facility

The Oversight Commissioner notes heightened concern amongst the citizens of Northern Ireland with increasing levels of violence, the impact of this on the change process, and the need for the support of the entire community if the desired state of change is to be achieved. However, the courage and foresight of those who remain committed to peaceful and democratic means is acknowledged.



This is the third official report of the Oversight Commissioner for the year 2002. This report for December of 2002 is the sixth in a series of reports that began in 2001. The objective of these oversight reports is to formally adhere to the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland by reporting publicly on the progress achieved following each oversight review. The recommendations also require that the Oversight Commissioner report on the extent to which any failures or delays are the responsibility of the policing institutions themselves, or are due to matters beyond their control.

When considering the progress made to date, it is important to recognise that the scope and magnitude of the changes recommended by the Independent Commission are unparalleled in modern-day policing. Each recommendation requires a significant application of resources and effort, as well as sufficient lead-time to be realised. Many of the recommendations were achieved in a relatively short period of time, including the establishment of the Policing Board and Office of the Ombudsman, as well as changes to police uniforms and symbols. Other changes are such that they will of necessity occur in stages, and only over an extended period of time. As a result, the visible impact of many of the policing reforms will not be immediately apparent.

This report for December of 2002 differs in style and format from the five previous oversight reports, and is intended to provide a more comprehensive overview of progress made in implementing the Independent Commission's recommendations, from the Autumn of 2001 to the present. The objective of this report is to provide an overall sense of how the reforms are moving forward. In the Oversight Commissioner's previous reports, the emphasis has been on a detailed analysis of each of the Independent Commission's recommendations, through the use of 772 performance indicators specifically designed to measure the progress made by the policing institutions in implementing the required changes. As a result, the previous reports were in essence a "snapshot" of the status of progress at a certain moment in time.

By contrast, this report is intended to represent the total experience of the oversight process since the Autumn of 2001. However, the underlying methodology and strategy utilised since the Oversight Commissioner's appointment in May of 2000 have not changed. These emphasise that for the oversight process to maintain integrity and credibility, reviews must be conducted in an objective, professional, independent and rigorous manner. Since this approach also underpins this report, it may be well to briefly review the principles and process that have been essential to the validity of the oversight role.

The first step in maintaining these principles was the recruitment of a distinguished group of policing experts to make up the oversight team. Further details on the members of the oversight team can be found on our website at: [www.oversightcommissioner.org](http://www.oversightcommissioner.org). The individuals who volunteered for this project are talented and internationally recognised, each with outstanding experience. They bring with them a vast breadth and depth of policing knowledge and expertise. Perhaps more importantly however, each has volunteered to serve on the oversight team because of a sincere belief in the crucial role that policing reforms play in the ongoing peace process.

In order to enhance the integrity and professionalism of our reviews even further, the Oversight Commissioner was able to gain the assistance of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the pre-eminent organisation of policing executives. The IACP represents over 17,500 law enforcement executives from 96 countries. In order to assist us, the IACP appointed a select panel of senior executives, each with an outstanding reputation, and each currently leading a major law

enforcement agency in the United States or Canada. The Oversight Commissioner and his team met with the IACP panel at IACP Headquarters in Washington, DC, in July of 2002. The select panel's opinions and contributions were extremely insightful and valuable, and are included in the oversight reviews. The panel was made up of the following executives:

- William Berger** - Chief of the North Miami Beach Police Department and (then) President of the IACP.
- Gwen Boniface** - Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, an organization of over 5,000 sworn police officers, and the President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.
- Sylvester Daughtry** - Executive Director of the Committee for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In addition, the former Chief of Police of Greensboro, North Carolina and also former President of the IACP.
- Paul Evans** - Commissioner of the Boston, Massachusetts, Police Department, an organisation of over 2,100 sworn police officers.
- James McMahon** - Superintendent and Officer-in-Charge of the New York State Police, an organisation of over 5,000 sworn police officers. In addition, Mr. McMahon is the current General Chairman, representing all State Police, State Highway Patrols, Provincial Police and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Provincial), on the Board of the IACP.
- Daniel Rosenblatt** - Executive Director of the IACP.
- Giuliano Zaccardelli** - Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, an organization of over 15,000 sworn officers with broad federal and provincial roles.

Prior to beginning the formal reviews, the Oversight Commissioner and his team of experts thoroughly researched the recommendations of the Independent Commission, the Government's Implementation Plan, and the supporting legislation. Based on this research, the Oversight Commissioner subsequently published 772 performance indicators that both represent "best practices" in policing, and measure the progress and pace at which the policing institutions implement change.

The Oversight Commissioner and his team conduct three full-scale, on-site reviews in Northern Ireland per year. The oversight process itself is divided into three evaluation stages, each of which must be met for a recommendation to be considered fully implemented:

- Stage 1 - Administrative Compliance - evidenced by directives, policy changes, manual revisions, regulations and orders.
- Stage 2 - Evaluation follows up on the results of administrative compliance, using personal interviews with the key officials or teams responsible for implementing changes.
- Stage 3 - Verification consists of actual visits to ensure that changes are being fully complied with, in operational contexts and venues.



The Oversight Commissioner and his team also conduct various meetings with elected and appointed government officials, major political parties, leading members of the clergy and a number of non-governmental organisations. In addition, the Oversight Commissioner and his team meet with a wide array of members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), including the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constables and District Commanders, as well as hundreds of rank-and-file members. Meetings are also held with PSNI employee representative organisations.

The results of this rigorous research process, in-depth analysis of progress, and personal meetings with community, government and police representatives, all make up the cornerstone of this report. In addition to providing a narrative summary of progress and experience in implementing the recommendations to date the report contains, as an appendix, comprehensive and easy-to-read tables at page 69. The categorical descriptions used in the tables are: recommendation completed, substantial progress, moderate progress, limited progress and minimal progress. The tables allow the reader to quickly gain an understanding of what has been achieved and what remains to be achieved.

However, there is a caution in using the tables since they are necessarily general. The nature of the enormous changes in policing recommended by the Independent Commission do not always lend themselves to a quick-read or “scorecard” approach. The tables should therefore be read and interpreted in the context of the narrative segments of this report, as well as the Oversight Commissioner’s five previous reports. Taken together, the tabular and narrative portions provide the most comprehensive opinions of the Oversight Commissioner on the summary of experience to date.

There are several areas of change in the policing of Northern Ireland that are worthy of special mention. First and foremost is a recognition of the outstanding efforts of the Independent Commission itself. The Oversight Commissioner and his team have been universally impressed with the Independent Commission’s work, both in terms of the quality of research conducted and of the validity of the resulting recommendations. As the members of the oversight team continue to “drill down” on recommendations in the course of the evaluation process, it remains apparent that the issues identified by the Independent Commission were those in greatest need of change. In addition, the Independent Commission’s recommendations generally represent best practices in the policing of a democratic society.

Among the central recommendations made by the Independent Commission were those that dealt with the principle of police accountability, including recommendations touching on the role of the Police Ombudsman and those establishing a Policing Board. The Policing Board in particular, consisting of elected officials and independent members, and thereby representing the community at large, has had a relatively brief period in which to fulfil the role intended by the Independent Commission. Although the Policing Board has been presented with a myriad of complex and difficult issues in its early stages, it has already demonstrated a strong sense of professionalism and commitment. If the Board continues to operate in such a professional and cooperative manner, and is able to enlist the support of the entire community, it will continue to uphold the crucial principle of holding the Chief Constable and the Police Service publicly to account. In our opinion, both the Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman have excelled at fulfilling their intended roles, and should continue to receive the support of the Government, the police and the public.

The institution that has been most impacted by the Independent Commission's reforms, and which is responsible for implementing the majority of its recommendations, is the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In any context, change and the change process are often difficult to accept. This is true for individuals, groups and government institutions. Without doubt, the scope and magnitude of the reforms required of the PSNI are more complex than have been faced by any similarly situated police service. Former Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flannigan was able to provide critical leadership at the right time, both by supporting the need for reform and by establishing an effective change team of talented police managers in order to move the process forward. The present Chief Constable, Hugh Orde, also brings a wealth of policing experience to his new position, and in initial meetings has made clear his commitment to continuing the changes in an expeditious manner.

Special mention should also be made of the concept of District Commands, a programme recommended by the Independent Commission. The Police Service moved quickly on this important recommendation, and established District Commands effective 1 April 2001. The individuals selected to serve as District Commanders have already demonstrated their commitment to policing with the community in a professional manner. In numerous interviews and field visits with District Commanders, the oversight team continues to be impressed by their performance. Unfortunately, despite their enthusiasm and commitment, they have not yet been provided with the requisite administrative support or delegated authority that is essential if they are to fulfil their responsibilities. The failure to support this programme of decentralized policing, and the District Commanders more directly, could have serious adverse impacts on the entire concept of policing with the community.

On a related note, the implementation of District Policing Partnerships is critical to the philosophy of District Commanders policing with the community. Two important themes raised by the Independent Commission are democratic accountability and decentralised policing. As previously stated, the Policing Board has already proven itself as an effective central institution for democratic accountability. The District Police Partnerships will be equally important to the decentralised District Commands. The involvement of the entire community in both of these institutions for democratic accountability will be critical to the long term improvement of policing in Northern Ireland.

One of the major factors in ensuring that the Police Service has the respect and support of the entire community is that the service itself is representative of the community. In its recommendations, the Independent Commission recognised the critical nature of the need for a representative police service. The Police Service, the Policing Board and the former Police Authority have made excellent strides in fulfilling the objective of attracting high-quality young people who are representative of the entire community of Northern Ireland, and in getting them to consider a career in policing.



The recruitment programme has been professional in every sense of the word. The involvement of vetting panels and independent community observers has ensured that the selection process is fair, open and accountable. The recruitment programme continues to produce significant numbers of talented young people in general proportion to the population of Northern Ireland. Perhaps more importantly than numbers and percentages however, are comments to the Oversight Commissioner by staff at the Police College, and by field supervisors, that recently recruited police officers are of outstanding quality.

Although the recruitment programme has been successful to date, it can be improved even further in the future if all of the Independent Commission's recommendations are followed, most notably: "that all community leaders 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". A professional recruitment programme, high standards and community support are critical for many reasons, not least because the recruitment decisions of today will impact the Police Service for the next 20 to 30 years.

In our meetings with hundreds of rank and file police officers, we were consistently told that the need for change was recognised. Although they did not always agree with all of the recommendations, they wanted to get on with the change process nonetheless. They are painfully aware of the terrible losses the police and citizens suffered over the past 30 years, and want to avoid similar tragedies in the future. They are also aware that police organisations in virtually every democratic society are generally well respected by the community they serve, and they would like very much to serve in a similar environment. They often comment on a concern that too much political infighting from all sides has made their task more difficult, while also slowing down the change process.

It has now been three years since the release of the Independent Commission's report, and over one year since the release of the Government's Implementation Plan. Although the Police Service of Northern Ireland has made significant progress in fulfilling the reforms recommended by the Independent Commission, there are several important areas where the pace of change has been less than expected.

The Independent Commission considered it vital that all its recommendations be implemented faithfully and comprehensively. It advised in the strongest terms against: "cherry picking from the report, or trying to implement some major elements of it in isolation from others". Continued delays in implementing more significant recommendations could have an adverse impact on what has generally been a positive approach to change. Our concerns about lack of progress in certain areas are related to this kind of "selective implementation", and are set out in greater detail in the Overview Section.

When the Independent Commission issued its report in 1999, it recognised that a stable and improving security environment was a critical factor to the overall success of policing reforms. Although the security concerns are vastly improved when compared to the difficult period prior to the 1998 Belfast Agreement, there are still potentially dangerous factors to consider. The increasing rates of violent crime directed at citizens, vigilante punishment torture, group violence at interface areas, attacks or threats of attacks on police officers, along with the growing threat of organised crime, creates an environment that has the potential to impede the progress in fulfilling the Independent Commission's intent.

The task of overseeing the major change programme outlined by the Independent Commission, as well as subsequent legislation, has proven to be a challenging and demanding task. The cooperation of the Secretary of State, the Northern Ireland Office, the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Office of the Police Ombudsman, who are responsible for the majority of the reforms, along with a number of other institutions, has been excellent throughout the oversight process.

In the course of our oversight review, we have conducted numerous meetings with members of the clergy, political leaders, non-governmental organisations and rank and file police officers. Their cooperation and contributions have been enormously helpful. Their intelligence and commitment to establishing a policing service that is representative of, and supported by, the entire community is a source of great hope for the future.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the citizens of Northern Ireland for the kind and gracious way they have treated the Oversight Commissioner and the team of policing experts assigned to the office. When accepting the position of Oversight Commissioner in May of 2000, my career in law enforcement provided a good foundation for recognising many of the "best practices" in professional policing. At the beginning of my tenure as Oversight Commissioner, I quickly recognised that the policing issue was one of the most important areas of concern for all of the citizens of Northern Ireland. Their courage and commitment to providing a better quality of life for themselves and their families, so that they might be free from the fear of violence and crime, has been source of great strength to all of us on the Oversight Commissioner's Team.

It is our sincere belief that by conducting our assigned responsibility in a professional, objective and rigorous manner, we can provide credibility to the oversight process. The ultimate goal is for a Police Service that is effective in reducing crime and violence, while at the same time earning the respect of all of the citizens of Northern Ireland. In summary, there has been significant progress in fulfilling the intent of the Independent Commission. This is to the great credit of all of the citizens and institutions of Northern Ireland, many of whom have sacrificed much to reach this stage of the implementation process. Where shortcomings or delays do exist it is our intention to set them out in a candid manner, with the expectation that where possible, they will be expeditiously corrected.

Thomas A. Constantine  
Oversight Commissioner



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ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
CALEA	Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies
DCU	District Command Unit
DPP	District Policing Partnership
FTR	Full Time Reserve
GB	Great Britain
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
IT	Information Technology
PBR	Plastic Baton Round
PRRT	Police Retraining and Rehabilitation Trust
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PTR	Part Time Reserve
TED	Training, Education and Development
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
UK	United Kingdom



▶▶ commissioner's overview



The responsibility of the Oversight Commissioner is set out in detail in Chapter 19 of the **Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland**, entitled: "Overseeing Changes", and should also be seen in the context of subsequent legislation and implementation plans. The Independent Commission commented on the Good Friday Agreement as recognising that policing was a central issue in any society and, in the case of Northern Ireland, an issue central to the principles of the Agreement itself. The Commission noted that the recommendations in its report were unanimous conclusions reached after exhaustive consultations, and considered it vital that the recommendations be implemented comprehensively and faithfully. The Commission advised in the strongest terms against "cherry-picking" or trying to implement certain elements in isolation from others.

The Independent Commission recommended that the Government, the Police Service, the Policing Board and other institutions provide the Oversight Commissioner with objectives and timetables covering their own responsibilities, that they should report on the progress achieved at the periodic review meetings, and that they should account for any failures to achieve objectives. The Oversight Commissioner would in turn report publicly after each review meeting on the progress made, together with observations on the extent to which any failures or delays were the responsibility of the policing institutions themselves, or were due to matters beyond their control.

It is important to understand that taken as a whole, the recommendations of the Independent Commission are the most comprehensive and complex set of police reforms attempted in a democratic society. The implementation of the recommendations is a challenging task for the Police Service and the other responsible institutions. We have previously commented that it will take seven to ten years, starting from the release of the Independent Commission's Report in 1999, to complete all of the recommendations. However, it is our opinion that most of the critical recommendations should be completed by late 2004.

In order to be consistent with the recommendation for the independent role of an Oversight Commissioner, it was critical that the office carry out the mandate in a professional, objective, independent and rigorous fashion, with integrity as the underlying principle. The primary step in carrying out this mandate, as is noted in the introduction, was the recruitment of a distinguished group of policing experts. All of the individuals involved have outstanding experience in policing, and are internationally recognised as experts in their fields, bringing with them a vast depth of policing knowledge and expertise. Perhaps more importantly however, each member volunteered to participate in this project, and did so because of a sincere belief in the critical role that policing reforms play in the ongoing peace process. The oversight team is also motivated in large part by its respect for those courageous people of Northern Ireland who have chosen to pursue a peaceful solution to conflict through the Good Friday Agreement.

As also noted, the integrity and professionalism of the oversight reviews was additionally enhanced through the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), who appointed a select panel of senior executives to assist the oversight process. The IACP panel met with the oversight team at IACP Headquarters in Washington, DC, in July of 2002, and was able to provide invaluable and insightful contributions to the project. Each of the executives appointed to the select panel has an outstanding reputation for knowledge and integrity, and is currently leading a major law enforcement agency in the United States or Canada.

As a result of extensive research, analysis of policies and field evaluations, the Oversight Commissioner and his team have formed an opinion of the experience to date in implementing the recommendations of the Independent Commission. It is our considered opinion that there has been substantial overall progress made in fulfilling the Independent Commission's intent. Although we have some concerns about the lack of progress in specific areas, we believe that with continued effort and the will to change, along with the support of the entire community, there is good cause for optimism.

### **Review of Progress and Accomplishments**

The PSNI has continued to develop the principle of human rights in policing as recommended by the Independent Commission. Their appointment of a lawyer to review human rights programmes and audit for conformance with the 1998 Human Rights Act has been positive. An Assistant Chief Constable has been made responsible for the management of the Human Rights Programme. As recommended, the new oath of office has been taken by all recruits as part of their graduation exercise. Human rights training has been introduced as an integral part of the recruit training programme with the assistance of the University of Ulster at Jordanstown.

In perhaps the most significant change for the policing of Northern Ireland, the Policing Board has been established in accordance with the relevant recommendations of the Independent Commission. In its first year of operation, the Board has demonstrated its professional commitment to the principle of holding the Police Service to account.

The performance of the Policing Board and of the Police Ombudsman in their respective roles of ensuring police accountability, have been excellent. The Policing Board, in the initial stages of its tenure, has quickly resolved the issues of new police badges and uniforms. In addition, the Board further developed the policies of the former Police Authority of Northern Ireland, in overseeing a successful recruitment programme designed to ensure that police hiring is representative of the community at large. In March of 2002 the Policing Board developed and published its long term strategic plan for the Police Service for 2002-2005.

In addition to these extensive responsibilities, the Policing Board was faced with some complex and challenging problems in the early stages of its tenure. The Board addressed the issues raised by the Police Ombudsman's report on the 1998 Omagh bombing, and the PSNI's response, by directing a review of intelligence sharing within the PSNI, to be conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

The recommendations on Special Branch made to the Policing Board by the HMIC are well researched, and provide a professional set of guidelines for addressing the complex problem of the better utilisation of Special Branch intelligence to combat violent and organised crime. As further evidence of its understanding of its role with regard to accountability, the Policing Board endorsed the HMIC's recommendations. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's review would appear to meet the intent of the Independent Commission regarding Special Branch.



The Policing Board has also selected a Chief Constable and two Assistant Chief Constables. The Board has made significant progress in establishing the important District Policing Partnerships. In addition, the Board has directed an all-important study of how the PSNI may use available resources more effectively, in order to provide a more efficient policing service to the people of Northern Ireland.

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is performing in all respects as recommended by the Independent Commission. Her office has developed a professional staff and created a system for sharing data about complaints against police officers with the Police Service, as well as undertaking to analyse data and determine trends and potential problems.

The Police Service has made an excellent start in implementing the policing with the community strategy. Its research was extensive, and the Policing Board has endorsed the strategic plan for policing with the community as the principal service delivery philosophy. To their credit senior police managers moved quickly to implement the community policing programmes, with many District Commanders launching early initiatives. This is a clear demonstration of their understanding and acceptance of policing with the community as the core standard of operation.

The PSNI has addressed the recommendations regarding holding centres and custody suites. It has closed the holding centres at Castlereagh, Gough Barracks and Strand Road. Suspects are now detained in custody suites in police stations, including a temporary custody suite at the Lisburn District Command and a permanent custody suite being constructed at the Antrim District Command. The Policing Board has extended the current Custody Visiting Programme, along with a PSNI pilot project that introduces video recording in custody suites.

The Police Service has issued a comprehensive order that outlines in detail the justification and procedures for all stops and searches conducted under emergency powers. In previous reports, we noted that although the order was comprehensive, the implementation of the order in the field was slow and inconsistent. The Police Service, through the use of an internal audit, had subsequently identified this problem with implementation, and has moved aggressively to correct it.

The Northern Ireland Office, in concert with the PSNI, established a committee to review the usage of plastic baton rounds (PBRs) in the context of less than lethal force. The reports and evaluations of less than lethal force alternatives by the committee have been state of the art, and are perhaps the most comprehensive series of reports available anywhere. There has also been the procurement of water cannons for utilisation in major disturbances.

The PSNI has developed detailed and professional standards for the selection of officers permitted to fire PBRs, sophisticated training programmes and the requirement for senior level authorisation. In addition, the Ombudsman has established protocols for the investigation of the actual use of baton rounds. The Ombudsman's investigation of these events is objective, professional and rigorous. The Policing Board has acted responsibly in establishing protocols that will allow the Board to monitor police performance in public order situations.

The Police Service has made great strides with early initiatives that address the Independent Commission's recommendations for decentralising the organisation. The most significant of these changes was the establishment of District Commands in April of 2001. The District Commanders assigned to these new units have demonstrated able leadership and a keen understanding of how they must work with the community.

In the course of our evaluations we conduct numerous visits to the District Commands, and continue to be impressed by the talent and commitment of the District Commanders. However, we do have concerns about the lack of administrative support provided to the District Commanders however, and the lack of delegated authority provided to them, without which the District Command concept cannot succeed. In addition, the support of the entire community, especially in serving on the District Policing Partnerships, will be critical to the long term success of the District concept.

The entire Government, including the Northern Ireland Office, the former Police Authority of Northern Ireland, the Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, worked to establish a police constable recruiting programme that has been very successful. They and the Consensia Partnership, the private agency contracted to supervise the recruitment process, deserve a great deal of credit for recruiting large numbers of high quality candidates, who are also representative of the community. The selection process has been fair, open and accountable. Our field evaluations show that the staff of the Police College, as well as police field supervisors, consider recently recruited police officers to be of outstanding quality.

The Police Service moved quickly to establish a Change Management Team to manage the complex task of implementing the numerous recommendations of the Independent Commission. The Change Team consisted of a group of talented mid and senior level officers, assisted by civilian advisors with demonstrated expertise in management. In view of the amount of change that is required, the efforts of the Team have been noteworthy. In fact, the Change Team deserves credit for being a major factor in moving implementation forward to its present level of achievement. We have found the Change Team to be fully co-operative in meeting the requests of the Oversight Commissioner. As the pace of implementation continues, there is a concern that the official plans and policies of the PSNI may not be carried out in the field as intended. In order to ensure that the intended changes continue however, the Change Management Team has developed an audit function to measure progress and identify issues in need of attention.



The size of the Police Service is an important issue for the police managers and the Policing Board. The Police Service currently has approximately 6,970 regular police officers available, as well as approximately 1,970 full time reservists. However, a number of issues including the pace of severance, security responsibilities, lack of a civilianisation programme and excessive levels of sick leave, have made staffing an important issue. The Policing Board quickly recognised the importance of the staffing issue and tasked the PSNI to address the following:

- 1) number of officers and reservists assigned to security posts;
- 2) management of the severance arrangements;
- 3) management of sick leave;
- 4) civilianisation;
- 5) downsizing headquarters;
- 6) reviewing ill health retirements; and,
- 7) reviewing overseas secondments.

As a result of the Policing Board's request, the Police Service has submitted an initial plan to take the following actions over the next three years:

- 1) reducing sick leave levels to 450 officers per day;
- 2) optimisation of 750 security posts;
- 3) civilianisation of 600 police positions; and,
- 4) short-term adjustment in the timing of officers leaving under the severance provisions.

The Foundation Faculty has developed a comprehensive training programme for police recruits and probationary constables. Since the first recruit class was inducted in November of 2001, the Police College had graduated 288 police recruits by 30 September 2002. The student officer curriculum is accredited by the University of Ulster, and successful candidates are awarded a University of Ulster Certificate in Policing Studies. They may also upgrade to a Diploma, which equates to one third of a university degree.

The Tutor Training Programme is considered a notable success. Over 120 experienced police officers have been trained through the Tutor Programme to mentor recent graduates of the Police College. Interviews and field visits with student officers and tutor constables indicate that the Tutor Programme has been enthusiastically received, and is extremely popular with participants.

#### **Areas of Concern**

Although the new police officers are taking the new police oath as required, the programme for existing officers does not fulfil the intent of the Independent Commission. In order to ensure that the existing police officers understand the new police oath, there is a need for an administrative and training process that can be verified. That did not occur in the original plan for briefing existing officers, and has now reportedly been delayed until the completion of the "Course for All" in the Spring of 2003.

One of the critical elements in the system of decentralisation of policing and related accountability is the implementation of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs). Although significant progress has been made, functioning DPPs will not be in place at least until January of 2003. The DPPs are an essential element of the Policing with the Community strategy. In addition, it is crucial to the role of the PSNI in protecting the citizens of Northern Ireland that the partnerships be supported by the entire community. The Government, the Policing Board and the PSNI will be required to work with various community groups to determine the appropriate strategy for co-ordinating the efforts of the Consultative Forums, and a number of more localised crime prevention groups.

The Policing with the Community strategy is dependent on the availability of adequate resources. A number of jurisdictions elsewhere have attempted to implement community policing strategies only to see them fail because the Police Service was unable to provide adequate response to complaints due to staffing problems. The resources available to the Police Service and the efficiency of the utilisation of personnel have become a cause for concern. However, as previously mentioned the Policing Board and the PSNI are moving in a proactive manner to address the problem of resources and staffing decisions.

The issue of adequate staffing for the PSNI has been impacted by a voluntary retirement programme that was implemented before a recruiting programme to replace police officers was established. Lack of progress in the civilianisation of administrative positions, with the potential to release hundreds of officers, and the management of excessive levels of sick leave have also had an impact. The staffing problem is further compounded by security issues and public order responsibilities. All of these factors impact on the ability of District Commanders to implement Neighbourhood Policing Teams because they are short staffed, and cannot reassign officers from patrol and response units. The availability of adequate patrol strength is an extremely important component of a successful policing with the community strategy.

Changing the Police Service to a policing with the community philosophy requires a significant investment in the officers who will be required to make the concept work in an operational setting. In the course of analysing the Neighbourhood Policing Teams, we determined that few had been properly trained in problem solving methods. This is another example of why training is such a critical factor in the overall implementation of the Independent Commission's recommendations.

The principle of decentralisation that underpins many of the recommendations will require the support of information technology and a state of the art analytical capability. Although the action plan for the application of technology is well under way, there will be a need for interim solutions that provide timely and accurate information on crime and public safety matters to front line officers.

Another important recommendation was that police stations change from their current "fortress-like" appearance, which is a legacy of the past, to one that is more accessible to the community. The Police Service has developed an approved Estate Strategy Review with specific plans for fulfilling this recommendation. However, a review of available documents and field visits shows that limited progress has been made on updating existing police stations.



The Implementation Plan released by the Northern Ireland Office in August of 2001 states that the Independent Commission's strategy for the civilianisation of positions at police station reception areas would be implemented. Although this aspect of the civilianisation programme would release hundreds of officers for patrol duties there has been very limited progress. Our field visits showed that mid level supervisors found the possibility of freeing-up police officers for patrol duties as both positive and necessary.

Based on the Independent Commission's recommendations, the Policing Board is responsible for actively monitoring police performance in public order situations. Existing departmental orders regarding the utilisation of plastic baton rounds do not include an authorisation verification from the District Commander, and as a result the Policing Board will not receive sufficient information to fulfil its role of monitoring authority and responsibility for the use of baton rounds.

The Independent Commission recommended that District Commanders should have fully devolved authority over the deployment of personnel within their command, devolved financial authority, and the authority to finance local policing initiatives. However, devolution of authority is currently on hold for lack of progress in filling a number of administrative positions within DCUs, including those of business managers and personnel managers. Although a regional accountability structure has been developed, this will only be effective if DCUs are fully staffed with appropriate forms of administrative and other support, and DCU Commanders are given appropriate devolved authorities to enable them to deliver on their policing commitments to their community.

The Police Service has been slow to develop an employee "early warning system" as a management tool. These systems are generally accepted as best practice, particularly in policing organisations, and serve a number of important purposes. For example, they address issues of public accountability as they help to identify "problem" police officers. Early warning systems also improve internal accountability, by allowing managers to identify those employees who require some form of guidance or assistance. Finally, these systems help an organisation to identify training issues and priorities at an early stage.

The Police Service continues to experience unusually high levels of sickness absence compared to other UK police services. The Policing Board reported on sick day targets set by the former Police Authority. In its Annual Report 2001-2002, the Policing Board reported that the average number of sick days for 2001/2002, for uniformed and civilian staff, was 23.4 and 15.8 days respectively. The Policing Board has set new targets for 2002/2003 of 18.5 and 14 days respectively. Unless the Police Service can address this problem more effectively, the number of police officers available for patrol will continue to be low, which in turn has wider impacts, such as on the Police Service's community policing commitments.

In recommendations 98, 99, 100, 101 and 102 the Independent Commission commented specifically on issues relating to the role of Special Branch as part of the proposed changes to the policing of Northern Ireland. The essence of these recommendations reflects the recognition that there existed the potential for an increase in violent crime, as shown by similar experiences in other countries. Consequently, the Independent Commission's recommendations focus on having the Police Service utilise the considerable skills and experience of Special Branch to address the emerging threat of organised crime and the violent criminal activity that follows, in addition to maintaining a relevant counter-terrorist capability.



The need for a well-resourced, well-trained and fully supported intelligence capacity, to deal with the threat of terrorism, is not in question. However, the lack of sufficient progress on fulfilling the Independent Commission's intent of actually bringing the resources of Special Branch together with those of Crime Branch continues to remain a concern. Although the role of the Oversight Commissioner in evaluating the progress on implementing recommendations pertaining to Special Branch is limited compared to other agencies, it has become increasingly obvious that the co-ordination between Special Branch and other units of the Police Service, as recommended by the Independent Commission, has yet to occur in the manner envisioned.

The proposed strategy, plans and policies that would be utilised to achieve the amalgamation of Special Branch and Crime Branch were first described in our performance indicators in September of 2001. As pointed out in previous reports, initial plans that had been submitted by the PSNI were limited and did not fulfil the Independent Commission's intent. Supplemental requests were made, and the Oversight Commissioner met personally with senior PSNI officials to emphasise the need for a plan, particularly one that would meet requirements for the better co-ordination of resources and information sharing.

It has been the position of the PSNI that because there were a number of external reviews being conducted involving Special Branch issues, they would not provide the revised strategy as requested by the Oversight Commissioner, as these external reviews might result in additional conclusions and guidance. The Policing Board agreed in principle, however requested that the PSNI provide a revised plan by November of 2002.

Nonetheless, the Stevens Inquiry will now not be completed until the Spring of 2003. If there is no implementation of a new plan until Spring of 2003, that would mean that our own review of a revised plan could not take place until the Autumn of 2003 at the earliest. Since the present term of the Oversight Commissioner is scheduled to conclude on 31 May 2003, this effectively means that there could be no oversight review of the plans and strategies of the Police Service to implement the Independent Commission's recommendations for Special Branch.

It is important to note that the Independent Commission's recommendations are clear in their intent to increase the sharing of resources and appropriate information between Special Branch and Crime Branch, as well as between Special Branch and other units of the PSNI, in an attempt to deal with the growing threat of violent and organised crime. Such practices are generally recognised as best practices both by the expert evaluators assigned to the Oversight Commissioner, and by the select panel of police executives from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Ensuring adequate policing resources for Northern Ireland is an important issue. The Independent Commission rightly recognised that the Chief Constable should have some discretion as to the exact number of police officers required to ensure an adequate service. It also recognised the impact of the security environment and among other things, made its projections based on the state of the peace process. It has also been publicly reported that patrol strength is a concern, however this concern should be seen against actual projections made by the Independent Commission. These were that, following a low of just over 7,100 police officers in 2002/2003, police numbers would stabilise at around 7,500.



The Independent Commission projected that in Year 3 of its calculations, in other words by 2002/2003, there would be 7,116 regular police officers available for duty. The Independent Commission also projected that the Full Time Reserve would have been phased out by Year 3. As of 30 September 2002, the Police Service had approximately 6,970 regular police officers. There were also approximately 1,970 members of the Full Time Reserve, for a total of 8,940 officers available for duty.

The lack of a means whereby the Police Service was able to limit the number of police officers authorised to leave the PSNI under the severance programme has been one factor in the Police Service's resource pressures, and current resources have made it difficult for the Police Service to meet policing demands. However, initiatives which might have served to relieve resource pressures, such as the reassignment of police officers from administrative duties, and a more determined civilianisation drive, have not been thoroughly pursued. This has been noted by the Policing Board, which is addressing the issue.

In discussing the issue of recruitment, the Independent Commission stated that the key to making the Police Service representative of the entire community is for leaders to actively encourage their young people to join the Police Service. The Commission recommended that 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. Unfortunately, the intent of the Independent Commission in this recommendation has not been fulfilled as there is evidence of a lack of encouragement and some cases reports of actual intimidation.

Despite this, large numbers of courageous and dedicated young people from every community are volunteering for the Police Service, in an effort to make Northern Ireland a safer place to live. Consistent with the notion of openness and transparency, the Independent Commission recommended registration of notifiable memberships. As of September 2002, this has not yet been implemented.

The construction of a new police college has unfortunately shown few signs of real progress. A new college is considered critical due to the future of the Police Service and its path to the new beginning envisaged by the Independent Commission, which first recommended the construction of a new college in September of 1999. The Commission noted that current classroom, residential and specialist training facilities were inadequate to meet the future needs of the Police Service, and would adversely impact the new Police Service's capacity for training both recruits and serving police officers.

In addition to recommending the construction of a new police college, the Independent Commission also recommended that the Police Service make more effective use of outside training and development opportunities, as this would both alleviate current pressures on PSNI training facilities, and promote greater interaction between police officers and members of the community. Such opportunities have never been explored or utilised to their full potential.

The lack of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) remains a serious concern. Without a comprehensive TNA, it will be difficult to establish the broad training needs of DCUs. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive TNA impedes the development of a fully costed, organisational

training budget. In the absence of a comprehensive TNA the entire Training, Education and Development Strategy can also not be implemented. In addition, the Independent Commission noted the importance of linking policing objectives to the identification of training and development needs. Only the completion of a comprehensive TNA will permit the identification of in-service training demands critical to the achievement of the Police Service's objectives.

The Independent Commission recommended in 1999 that, as soon as possible, all members of the Police Service be instructed concerning the impact of the new constitutional arrangements on policing for Northern Ireland, the policing arrangements recommended by the Independent Commission, and the reforms of the criminal justice system. As of 30 September 2002 this had not yet been implemented. The Independent Commission also recommended that, as a matter of priority, all members of the Police Service should be instructed in the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on policing. We have noted previously that the Police Service has made significant progress in integrating human rights into its recruit training programme.

However, as of 30 September 2002, the integration of human rights dimensions into every training module, for serving police officers and for civilian staff, as recommended by the Independent Commission as a "matter of priority", had not been accomplished. The Police Service has prepared and is delivering a Course for All, for police and civilian staff, that is intended to meet the following objectives: instruct employees on the new constitutional arrangements, the nature and scope of the Independent Commission's recommendation, the new foundation of human rights in policing, and issues regarding police-community relations.

As of 30 September 2002, the Course for All curriculum had not been provided, and we were unable to evaluate the content. However, the course objectives are ambitious and our experience shows that dealing with material of this complexity, and to the required level of detail, does not seem feasible in the two days allotted to the course.

Finally, the lack of progress in addressing the issue of public attendance at police training sessions also remains. The Independent Commission intended that public participation in the development and delivery of the Police Service's training programme be an ongoing process, fully integrated into the way in which individual courses, both for recruits and serving police officers, were developed and refined.



▶▶ human rights



## 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 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. They were:

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

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) continues to develop the human rights agenda recommended by the Independent Commission. Under the supervision of the human rights lawyer appointed to the Police Service in October of 2001, policies have been audited so as to conform to the 1998 Human Rights Act. A Code of Ethics was drafted by the Police Service and, after extensive community consultation, approved by the Policing Board in September of 2002. In addition, the human rights lawyer noted above also advises the Police Service on the human rights implications of new policies, operations and training.

An Assistant Chief Constable has been made responsible for the development of the human rights programme, assisted by a Human Rights Section. A detailed human rights plan has been prepared, circulated to outside groups such as the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission, and has been discussed by the Policing Board. Full implementation awaits final approval of the programme by the Chief Constable, expected in the Autumn of 2002. Some aspects of the programme have already been implemented.

Human rights training for recruits has been expanded substantially and has been incorporated into many of the simulations - or "practicals" - that are a fixture of PSNI Police College instruction. All lessons are audited for inclusion of nine core themes, including human rights theory and practice. The Professional Standards and Ethics theme also contains a human rights element. Recent graduates of the recruit training programme have been described by their field supervisors as being of outstanding quality. Since September of 2001, police recruits have also been administered the new oath at the Police College's graduation exercises. However, familiarising serving police officers with the new oath, and recording the administration of this process, has not seen significant progress. This issue is described in greater detail in the Areas of Concern below.

The recruit foundation training programme is supervised by the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, with some of the human rights teaching being done by individuals outside the Police Service. Human rights is taught as a specific subject, as well as being integrated into other recruit training modules, including Police Community Relationships and Criminal Justice. The programme is currently the subject of an evaluation being conducted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. Finally, the Police College recently appointed a Human Rights Coordinator to support and help standardise human rights instruction throughout its programmes. However, as of 30 September 2002, the integration of human rights dimensions into every training module, for serving police officers and for civilian staff, as recommended by the Independent Commission, had not been accomplished. The Police Service has also sponsored two public human rights conferences, in October of 2001 and October of 2002. The proceedings of the first conference have been published.

#### **Areas of Concern**

While visible progress has been made in implementing certain of the Independent Commission's recommendation on human rights, progress on other recommendations has been lacking. For example, section 38(2) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires that the terms of the new police oath be brought to the attention of serving police officers, and that they understand the new oath and understand the need to carry out their duties in accordance with it. The Government's August 2001 Implementation Plan, as well as our performance indicators published in September of 2001, further require that the administration of this process be documented.

In order to ensure that serving police officers understand the new oath and understand the need to carry out their duties in accordance with it, there is a requirement for an administrative and training process that can be verified by the oversight team. That did not occur in the original briefing plan for serving officers, and is now reported to be delayed until the completion of the "Course for All". However, although well under way, all employees will not have attended the course until the Spring of 2003, three years since the Independent Commission first made its recommendations regarding the new police oath.

Bringing the Police Service into full compliance with the human rights recommendations of the Independent Commission will require further efforts. As noted, the Police Service has made considerable progress with respect to the inclusion of human right into the recruit training programme. However, the Independent Commission also recommended that the impact of human rights be evaluated across the Police Service. For this to occur, a system that gauges the awareness and practice of human rights in the performance appraisals of police officers must be in place. As noted in previous reports, the development and implementation of a new appraisal system is important not only because individual officers' human rights performance should be measured, but because these measures are central to issues of public accountability. Although the development of a meaningful appraisal system is a complex undertaking, implementation dates have been revised, with the first implementation date given as September of 2002, which has since slipped to April of 2003.

An important element of the human rights agenda still requiring action is the evaluation of the human rights policies and practices of the Police Service by the Policing Board. However, this fact is recognised by the Policing Board, which has begun to formulate a plan for evaluating the Police Service's human rights performance. The Policing Board is presently engaged in the process of hiring a human rights consultant to assist in this regard.





▶▶ **accountability**



## Background

The Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland sought to increase police accountability through three new institutions: a policing board, an ombudsman and decentralised community consultation bodies. The Policing Board, which is composed of ten elected representatives from the Northern Ireland legislature and nine independent members, has been given the following responsibilities by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000:

- (1) to set goals and priorities for the Police Service in consultation with the Chief Constable, and to issue an annual policing plan;
- (2) to negotiate with the Northern Ireland Office, again in consultation with the Chief Constable, a budget appropriate for the goals and priorities of the annual plan;
- (3) to monitor the performance of the police according to the objectives of the annual plan;
- (4) to appoint the Chief Constable and other chief officers, including civilians, and to terminate their appointments if necessary; and,
- (5) to raise questions with the Chief Constable about the policies and practices of the Police Service.

Although the Northern Ireland legislature was suspended at the time this report was being written, all Policing Board members, both elected and independent, have accepted re-appointment to the Board, as provided for in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

The responsibilities of the Ombudsman are narrower but no less significant. The Ombudsman receives, investigates and actions complaints about the behaviour of individual police officers, shares trend information with the Police Service, and analyses information in order to help the Police Service take corrective action. The Ombudsman may undertake investigations into problems even when specific complaints have not been filed.

Finally, the Independent Commission recommended that accountability to local communities be brought about through two sets of institutions:

- (1) District Policing Partnerships, which would be sub-committees of District Councils composed, like the Policing Board, of political and independent members; and,
- (2) consultative forums based in neighbourhoods, perhaps corresponding to the beats of uniformed patrol officers, and composed of local members of the public.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Policing Board was established in November of 2001 in accordance with the relevant recommendations of the Independent Commission. In its first year of operation, it has accomplished a great deal, addressing its responsibilities with professionalism and dedication. It supervised the development of the Police Service's new badge and uniform, while simultaneously overseeing an aggressive and successful recruitment programme to ensure equitable community representation among police recruits. In March of 2002 it developed and published a long-range strategic plan for the Police Service for 2002-2005, which includes objectives, indicators and targets, as well as a budget for the current fiscal year (2002/2003). Following extensive public consultation, the Policing Board also published a "Code of Practice for the Exercise of Functions

by the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)", a key step in making the concept of DPPs operational. The Police Service and Policing Board also produced and approved a comprehensive and wide-ranging Human Resources Plan, which clearly demonstrates the willingness of the Policing Board to hold the Police Service to account.

The Policing Board undertook a systematic evaluation of the performance of the Police Service for 2001-2002, based on the annual plan formulated by the former Police Authority. This was published as the Policing Board's first annual report in September of 2002. In addition, the Board was able to deal with and respond in a professional manner to, a number of controversial issues including the Ombudsman's report on the 1998 Omagh bombing and the Chief Constable's response, by seeking an outside review by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. The review focussed on the relationship between Special Branch's intelligence gathering function and other parts of the Police Service, such as the Criminal Investigations Department. The Policing Board, in a thorough and consistent example of ensuring police accountability, received and endorsed the HMIC's report. The report itself was well-researched and specific in its recommendations, which are entirely consistent with established best practices. During the Summer of 2002, the Policing Board appointed a new Chief Constable and two Assistant Chief Constables. Finally, the Board regularly consults with the Chief Constable, who furnishes quarterly reports on police performance.

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is performing in all respects as recommended by the Independent Commission. The Ombudsman is notified of all complaints about police behaviour and supervises all investigations of them, whether undertaken by her own staff or by the Police Service. The Ombudsman has created a system for sharing data about complaints against police officers with the Police Service, and has undertaken analyses to determine trends and potential problems.

Increasing the accountability of the police, whether exercised from above through the Policing Board and Ombudsman, or from below through the District Police Partnerships, depends in large measure on the willingness of the police to inform the community about what they are doing. Recognising this, the Independent Commission recommended that the Police Service: "take steps to improve its transparency," saying that: "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".

The Police Service has been developing such a policy for almost a year. The policy has been circulated for comment to the Policing Board, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Ombudsman and several human rights non-governmental organisations. The revised draft was resubmitted to the Policing Board in August of 2002. The policy explicitly refers to the requirements of the Independent Commission, as well as to the performance indicators put forward by the Oversight Commissioner in September of 2001. The policy is called a "consultation document" as it does not require the formal approval by the Policing Board, but can be implemented with the concurrence of the Chief Constable.



Codes of Practice issued in August of 2002 completed legislative accountability in relation to the Independent Commission's covert law enforcement recommendations. A Chief Surveillance Commissioner for Covert Law Enforcement is in place, and a complaints tribunal is in operation. The remaining issue is verification that PSNI policies are in compliance with new Codes of Practice on covert surveillance. In relation to the strengthening of financial accountability, the Chief Constable is now the designated accounting officer for the PSNI. An audit agreement is in place with the Policing Board, and 'best value' audits will commence in April of 2003, wherein the Policing Board will set standards to measure the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of all police functions through the Continuous Improvement Performance Plan. A fully costed policing plan will be available in April of 2003.

#### **Areas of Concern**

While the institutions for holding the Police Service to account for its strategic direction and management on the one hand, and individual behaviour on the other, have been working as recommended, the exercise of decentralized, grassroots accountability over local police activities remains uncertain.

The crucial element in the system of accountability recommended by the Independent Commission is the establishment of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs), and as of 30 September 2002 these were still under development. Although significant progress has been made with respect to advertising and generating interest in DPPs across Northern Ireland, no functioning DPPs have been instituted. Moreover, it appears unlikely that DPPs will be fully established prior to January of 2003.

However, as noted the process of soliciting nominations for independent members and for selecting them is well underway. The DPPs are a crucial institution for ensuring that command devolution by the Police Service to District Command Units is meaningful and is undertaken "with the community," as called for by the Independent Commission. In addition, it is critically important that all sections of the community participate in this endeavour, if grassroots accountability and better policing are to become a reality. As noted by the Independent Commission, the function of the DPPs should be more than advisory, explanatory and consultative. DPPs should voice the community's concerns, actively monitor the Police Service's performance, and ultimately ensure the consent of the community to be policed.

The other element of uncertainty for accountability concerns the Independent Commission's "consultative forums". This is particularly true with regard to the respective roles of the DPPs being established, and the already existing Community Safety Partnerships and Community Police Liaison Committees. For example, roughly 142 Community Police Liaison Committees are already in existence, as are several Community Safety Partnerships, with regular and in some cases, long-standing contact with the Police Service. There are many other local crime prevention groups, such as Neighbourhood Watches and housing estate committees, with which the Police Service has long had contact. Making all of these organisations collaborate effectively will be a challenge for both the Police Service and the Policing Board.

▶▶ **policing with the community**



## Background

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland recommended that policing with the community should be the core function of the Police Service and the core function 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 is 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.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service conducted research into the principles and practices of policing with the community and consulted broadly with representatives of all ranks within the PSNI. Informative bulletins were issued at periodic intervals as the strategy for implementation took shape, with the new Policing Board maintaining oversight of the process. The Plan for Change component of the Policing Plan 2002-2005, released in March of 2002, committed the Board and the Police Service to implementing policing with the community as the principal service delivery philosophy, in which the police and the community would work in partnership with each other. The Policing Board has now endorsed the strategic plan, the implementation plan and an accompanying communications plan. Formal commencement was in September of 2002.

Senior Police Service managers did not wait for all features of a comprehensive plan to fall into place, with many DCU Commanders launching early initiatives. This clearly demonstrated their understanding and acceptance of policing with the community as the core standard of operation. In some cases these early experiments had to be abandoned or suspended due to increased demands for public order policing. However, this must be balanced against a lack of progress in other areas, such as the reduction of sick leave and the freeing-up of police officers with civilian staff. Concerted action in both of these areas would have reduced resource pressures experienced by the Police Service due to public order incidents. Nonetheless, Commanders, Sector Inspectors and regular patrol officers must be commended for their risk taking in the cause of quality and community policing.

The Police Service also completed a number of significant community-based crime prevention projects over the past year. Neighbourhood Policing Teams were established, and where local conditions and resources allow, officers are walking beats and providing an essential presence in town and city centres. In many communities, response-to-call units are patrolling the streets and answering calls from citizens under conditions of normalcy. Other police districts were found to be conducting tactical patrols aimed at crime prevention, particularly crimes against persons and property.

Despite increased public order policing demands in a number of police districts, many officers displayed a commendable sense of duty and determination in adverse conditions. In addition, active and healthy partnerships with community leaders and groups were found to exist in many of the districts visited. Arguably, given a more stable environment in certain areas, the Police Service could make significant progress in its transition to a policing with the community style of operation.

The Policing Plan published by the Policing Board identified the PSNI's Analytical Centre as a potential centre for excellence, a goal which seems well within the grasp of management and this dedicated team. In a relatively brief span of time the Police Service has developed a sound capacity for crime and complaint pattern analysis, an achievement which has also been noted in previous Oversight Reports. With the exception of a few positions that will be staffed by the end of 2002, each District Command Unit now enjoys the benefit of a professionally trained and qualified crime analyst, supported by appropriate computer technology. These functions should be regarded as striking examples of the benefits that civilianisation in appropriate areas can bring to the Police Service.

#### Areas of Concern

There remain, however, significant barriers to progress. While the impacts of increased public order demands are acknowledged, this must be offset against the lack of progress in other areas on the part of the Police Service, for example in the reduction of high sickness absence levels, and the aggressive recruitment of more civilian staff. Progress in these and other areas would have permitted the Police Service to meet public order demands, without thereby affecting its commitments with respect to policing with the community.

Despite an encouraging start prompted in part by the Strategic Plan, as well as by the energy and enthusiasm of District Command staff, Districts have been required on numerous occasions to contribute personnel to other areas and duties. This was particularly true in dealing with the many public order incidents in Belfast urban region during this past Summer. This has a number of direct effects, including the diversion of recruit officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams they had been assigned to following police training. District and Sector Commanders noted that increased demands for public order policing in certain areas made the development of effective beat and community problem solving plans difficult.

Goal setting in the manner recommended by the Independent Commission requires that District Commanders be responsive and accountable to the goals established by the Policing Board in consultation with the Chief Constable. An added responsibility is the establishment of goals that respond to the needs of the local community. While some DCUs have established integrated sets of goals, others have yet to provide an opportunity for their community to collaborate in this process. Other factors which impede community involvement include a lack of appropriate training for police officers, the fact that District Policing Partnerships are only just becoming established, and the limited authority District Commanders currently have to tailor police services to local needs.



Although Neighbourhood Policing Teams were engaging as best they could with community problem solving, as of 30 September 2002 few had been properly trained in problem solving methods. These are part of the Course for All curriculum, however as pointed out earlier, although under way, the Course for All will not be completed until the Spring of 2003. While many instances of progressive community-oriented policing projects were reviewed, few met acceptable standards of collaborative community-based problem solving. Of the few crime investigation units which were observed, each was short-staffed, lacking in experience and in need of training. The decentralised style of community policing also depends heavily on good communications systems, and must be supported by information technology and an analytical capability. The action plan for technological development is well underway, and in the interim there is a continuing focus on user needs and equipment that will host the new systems. However, it will be some months before the first new applications are fully functional.

On a similar note, truly decentralised policing systems require effective linkages with up-to-date information on current policies, force orders, directives and bulletins. While computer-based systems will ultimately provide the means for broad distribution, it is noted that the anticipation of computer-based systems should not prevent the PSNI from addressing its manual business processes in the interim.

In summary, while a willingness to change to a community policing style is evident in the expressed intentions and behaviours of many District Commanders, mid-level managers and front line police officers, their ability to learn and adapt new skills are frustrated by a number of barriers, including:

- (1) the diversion of officers to public order duties; delays in the staffing of key civilian positions in DCU, and lack of progress on civilianisation and the reduction of sick leave;
- (2) the critical importance of having participation and support from the entire community;
- (3) continuing deficiencies with respect to communications systems;
- (4) a lack of clear devolved authority to District Commanders, limiting their ability to tailor police resources to the demands of the local community;
- (5) continuing policy and resource constraints, thereby impeding the flexibility of District Commanders; and,
- (6) lack of appropriate in-service training.



▶▶ **policing in a peaceful society**



## Background

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland made several recommendations covering the appearance of police stations and more appropriate types of patrol vehicles. Many recommendations also address 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.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

As reported previously, the three holding centres at Castlereagh, Gough Barracks and Strand Road have been closed. All suspects are now detained in custody suites located in police stations. To fulfil the Independent Commission recommendation, the Police Service successfully constructed and managed a temporary custody suite at Lisburn DCU, pending the opening of a permanent 20-bed joint custody suite at Antrim DCU. The Antrim facility should be ready for use in April of 2003. Although a final decision has not been made, the Police Service and the Northern Ireland Office are working together to determine the number and location of additional joint custody suites required, as well as how funding will be provided. The Police Service is currently operating 22 separate custody suites.

Related to the closing of the three holding centres and the establishment of custody suites, the Policing Board has extended the inspection of the "condition of detention" at custody and interrogation suites to the current Custody Visiting Scheme. Custody visitors have been trained and guidelines for visiting the detained terrorists suspects have been agreed upon between the Policing Board and Police Service. The Policing Board requires the submission of monthly inspection reports from custody visitors to permit the Board to identify any follow-up action that might be required. The Policing Board still needs to resolve the outstanding issue of custody visitors observing interviews on camera. In the interim, a consent form and procedure have been established to obtain consent from the suspect before a visitor is allowed to view interviews or interrogations. Oversight field visits confirmed that unannounced inspections by custody visitors were taking place.

Progress is being made on introducing video recording into custody suites. A pilot project at Musgrave Station is ongoing, and that project is providing experience and information that is necessary to introduce video recording in other custody suites. Equipment is on order for Antrim, and necessary cabling has been installed in Coleraine custody suite. Funding has been agreed by NIO, and a business case for the full project will now be prepared.

The Independent Commission specifically noted that: "much of the dissatisfaction with policing, in both the loyalist and republican areas, stems from the use of emergency powers" by the Police Service. The Commission recommended that the Police Service keep records, in order to establish accountability and effective management, of all stops, searches and similar actions taken under emergency powers. On 30 August 2001 the Chief Constable distributed General Order 37/2001, The Terrorism Act 2000 - Human Rights and Monitoring Issues. This order is comprehensive and details the justification and procedures for all stops and searches under an emergency, while also establishing reporting and review responsibilities for all stops and searches. The order also includes a new Police and Criminal Evidence form, designed to record incidents of stops, searches and

seizures, and a human rights checklist to be used by police officers when conducting a stop and/or search. Although the policy has been noted as progress, the implementation is an area of concern as later noted.

The Army also has authority to exercise emergency powers, which is controlled through its own command structures. Performance data is maintained that includes persons stopped and searched, arrested or detained, premises entered or searched, and items seized. This data has been available for oversight review since April of 2002.

#### **Areas of Concern**

The Police Service has an approved Estate Strategy Review in place which contains specific plans for moving toward the: "appearance of ordinary buildings", for police stations that are either renovated or are new constructions. The funding requirements are included in the plans.

A review of available documents and plans, followed by field visits to several police stations, indicates that little progress has been made on updating existing police stations so they are more regular in appearance, more accessible to public callers and better places to work for Police Service staff. The condition, and exterior and interior appearance of, a majority of police stations need an expedient conversion to a more regular appearance.

Likewise, the enquiry areas of some police stations are particularly dismal and forbidding, and urgently require renovation. However, while some police stations needing upgrades are not on the upgrade schedule, others that already have a regular appearance, and are modern and in relatively good condition, are scheduled for upgrade and renovation. This indicates a problem with prioritisation.

While it is clear that many police stations are located in areas affected by tactical security problems, District Commanders responsible for police stations in more secure areas could be granted the authority and funding to initiate such action as to bring their stations in compliance with the Independent Commission's intent regarding the appearance of stations. Improving the look of police stations will also support a DCU's community policing goals, community involvement in the area policing, recruitment of future police and civilian employees, and improvement of morale for the police officers and civilians assigned to work there.

Although General Order 37/2001 on the use of emergency powers is comprehensive and includes all the necessary policies and procedures for successful implementation, analysis of records of use shows that District Command Units were slow to comply with this order. The first performance or statistical report released by the Police Service, covering the period January-March of 2002, showed that a large majority of DCUs reported little or no activity on the use of emergency powers during this period. This was subsequently confirmed by a PSNI Audit Report provided in August of 2002 by the Change Management Team, which identified deficiencies in implementation similar to those outlined by the Oversight Commissioner.

The Audit Report also verified that there was little evidence of the new reporting forms being used, even in areas of high crime and/or terrorist activity. However, a follow-up statistical report, covering the period 1 April to 30 June of 2002, indicates some improvement in compliance with



General Order 37/2001. Slow progress on the recording of the use of emergency powers may indicate that the lack of specific training for police officers in this area is having a negative effect. PSNI audit reports also confirmed the need to improve and better evaluate the method(s) used by the Police Service to communicate and distribute important policies and procedures across the organisation.

There has also been little progress on the issue of the civilianisation of appropriate positions within the Police Service. In its report in 1999, the Independent Commission first recommended among other things that police officers assigned to station receptionist duties be replaced with civilian employees. Other jobs that do not require police powers were also to be considered for civilianisation. These recommendations were approved in the Government's August 2001 Implementation Plan, which indicated that a strategy of civilianisation would be developed and pursued.

There are many reasons why civilianisation is important, including the freeing-up of police officers for other duties. For example, if they had been hired in a timely manner, civilian receptionists would have permitted up to 260 police officers to be reassigned to numerous patrol and detective duties. Increased civilianisation would also have a beneficial impact on the Police Service's community policing initiatives, both by directly integrating members of the community into the organisation, and by placing civilian employees into those positions which most often come into contact with the public. Finally, progress on civilianisation among other initiatives, would also have permitted the Police Service to address increased public order demands, while continuing to meet its policing with the community commitments.

The Policing Board and Chief Constable have all agreed that many of the positions currently held by police officers could be staffed by civilian employees, not least those in police station reception areas. Section Commanders and first-line supervisors confirmed that civilianising these positions would be an important asset. The Chief Constable has suggested that up to 1,000 positions could potentially be civilianised, and senior managers in the Police Service were subsequently instructed to identify possible positions, as well as develop a corresponding implementation timetable.

However, as of August of 2002, some three years after the Independent Commission's recommendations on civilianisation, a comprehensive implementation strategy and timetable has not been adopted. The need for legislation does not appear to be a significant barrier, as the Northern Ireland Office advises that legislation is not needed for civilianisation as long as selected positions require no police powers.

It is noted that the Police Service has recently contracted with Grafton Recruitment to recruit civilian employees, which would include positions for station receptionists. Grafton Recruitment was due to initiate the recruitment programme on 30 September 2002. Without evidence of a written plan, it was not possible to determine if civilian receptionists would be in place before the reception areas are remodelled to be more effective. A determination was made that new civilian staff would be permanent contract employees, and that a 50:50 balance would be maintained in order to represent the community. At the present time, the needed business and personnel managers for the DCUs have been selected or promoted from within the Police Service.

▶▶ public order policing



## Background

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland recognised that the public order policing experience of the police in Northern Ireland differed significantly from that of any other police force. It therefore saw the need for research into alternative 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 also for identifying equipment that might be utilised by the police to better deal with during public order situations and other emergencies.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

As pointed out by the Independent Commission, the most controversial aspect of public order policing in Northern Ireland has been the use of plastic baton rounds, or PBRs, by the Police Service. The Independent Commission made two recommendations. First, that an immediate research programme should be initiated to find a less potentially lethal alternative to the PBR. Second, that police commanders should have broader ranges of public order equipment at their disposal. In June of 2000, the Northern Ireland Office formed a Steering Group to conduct the research and identify a broader range of public order equipment. After considerable in-depth research, the Steering Group released an interim research report in November of 2001, entitled: "A Research Programme Into Alternative Policing Approaches Towards the Management of Conflict".

The report was a well-researched and detailed technical examination of alternatives to the PBR, with an evaluation of several less potentially lethal devices that could be made available to the Police Service. The Steering Group's Phase 3 research report, which will limit further research to Category A devices (e.g. electrical incapacitation devices and water cannon), will be issued before the end of 2002. The report will include medical evaluations of each of the devices recommended. In summary, the Steering Group is fulfilling the intent of the Independent Commission's recommendations in this regard, and has in fact made considerable progress.

Based on an interim medical evaluation, the Police Service received approval and funding to purchase six vehicle mounted water cannon for the purpose of providing DCUs with a less potentially lethal alternative to PBRs in public order situations. The interim report reviewed previously published medical and technical data, and other official documentation on the operational use of water cannon, and among its conclusions it reported that there were no deaths from the use of police water cannon. Further, the review noted a low incidence of life threatening injuries attributable to water cannon jets. The decision to move forward with the purchase was also based on the experience of two public order incidents occurring in the summer of 2002, in which two borrowed water cannon vehicles were successfully deployed by the Police Service.

There have been substantial improvements in the way in which the Police Service has handled public order situations. The Policing Board and the Police Service have developed an effective set of policies and procedures for accomplishing the many issues identified by the Independent Commission for dealing with public order situations. With the exception of one minor issue, addressed in the Areas of Concern, considerable progress has been made in this important area.

General Order 46/2000, Issues, Deployment and Use of Baton Rounds in Situations of Serious Public Disorder, includes directives to effectively manage and record the deployment and use of PBRs. On 15 August 2002, the Chief Constable distributed General Order 50/2002, Requirements for Early Reporting to the Policing Board, which requires the early reporting of the discharge of PBRs. Separate forms have been designed specifically for these two reporting purposes. The order also places responsibility on the DCU Commander to ensure the reports are completed on time.

The number of police officers authorised to fire the plastic baton gun is limited, and a training component for Commanders, supervisors and police officers has been established to cover all aspects of effective PBR deployment. The use of PBRs by the Police Service has steadily decreased over time, from 1,236 PBRs fired in 1998, 111 fired in 1999, 22 fired in 2000, and 91 PBRs fired in 2001. However, there was an increase between 2001 and 2002, with 248 PBRs being fired up to and including 29 August 2002. A report released in May of 2002 by the Police Ombudsman detailed the investigation of seven recent incidents where the Police Service used PBRs in public order situations. The report concluded that the discharge of baton rounds in each case was fully justified and proportionate, as were the authorisations and directives given. Oversight field visits indicated good co-operation between police officers and the investigators assigned to the Ombudsman's office.

The Police Service have agreed to implement an internal administrative review procedure. This is generally considered a best practice with respect to the use of lethal and less than lethal force. The Police Service's decision to conduct an internal post-utilisation review of each incident involving the use of baton rounds is also a positive step. The administrative and post-utilisation reviews do not conflict with the investigatory authority of the Ombudsman, who has a primary authority to investigate the use of baton rounds. The critical institutional role of the Ombudsman was recognised by the Independent Commission, who noted the importance of a thorough, impartial and independent investigative agency, one which would take into account both the "public interest" and the interests of other parties involved. Once the Ombudsman releases a report on a PBR incident, and provided there are no criminal or disciplinary proceedings pending, four senior police officers review the findings contained in the Ombudsman's report, as well as any internal reports, to determine if there are any of policy, discipline, human rights or training matters that should be addressed.

The Policing Board also has a responsibility to actively monitor police performance in public order situations, which includes the use of plastic baton rounds. To act on this responsibility, the Policing Board and the Police Service have agreed to certain protocols to allow the Board to conduct the necessary monitoring. General Order 50/2002 implements the Police Service's monitoring responsibilities. The development of the Policing Board's monitoring responsibilities is currently underway.



### Areas of Concern

As noted above, among other things the Policing Board is responsible for actively monitoring police performance in public order situations, a role recommended by the Independent Commission. In order to perform this task the Policing Board needs information to analyse and upon which to act. The Independent Commission also stated that the use of PBRs should in the first instance require authorisation from a District Commander. The general orders issued by the Chief Constable require this authorisation by a District Commander. The recommendation further states that this authorisation by the commander should be “justified” in a report to the Policing Board, which should be copied to the Police Ombudsman.

A review of General Order 50/2002 and the two attached reporting forms (PB1 and PB2) failed to identify a requirement that a District Commander authorise PBR use during a public order situation, nor subsequently justify his/her authorisation in a report to the Policing Board. Of the 21 sections or questions found on Form PB1, none make reference to the justification, or reasons, that prompted the authorised discharge of a baton round(s). Information should be provided to the Board to allow members to fulfil their monitoring responsibility and authority.



▶▶ management and personnel



## 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 which could deal with what was perceived as “pattern” absenteeism. Further recommendations proposed a rigorous programme of civilianisation to take pressure off uniformed police officers, as well as various other efficiency measures.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Change Management Team was created to produce and monitor the programme for change in the Police Service. While the Team was initially confronted with an extremely complex challenge of integrating an internally driven list of managerial goals with the recommendations of the Independent Commission, the assistance of civilian advisors allowed the Team to manage the consolidation of a number of goals and objectives, while also permitting the Team to clarify its processes and focus attention on the most critical issues. The current Plan for Change is inclusive of overarching aims, performance indicators, targets for achievement and an eight-part programme including elements of: Shared Values; Style; Staff; Skills; Communications, Marketing and Image; Structures; Information Systems; and Systems Finance. The Change Management Team has engaged in a continuing process of renewal and has most recently launched an audit process to measure progress and identify issues in need of attention.

The Police Service approved a new Annual Performance Review system consistent with the UK competency framework. Unfortunately the process of review and endorsement essential to satisfy the monitoring function of the Policing Board resulted in a delay in implementation, which is now scheduled for April of 2003. Nonetheless, the new system is built on a standardised platform, and includes factors essential to the human rights objectives of the Police Service.

A system providing the means for Regional Assistant Chief Constables to evaluate and hold District Commanders accountable for their conduct and objectives has been developed. These will not be implemented until September/October of 2002. However, as pointed out previously, an accountability system such as that envisioned by the Police Service is only meaningful if District Commanders are provided with the requisite personnel and delegated authorities with which to meet their own goals. As yet these have not been provided. The criteria and methodology of the accountability system were designed with the assistance of Analytical Services and is unique to the PSNI. It includes a variety of quantifiable indicators to measure progress against the goals established by the Policing Plan, with provision for administrative as well as local goals.

The Independent Commission recommended that police managers use random checks as a way to monitor the behaviour of police officers in dealing with the public and ensuring integrity. A Professional Standards Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, was created to oversee integrity issues. In July of 2002 the Professional Standards Committee approved an Integrity and Professional Standards Strategy. The Police Ombudsman has designated a senior member of staff to sit on this Committee.

A substantial fund was established by the Government to help injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families, as well as police widows. The Widows' Association was provided with an office on police premises, and a source of finance adequate to run their organisation. The structures, systems and funding to fulfil this commitment are now in place.

#### Areas of Concern

The Independent Commission recommended that District Commanders should have fully devolved authority over the deployment of personnel within their command, devolved budgets (excluding salary budgets), and authority to purchase a range of goods and services, and also finance local policing initiatives. The regional accountability structure that has been developed must be balanced against the requirement for DCUs to be fully staffed with appropriate forms of administrative and other support. District Commanders require a full range of appropriate devolved authorities to enable them to deliver on policing with the community, and problem solving to meet the needs of their local communities.

Full devolution of authority is currently on hold due, among other things, to the inability of the Police Service to staff certain administrative positions. These are Business Manager and Personnel Manager positions. As of September of 2002, only 9 of the 12 larger DCUs were staffed with Business Managers, and just 6 of 20 smaller commands were similarly staffed, with 4 having to share their Business Managers. However, Business Managers are only one of the administrative positions that need to be staffed in order for DCU Commanders to be able to function as intended. As yet, none of the Personnel Manager positions have been filled.

While the Police Service attributes the cause to various reasons ranging from inadequate salary levels, insufficient funding, to the lack of qualified candidates, it is notable that a similar lack of progress marks the response to another recommendation of the Independent Commission for a rigorous programme of civilianisation of most positions which do not require police powers, training, or experience. In this instance, some 260 positions identified as priorities for civilianisation in 2000 remain staffed by police officers. Civilianising these positions has a number of important benefits, most importantly the freeing-up of uniformed police officers who could be far more valuably deployed in operational roles. The Policing Board has undertaken a thorough review of all human resource issues within the Police Service, and progress on civilianisation will both empower District Commanders to fulfil the purpose of devolution, and free up police resources for operational duties.

As noted by the Independent Commission in Recommendation 80, an important aspect of internal accountability is the identification and use of trend information, including on public complaints, with which to counsel and assist police officers. The development and use of employee "early warning systems" as a management tool is considered a common best practice, particularly in policing. Their use and effectiveness was specifically confirmed and supported by the select IACP panel in July of 2002. However, the Police Service has not provided any evidence that trend information supplied by the Police Ombudsman is being utilised and followed up by management as intended by the Independent Commission, nor that guidance has been drawn up that will allow managers to use this information correctly and effectively.



The Police Service continues to experience unusually high levels of sickness absence compared to other UK police services. The Policing Board reported on sick day targets set by the former Police Authority. In its Annual Report 2001-2002, the Policing Board reported that the average number of sick days for 2001/2002, for uniformed and civilian staff, was 23.4 and 15.8 days respectively. The Policing Board has set new targets for 2002/2003 of 18.5 and 14 days respectively. A PSNI policy issued in 2001 places significant responsibility at the DCU level for managing cases and monitoring daily reports of sickness and injury. A system of case counselling was introduced linking Commanders with Occupational Health professionals. District Commanders appear to be fully engaged with this issue, but indicators continue to chart high, even rising levels of sickness absence. The inability of the Police Service to address this problem will not only reduce the number of police officers available for patrol but will have a wider impact, such as on policing with the community programmes.

▶▶ information technology



## Background

The Independent Commission recommended an urgent, independent and in-depth strategic review of the use of information technology (IT) 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 three to five years.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Information Systems Strategy 2000/1-2004/5 designed to deliver integrated technology systems readily available to all staff, was approved in 2001, accompanied by an independent evaluation by an expert on information strategy and planning. Funding estimates for IT plans were approved by the Government. A comprehensive list of objectives was provided together with detailed time lines. An updated strategy included the following list of projects and target dates, to be implemented by March 2003:

- (1) the widespread availability of word processing and other standard desktop computing capabilities including e-mail;
- (2) a Police Service intranet;
- (3) an integrated Crime Information System reporting; and,
- (4) other crime analysis tools (e.g. crime mapping).

## Areas of Concern

The future focus of this initiative is on the mission critical components of the strategy outlined above. However, in the opinion of the independent validator there remain critical issues which must be addressed to ensure success. These include:

- (1) provision of funding;
- (2) the availability of specialist human resources;
- (3) implementation of the systems integration project;
- (4) calculation and monitoring of risk; and,
- (5) particular attention must be paid to the interdependencies between the various implementation projects.

Staffing remains a critical factor. The PSNI is contracting out as much of the work as possible through the use of outside service providers. However, a large element of the programme must be managed internally and at last report, Information and Communication Services are carrying 36 vacancies. Consultants are assisting with a risk assessment as part of an overall PSNI risk management report contract. User training is a feature of the training and development strategy, but it appears that training will lack the capacity to begin. Support and Information Services Department has taken the lead for early initiatives.

There is a continuing risk of proceeding with the implementation of revamped IT systems while actual organisational practices in many operational and administrative areas are undergoing re-design. There is also a concern for competing demands for managerial energy related to implementing the new digital trunked radio system scheduled to go live by February of 2004.

An assessment by the independent validator expressed concerns regarding the speed of implementation. The Police Service cited staffing procedures and the administrative time occupied by preparing business cases as factors influencing the pace of change. These issues will bear watching as various target dates in the plan become effective in late 2002 and early 2003.





▶▶ structure of the police service



## Background

The Independent Commission recommended re-structuring 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 (FTR) and the concomitant enlargement of the Part Time Reserve (PTR).

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service has made progress with early initiatives in modifying the structures of the organisation. Twenty-nine new District Commands were created in April of 2001, the Divisional layer of management and regional Headquarters were removed, and the post of Deputy Assistant Chief Constable was deleted. However, devolution of authority to District Commanders is incomplete, which in turn affects progress on the establishment of local goals with the community. The establishment of the District Policing Partnerships will be delayed until at least January of 2003.

With respect to Special Branch and Crime Branch reporting to a single Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), as of 1 April 2001 these two branches came under the command of a single ACC. A fuller organisational amalgamation of Special Branch and Crime Branch became effective on 1 September 2002, and is now called Crime Department. The ACC in charge of Crime Department is directly responsible for six branches and a departmental support unit. A new system designed to improve security briefings for DCU Commanders was put in place. Several of the DCU Commanders interviewed also verified that they have been made aware of the availability of specialised assets and the procedures with which they must be requested. Statistical data provided by the Crime Department indicates that support for non-national security operations to the DCUs has increased in 2002 compared to 2000. Finally, in consultation with the Government and the Police Service, the Policing Board determined an end-date for the Full Time Reserve. However, the enlargement of the Part Time Reserve has not yet occurred.

## Areas of Concern

In recommendations 98, 99, 100, 101 and 102 the Independent Commission commented specifically on issues relating to the role of Special Branch as part of the proposed changes to the policing of Northern Ireland. The essence of the recommendations is based on the recognition that the potential existed for an increase in violent crime, and that experiences elsewhere showed that a decrease in paramilitary-related crime was frequently followed by an increase in organised crime activity. Unfortunately, the Independent Commission's projection in this regard has become reality, particularly with rapidly developing organised crime groups controlling smuggling, extortion and drug trafficking throughout Northern Ireland.

It should come as no surprise that some of these groups, having been well-schooled in covert activities and the application of violence and terror, have found such skills readily transferable to other activities. A number of the individuals involved have become wealthy by controlling the drug trade and extortion rackets, all at the expense of the citizens of Northern Ireland. Having anticipated this, the Independent Commission's recommendations focus on having Special Branch utilise its considerable skills and experience to address the emerging threat of organised crime, and the violent criminal activity that invariably follows. This in no way implies that there is not also a need to maintain a relevant counter-terrorist capability. The Oversight Commissioner recognises the need to balance the sometimes competing interests between combating crime and dealing with terrorism, and has considered these important responsibilities in our evaluations.

There is clearly a need for a well-resourced, well-trained and fully supported intelligence capacity in order to deal with the threat of terrorism to national security. If anything, the threats to individual citizens and nations by extremely dangerous terrorists has increased dramatically over the past decade and unfortunately, violent and horrific terrorist acts once considered unthinkable have now become commonplace.

However, the lack of sufficient progress on fulfilling the Independent Commission's intent of actually bringing the resources of Special Branch together with those of Crime Branch continues to remain a concern. Although the role of the Oversight Commissioner in evaluating the progress on implementing recommendations pertaining to Special Branch is limited when compared to the more detailed reviews of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, or of Commissioner Stevens, it has become increasingly obvious that the co-ordination between Special Branch and other units of the Police Service required by the recommendations has yet to occur in the manner envisioned by the Independent Commission.

The oversight team first identified the need for a strategy, plans and policies that would be utilised to achieve the amalgamation of Special Branch and Crime Branch in performance indicators published in September of 2001. As pointed out in our previous reports, in May and September of 2002, the plans submitted by the PSNI in response to our requests were limited and did not fulfil the Independent Commission's intent. As a result, the Oversight Commissioner submitted supplemental requests, and conducted personal meetings with senior officials of the PSNI to emphasise the need for a plan that would meet requirements for the better co-ordination of resources.

It has been the position of the PSNI that because there were a number of external reviews being conducted involving Special Branch issues, they would not provide the revised strategy as requested by the Oversight Commissioner. The PSNI expressed a concern that it would not be appropriate to prepare any additional plans until reviewing the conclusions and guidance of these external reviews. The Policing Board agreed in principle, however requested that the PSNI provide a revised plan by November of 2002. When the PSNI first advised the Oversight Commissioner of the reasons for not responding to our supplemental requests, it was operating on the assumption that the external reviews would be concluded in time to permit a revised plan to be made available in November of 2002.



Unfortunately, the Stevens Inquiry will now not be completed until the Spring of 2003, at the earliest. If the PSNI were to continue to postpone any changes or revisions to the proposals for the improved co-ordination of Special Branch and other units of PSNI until after the release of the report of the Stevens Inquiry in the Spring of 2003, it will require that an objective oversight review of the changes would also have to be delayed until the Autumn of 2003. At present the term of the Oversight Commissioner is scheduled to conclude on 31 May 2003, which would effectively mean that there would be no oversight review of the Police Service's plans and strategies to implement the Independent Commission's recommendations for Special Branch.

We are aware of the Police Service's concerns in addressing the change progress for integrating Special Branch with Crime Branch, in the context of a number of external reviews. However, the recent review of Special Branch by HMIC, as requested by the Policing Board, may provide the proper context for the PSNI to submit a plan that fulfils the Independent Commission's intent. The HMIC review, released in November of 2002, recommended the improved sharing of intelligence within the Police Service. The Policing Board, in another outstanding example of a professional and consistent approach to ensuring police accountability, supported the HMIC's recommendations. The initial review of the HMIC's recent report point to a well-researched, professional set of recommendations that are entirely consistent with best practices.

It is important to note that the Independent Commission, in an attempt to deal with the growing threat of violent and organised crime, was clear in its intent to increase the sharing of resources and appropriate information between Special Branch and Crime Branch, as well as between Special Branch and other units of the PSNI. The policing experts assigned to the Oversight Commissioner recognised that the PSNI plans submitted in January of 2002 for evaluation did not fulfil the intent of the Independent Commission, regarding the need for an improved strategy for sharing the resources and intelligence information of Special Branch with other units of the PSNI. This opinion was shared by the select panel of police executives from the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The recent HMIC review report noted above, and the acceptance of its recommendations by the Policing Board, clearly point the way toward enhancing the provision of policing to the people of Northern Ireland.

Finally, the Independent Commission also recommended a slimmer structure at police headquarters, one that reflected a shift of focus towards community policing and the delegation of responsibility to District Commanders. The Policing Plan 2002-2005 commits the Police Service to this goal. A review team appointed by the Police Service developed a plan approved by the Chief Constable's Policy Meeting, provided in January of 2002, which was transformed into a Strategic Work Programme. This in turn was made available in April of 2002. It was learned in September of 2002 that no substantial action had been taken on this plan, pending its review by the newly appointed Chief Constable. Irrespective of the need for this review, the perception of a fully staffed Headquarters at a time when front line operations are stretched beyond capacity because of public disorder and community policing priorities is a concern.

▶▶ size of the police service



## Background

The Independent Commission compared the strength of the Northern Ireland 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 could 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 also the eventual phasing out of the Full Time Reserve.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service has expeditiously implemented the proposed severance arrangements recommended by the Independent Commission, for both regular officers and members of the Full Time Reserve (FTR). To date, of a total of 2,705 police officers eligible for severance, 1,700 have applied. In addition, of a total of 638 members of the FTR eligible for severance, 264 have applied.

A complete set of policies, directives, documents, and booklets has been used by the Voluntary Service Support Unit to assist in the administration of the severance arrangements. It was determined that members of the FTR are treated as far as possible in the same way as regular police officers. Solid work by all concerned has resulted in severance arrangements being placed on a fast track, even though associated Police Regulations still remain to be adopted.

Following a report to the Policing Board by the Chief Constable regarding staff shortages, especially of experienced officers at all ranks, and associated impacts on service delivery, the Board approved a proposal to suspend the severance programme for one year. The Northern Ireland Office was asked to allow the programme to continue until 2010, or an earlier date if severance had by then achieved its objectives. In order to improve on severance arrangements, the Northern Ireland Office is currently conducting a review of the first three years of the severance programme. The results of this review, including the controls put in place by the Policing Board and Police Service, meet the intent of the Independent Commission.

In professionally fulfilling its monitoring role, the Policing Board recognised the priority of the human resources issue, and the urgent need to address patrol capacity. In considering the issue of reduced patrol strength, the Policing Board instructed the Police Service to:

- (1) review the number of officers and reservists assigned to security posts;
- (2) review the management of severance arrangements;
- (3) manage high levels of sick leave;
- (4) address civilianisation;
- (5) review the number of police officers assigned to Headquarters;
- (6) review ill health retirements; and,
- (7) review the number of police officers on overseas secondments.

In response, the Police Service submitted an initial plan listing the following actions to be taken over the next 3 years:

- (1) reducing the sickness levels to 450 officers per day;
- (2) optimisation of 750 security posts;
- (3) civilianisation of 600 police positions; and,
- (4) short-term adjustment in the timing of officers leaving under the severance provisions.

#### **Areas of Concern**

Ensuring adequate policing resources for Northern Ireland is an important issue. The Independent Commission recognised that the Chief Constable should have some discretion as to the exact numbers of police officers and civilians to be employed. The Independent Commission also recognised the importance of the security environment, making its projections contingent on a number of issues, including the state of the peace process. It has also been publicly reported that patrol strength is a concern. This concern should be seen against actual projections made by the Independent Commission. These were that, following a low of just over 7,100 police officers in 2002/2003, police numbers would stabilise at around 7,500.

The Independent Commission projected that in Year 3 of its calculations, or by fiscal year 2002/2003, the Police Service would have 7,116 regular police officers available for duty. The Independent Commission also projected that by 2002/2003 the Police Service would have phased out the Full Time Reserve. As of 30 September 2002, the Police Service had approximately 6,970 regular police officers at its disposal, as well as approximately 1,970 members of the Full Time Reserve. The total number of officers available for duty is approximately 8,940.

The Progress and Accomplishment section notes that the severance programme was expeditiously implemented by the Police Service, permitting a large number of police officers to leave in a relatively short period of time. This was particularly the case with respect to more experienced officers. The Police Service has stated that it now faces a severe lack of experienced officers, and that service levels are necessarily affected. However, it was not evident that police officers with specific and required skills, needed either for continuity or to provide a minimum service level, had their early retirement or severance packages disapproved, nor that there was a limit placed on the authorised number of officers allowed to leave under severance. Moreover, initiatives which might have served to relieve this pressure, including the reassignment of police officers currently posted to headquarters, and a more determined civilianisation drive, have not been thoroughly pursued.

In dealing with reduced patrol capacity, the Police Service has stated that in many instances, it was only able to provide emergency call response. However, as has been noted both by ourselves and by the Policing Board, factors which might have helped the Police Service to deliver day-to-day policing, and to respond to major crime inquiries, have not been addressed, including reducing high levels of sickness absence, and reassigning police officers presently in administrative positions.





▶▶ composition and recruitment



## Background

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland envisaged a police service that is representative of and supported by the community it serves. A key component necessary to achieve a representative 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 in this chapter 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.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Northern Ireland Office, Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman, who regularly interact with the Police Service, have each established plans and practices to ensure that their staffs are diversified to the degree possible and consistent with applicable legislation.

The Police Service, consistent with the legislative authority provided in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, contracted with the Consensia Partnership, an independent recruitment agency, in January of 2001 for the recruitment of police officers. It also established an internal project team to coordinate recruitment, and the team engages in regular consultation with Consensia on competition planning, quality assurance of assessment procedures, co-ordination of vetting, and other recruitment-related matters. Consensia began the first recruitment campaign in March of 2001, and has since completed two additional campaigns.

The recruitment programme is well designed, aggressive, and meets contemporary policing standards. The recruitment advertising scheme in each campaign has been extensive and designed to reach groups who are under-represented, with an objective of ensuring that the composition of the Police Service is representative of the community it serves. The scheme has included press, television and on-line advertising covering Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. Consensia received 38,819<sup>1</sup> inquiries for information packs, which resulted in the receipt of 17,103 applications for the three campaigns.

The selection process includes a revised standard of merit, lay involvement, and the revision of other selection criteria. These were approved by the Chief Constable and are consistent with other police services in the United Kingdom. Applicants are required to meet nine core competencies and stringent medical standards, and complete a job-related physical competency assessment. The Secretary of State has appointed an independent assessor to validate disqualification decisions in cases where an applicant is aggrieved. The Policing Board has ratified the appointment of an Independent Member to the Chief Constable's Vetting Panel.

<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise noted, all data in this chapter are provided by Consensia, dated 30 July 2002.

The selection process, using job-related but stringent standards, has proven successful and is producing a merit pool of male and female applicants, from which an equal number of Catholics and non-Catholics are appointed to training. Over three recruiting campaigns Consensia has received 17,103 applications which, following a rigorous selection process, resulted in a merit pool of 1,519 individuals. Since November of 2001, the Police Service has appointed a total of 388 applicants from the merit pool to eight training classes. These recruit intakes have included 197 Catholics, or 50.8%, and 191 non-Catholics, or 49.2%. Of this group of recruits 131, or 33.7%, were women. The average age of the recruits appointed to the Police Service since the commencement of the new recruitment programme is 29 years for men, and 28 years for women.

The success of the selection process can be attributed to the close working relationship that has developed between the Police Service and the Consensia Partnership, and the participation of the lay assessors who have demonstrated dedication and attention to duty. In addition, following each competition, Consensia carefully evaluates the results at each step of the selection process. As a consequence, they have improved administrative processes - now expediting notices of testing following application - modified the medical process to reduce the cost to applicants, streamlined the medical appeals process, and made improvements in the assessment centre component. The Police Service Human Resource Strategy, approved by the Policing Board in September of 2002, recommends that Consensia organise the recruitment competitions for each March and September. In addition, it notes that the physical competency assessment and the assessment centre process are being independently reviewed.

The Police Service recognises the importance of developing interest in policing among young adults. In this regard, it continues to organise work experience schemes in schools, and have career advisers attend career fairs seeking increased community support and long-term recruitment opportunities. The work experience programme in particular is seeing increasing interest. For example, during the past year, 157 out of a total of 261 schools participated in the programme, up from 142 the previous year. This is a long-term programme however, and comprehensive results will not be known for some time.

The support of the community is also essential to the recruitment of a diversified and representative Police Service. In this regard, statements made by public officials, including at ministerial level, along with those made by church leaders encouraging young adults from all communities to join the Police Service, are beneficial and helpful. In addition, the Gaelic Athletic Association's removal of its ban on PSNI officers becoming members was warmly welcomed.



### Areas of Concern

The Independent Commission envisaged a Police Service, consisting of both police officers and civilians, that was representative of the entire community. The continued success of the recruitment programme in attracting applicants that are representative of the community, is dependent on the encouragement of broadly-based cross-community support. Although support has been forthcoming from many, it has not been forthcoming from all segments of the community. There have been refusals to accept, and requests to remove, recruitment advertising, as well as open discouragement from applying to the PSNI. In addition, some new recruits have been openly discouraged from remaining with the Police Service. These actions serve as an impediment to the development of a Police Service that is representative of the community it serves, as envisaged by the Independent Commission. A lack of cross-community support will never permit a truly representative Police Service from coming into being, will hamper attempts at establishing effective community policing, and will ultimately prevent the full transformation of policing in Northern Ireland as intended by the Independent Commission.

Although the Police Service is making significant strides in terms of the recruitment of police officers, it has been slow to develop a more comprehensive plan or strategy to ensure a more representative civilian workforce as well. There has essentially been little or no recruitment of civilian staff as envisaged by the Independent Commission. At a point in time when there are resource issues, one of the quickest ways these would be addressed is by the use of civilians in posts currently occupied by police officers.

The current community background ratio for Police Service civilian staff is 13% Catholic and 87% non-Catholic. For those seconded from the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the breakdown is 12% Catholic and 88% non-Catholic. An independent agent for civilian recruitment to the Police Service has now been selected. On 28 July 2002, following a competitive tendering process, Grafton Recruitment was granted a three year contract, during which time it is charged with the recruitment of permanent and temporary civilian staff, consistent with the Independent Commission's recommendations. In late August of 2002, there were active competitions for trainee police analysts and administrative assistants, in which the 50:50 rule applied.

Consistent with the notion of openness and transparency, the Independent Commission recommended the registration of notifiable memberships. Although the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides the necessary authority, this relatively straightforward recommendation has not been implemented. In fact, this process has suffered repeated delays since it was first introduced in September of 2000.

▶▶ training, education and development



## Background

The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland addressed the subject of the training, education and development of police officers at some length, and focussed on the restructuring of this critical area as being pivotal for a successful transformation of policing in Northern Ireland.

The Independent Commission recommended the development of a Training, Education and Development (TED) Strategy for both recruit and in-service training programmes. The TED Strategy was to clearly demonstrate the inter-connection between the overall aims of the Report of the Independent Commission, and the objectives and priorities set out in future policing plans.

The Independent Commission 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 the police service. The new police college was seen as the cornerstone to providing police recruits, as well as seasoned police officers and civilian personnel, with an environment conducive to the development of all employees, and to the learning of modern policing techniques.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

Following its review of and amendment to the Police Service's Training, Education and Development Primary Reference Document, the Policing Board endorsed the Primary Reference Document on 4 April of 2002. This forms the basis of the Police Service's overall training strategy, and focuses on nine core themes. These include human rights, professional standards and ethics, community policing, problem solving, health and safety, and best practice among others.

The Foundation Faculty has developed a comprehensive training programme for police recruits and probationary constables. Since the first recruit class was inducted in November of 2001, the Police College had graduated 288 police recruits by 30 September 2002. The Foundation Faculty curriculum for student officers is accredited by the University of Ulster, and successful candidates are awarded a University of Ulster Certificate in Policing Studies. The programme allows successful candidates to upgrade to a Diploma, which also equates to one third of a university degree.

The Trainer Development Unit has successfully completed the first training course for police and civilian trainers. The new Tutor Training Programme is also considered a notable success, with over 120 experienced, serving police officers being trained through the Tutor Programme. Other experienced police officers are receiving the tutor training on an ongoing basis. In addition, tutor supervisors are in place and are responsible for the programme's quality assurance. Interviews and field visits with student officers, tutor constables and trainers in the Tutor Programme indicate that this programme has been enthusiastically received, and is extremely popular with participants.

The Policing Board is continuing to fulfil a crucial monitoring role, and has established an effective communications link with the Police College through the Board's Personnel and General Purposes Committee. The Police College has also established an exchange programme with An Garda Síochána, for the exchange of training personnel. The Police Service has launched an open competition for the position of its Head of Training College. This position is being widely advertised and is open to civilian applicants.

### Areas of Concern

The construction of a new police college has unfortunately shown few signs of real progress. As we have pointed out in previous reports, a new college is critical due to its impact on the future of the Police Service and as a path to the new beginning envisaged by the Independent Commission. The importance of this recommendation was first noted by the Independent Commission in September of 1999. The Commission also noted that current classroom, residential accommodation and specialist training facilities were inadequate to meet the future needs of the Police Service, in that physical limitations would have an impact on the capacity of training, both for recruits and serving police officers. Although preliminary work has been done to determine the potential for contracting out certain courses, a long-term cost/benefit analysis should indicate that temporary arrangements to cover the PSNI's training needs would ultimately result in greater costs than a dedicated effort to construct a purpose-built training facility for the Police Service's own use.

In addition to recommending the construction of a new police college, the Independent Commission also recommended that the Police Service make more effective use of other training and development opportunities. The Independent Commission proposed closer cooperation with other training institutions, both as a way to alleviate pressure on the Police Service's existing facilities, and to allow for greater interaction between police officers and members of the community. However, although the University of Ulster has helped develop, and is delivering courses at PSNI facilities, the use of outside facilities has never been utilised to its full potential.

The lack of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) remains a serious concern. Without a comprehensive TNA, it will be difficult to establish the broad training needs of DCUs. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive TNA impedes the development of a fully costed, organisational training budget. In the absence of a comprehensive TNA the entire Training, Education and Development Strategy can also not be implemented. In addition, the Independent Commission noted the importance of linking policing objectives to the identification of training and development needs. Only the completion of a comprehensive TNA will permit the identification of in-service training demands critical to the achievement of the Police Service's objectives.

Another issue impacted by the lack of a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis is the development and completion of Service Level Agreements between the Police Service's training function and DCU Commanders. The Independent Commission initially recommended both the structural decentralisation of the Police Service and the attendant devolution of authority to District Commanders. Devolution was to be sustained in part through Service Level Agreements with Headquarters support departments, including training, which would allow DCUs the flexibility to determine their own training needs and priorities. These would flow from a DCU's particular policing circumstances, and would ultimately allow for a more effective use of organisational training resources.

Structural decentralisation was achieved on 1 April 2001, with the creation of 29 District Command Units. However, Service Level Agreements have yet to be concluded. Without the agreements and the support of Headquarters departments, decentralisation will be delayed and District-based policing objectives, particularly those aimed at community policing, will not be fully met. Lack of training in Neighbourhood Policing in particular, will impact on the Police Service's policing with the community commitments.

The Independent Commission recommended in 1999 that, as soon as possible, all members of the Police Service be instructed concerning the impact of the new constitutional arrangements on policing for Northern Ireland, the policing arrangements recommended by the Independent Commission, and the reforms of the criminal justice system. As of 30 September 2002 this had not yet been implemented. The Independent Commission also recommended that, as a matter of priority, all members of the Police Service should be instructed in the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on policing. We have noted previously that the Police Service has made significant progress in integrating human rights into its recruit training programme.

However, as of 30 September 2002, the integration of human rights dimensions into every training module, for serving police officers and for civilian staff, as recommended by the Independent Commission as a "matter of priority", had not been accomplished. The Police Service has prepared and is delivering a Course for All, for police and civilian staff, that is intended to meet the following objectives: instruct employees on the new constitutional arrangements, the nature and scope of the Independent Commission's recommendation, the new foundation of human rights in policing, and issues regarding police-community relations.

As of 30 September 2002, the Course for All curriculum had not been provided, and we were unable to evaluate the content. However, the course objectives are ambitious and our experience shows that dealing with material of this complexity, and to the required level of detail, does not seem feasible in the two days allotted to the course.

The roll-out of the Course for All ultimately depends on the restructured District training model and District Training Officers for delivery. However, District training units are still only at the developmental stage, and only a limited number of District Training Officers have been assigned to DCUs. Not only does this hamper the actual roll-out of the course, but also makes the coordination of organisational training needs difficult. Completed Service Level Agreements would have surfaced these concerns at an earlier stage.

The lack of progress in addressing the issue of public attendance at police training sessions remains a concern. The Independent Commission intended that public participation in the development and delivery of the Police Service's training programme be an ongoing process, fully integrated into the way in which individual courses, both for recruits and serving police officers, were developed and refined. Finally, the practice of doubling the District Trainer Officer's workload, by making this individual responsible for two districts, may ultimately prove untenable. This issue was raised as a concern by a number of individuals involved in the PSNI's training programme. This also highlights the benefits of appropriate civilianisation in the PSNI's training area, among others.



▶▶ culture, ethos and symbols



### **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.

### **Review of Progress and Achievements**

The symbolic significance of recommendations in the Chapter is readily apparent. Careful and diligent work on the part of the Policing Board, combined with sound planning and logistical control by the Police Service, resulted in a critical early success to the new beginning envisaged by the Independent Commission. The change of name came into effect on 4 November 2001, with the badge and flags being changed on 5 April 2002. The complete change of uniform was completed in a single day, on 5 April 2002.

A police memorial policy was established and a Garden of Remembrance is funded and under construction. An order was issued to introduce policy for a neutral working environment, and audits were completed for all police installations.

### **Areas of Concern**

As of 30 September 2002, the Police Service had not yet provided a final General Order on a neutral working environment. However, this in no way reflects on the diligence and efficiency with which other recommendations in this chapter were implemented.

▶▶ co-operation with other police services



## Background

The Independent Commission was asked to make proposals concerning the scope for structured cooperation with An Garda Síochána and other police services. The Independent Commission 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.

## Review of Progress and Accomplishments

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has contributed in an exemplary fashion to United Nations missions around the world. The Inter-Governmental Agreement was signed by representatives of the British and Irish Governments on 29 April 2002. The first annual conference between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána was held in April of 2002 at the Garda training facility in Templemore. Structured training links have been established and joint disaster planning is proceeding.

An Garda Síochána is piloting a similar digital Tetra radio system in the Greater Dublin area, which could in the long run enhance existing communications with the PSNI. The PSNI have been involved in several peacekeeping missions, although these have been recently limited due to resourcing issues. Secondments of predominantly senior police officers to other police services are taking place, however there is limited secondment into the PSNI.

## Areas of Concern

Although there appear to be informal contacts between the PSNI and police training facilities in Ireland, England, and Scotland, the PSNI has not yet developed collaboration agreements with those institutions which cover issues such as faculty exchanges and joint in-service training. The development of meaningful collaboration with other police training facilities and institutions may require additional staffing.

The Police Service also needs to develop its capacity to draw on the experience of police services from around the world, which are confronted with similar problems, and then determine best practices. This is especially true of police services in Europe and North America. Responsibility for this has been given to the newly relocated Research Unit. The general theme is one of expressed good intentions, at all levels, to increase structured co-operation, but no accomplishment.

Despite the signing of an Inter-Governmental Agreement noted above, current legal advice maintains that legislation is required to give effect to the expressed intent of greater co-operation between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána. This is not expected until 2003. The impact of an absence of a structured framework is that intentions can not be given the full effect recommended by the Independent Commission. One example is the lack of formal exchanges of police officers into and out of the PSNI from An Garda Síochána.

▶▶ appendix



DEGREE OF PROGRESS	DEFINITIONS	EVALUATION STAGES
<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>(Final results achieved)</p>	<p>Policies and directives that meet the intent of the Independent Commission Recommendation have been fully developed. The directives have been fully disseminated throughout the organisation. Field evaluations have determined that the directives are being adhered to as required. In the case of some of the completed recommendations, the appropriate Institution (PSNI, HMIC, Policing Board, Ombudsman) will in all probability audit compliance in the future.</p>	<p><b>All Stages Complete</b></p>
<p><b>Substantial Progress</b></p> <p>(Majority results achieved)</p>	<p>Policies or directives are developed, communicated and already into the implementation phases. Field visits and interviews demonstrate wide-spread understanding of changes spelled out in policies or directives. Analysis and evaluation confirm the effectiveness of policies or directives. Verification reveals preliminary adherence in a significant manner.</p>	<p><b>Evaluation &amp; Verification</b></p>
<p><b>Moderate Progress</b></p> <p>(Some results achieved)</p>	<p>There has been significant progress on the development of policies or directives. The proposed policies generally meet the intent of the Independent Commission Recommendation. The policies and directives have reportedly been disseminated. Initial field evaluations demonstrate a limited level of knowledge, or required follow-up action.</p>	<p><b>Evaluation &amp; Verification</b></p>
<p><b>Limited Progress</b></p> <p>(Results not achieved)</p>	<p>There has been some progress on the development of policies or directives. The proposed policy may partially meet the intent of the Independent Commission Recommendation, but is deficient in significant areas. Although the policies and directives have reportedly been disseminated, field evaluations reveal a lack of knowledge, or required follow-up accountability.</p>	<p><b>Administration &amp; Evaluation</b></p>
<p><b>Minimal Progress</b></p> <p>(Results not achieved)</p>	<p>The development of the plans, policies or orders required to initiate the change process has not been completed. In some cases, the plans and policies have been developed but they do not fulfil the intent of the recommendation. There is little or no communication or dissemination of policies across the organisation and/or no obvious means or methods of implementing a policy or directive.</p>	<p><b>Administration</b></p>

## Human Rights

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
1. Human Rights Based Approach to Policing			✓		
2. New Police Oath (a) New Recruits (b) Existing Officers	✓			✓	
3. Code of Ethics		✓			
4. Human Rights Training (a) New Recruits (b) Regular Officers		✓		✓	
5. Appraisal of Human Rights Performance				✓	
6. Appointment of Lawyer with Human Rights Expertise	✓				
7. Monitoring Human Rights Performance				✓	



## Accountability

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
8. Creation of Policing Board	✓				
9. Policing Board to Hold Chief Constable Publicly to Account	✓				
10. Policing Board to Set Objectives and Priorities over a 3 to 5 Year Period	✓				
11. Policing Board to Adopt an Annual Policing Plan	✓				
12. Policing Board to negotiate Annual Policing Budget	✓				
13. Monitoring Police Performance	✓				
14. Policing Board Role in Police Appointments	✓				
15. Policing Board Co-ordination with Other Agencies	✓				
16. Policing Board to have 19 Members, 10 of whom should be Assembly Members	✓				
17. The Nine Independent Members of the Board to be selected from a Range of Different Fields	✓				
18. Independent Members of the Board to be Appointed by Secretary of State, in Consultation with First and Deputy First Ministers	✓				
19. A Board Member to be Appointed by Secretary of State to be First Chairman of the Board	✓				
20. Devolution of Responsibility for Policing to Northern Ireland Executive					✓
21. Powers of the Policing Board to Continue					✓
22. Simplification of Roles in Tripartite Arrangement	✓				
23. Repeal of Power to Issue Guidance to the Police	✓				
24. Chief Constable deemed to have Operational Responsibility				✓	
25. Policing Board to have Power to Require Chief Constable to Report on any Issue		✓			
26. Policing Board to have Power to Initiate Inquiries		✓			
27. Creation of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)			✓		
28. Arrangements for Belfast			✓		



## Accountability

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
29. Monthly meetings between DPPs and District Commanders				✓	
30. DPPs to submit an Annual Plan to District Councils				✓	
31. Administration Costs of DPPs			✓		
32. Expenditure by DPPs					✓
33. Consultative Forums at Local Level				✓	
34. Contacts Between Policing Board and DPPs				✓	
35. Meetings of the Policing Board		✓			
36. Meetings of the DPPs				✓	
37. Openness of the Police Service				✓	
38. Role of the Police Ombudsman		✓			
39. New Covert Policing Legislation Compliant with European Convention on Human Rights		✓			
40. Commissioner for Covert Law Enforcement	✓				
41. Complaints Tribunal for Cases Involving Covert Law Enforcement Operations		✓			
42. Strengthening of Financial Accountability			✓		
43. Designation of Chief Constable as Sub-Accounting Officer		✓			



## Policing with the Community

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
44. Community Policing as a Core Function			✓		
45. Dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams				✓	
46. Service in Neighbourhood Policing Teams				✓	
47. Police Probationary Training				✓	
48. Patrolling on Foot				✓	
49. Role of Neighbourhood Policing Teams				✓	
50. Crime and Complaint Pattern Analysis			✓		
51. Attendance at Police Training Courses					✓

## Policing in a Peaceful Society

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
52. Appearance of New Police Stations					✓
53. (a) Renovation of Police Station Reception Areas (b) Civilian Receptionists				✓	✓
54. Devolved Authority of District Commanders				✓	
55. Replacement of Armoured Landrovers with Police Cars as Patrol Vehicles				✓	
56. Movement of Armoured Landrovers to Depots				✓	
57. "Police" to be Painted on the Side of all Landrovers		✓			
58. Army Support-Security Demands			✓		
59. Army Support-Public Order Demands		✓			
60. Emergency Legislation		✓			
61. Records on the Use of Emergency Powers			✓		
62. Holding Centres		✓			
63. Video Recording in PACE Custody Suites			✓		
64. Inspection of Custody and Interrogation Suites		✓			
65. Objective of an Unarmed Police Service				✓	



## Public Order Policing

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
66. Public Order Emergencies				✓	
67. Provision of Marshals by Organisers of Parades				✓	
68. Development of Marshal Training				✓	
69. Investment in Research into Alternatives to PBRs		✓			
70. Police to be Equipped with a Broader Range of Public Order Equipment				✓	
71. (a) Procedures for Use of PBRs Consistent with Rest of UK (b) Baton Training Restricted to Small Number (c) Justification for PBR Use to be Submitted to Policing Board (d) Video Recording of Incidents of Use of PBRs		✓ ✓ ✓		✓	
72. Police Officers' Identification Numbers		✓			
73. Monitoring of Police Performance in Public Order Situations by Policing Board and Police Ombudsman		✓			
74. Guidance Governing Deployment and Use of PBRs		✓			

## Management & Personnel

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
75. Police Management of Change		✓			
76. Devolved Authority of District Commanders			✓		
77. Police Appraisal System				✓	
78. Accountability of District Commanders			✓		
79. Automated Trend Identification for Complaints				✓	
80. Use of Trend Information				✓	
81. Random Checks on Officers' Behaviour				✓	
82. Ensuring High Ethical Standards				✓	
83. Tenure Policy on Police Postings				✓	
84. Officers Injured on Duty			✓		
85. Policy for Management of Long-Term Sickness Absence				✓	
86. Detailed Review of Sickness Absence				✓	
87. New Police Fund	✓				
88. Funding for Widows' Association	✓				
89. Replacement of Assistant Chief Constables	✓				
90. Rigorous Programme of Civilianisation					✓
91. Review of Police Support Services				✓	
92. Comprehensive Audit of Police Estate				✓	



## Information Technology

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
93. Development of Police IT Strategy			✓		

## Structure of the Police Service

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
94. Creation New District Commands	✓				
95. Each District Command to be Headed by a Superintendent and Sufficiently Resourced			✓		
96. Removal of Divisional Layer of Management at HQ			✓		
97. Reorganisation of Police Headquarters				✓	
98. Amalgamation of Special Branch and Crime Branch			✓		
99. Reduction of Numbers Engaged in Security Work				✓	
100. Informing District Commanders about Security Operations				✓	
101. Amalgamation of Support Units of Special Branch				✓	
102. Police Postings in Security Work				✓	
103. Phasing Out of Full Time Reserve*				✓	
104. Enlargement of Part Time Reserve					✓

\*Decision made to phase out FTR from April 2005.



## Size of the Police Service

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
105. Future Size of the Police Service			✓		
106. Severance Arrangements for Officers aged 50 or above		✓			
107. Severance Arrangements for Officers before the age of 50		✓			
108. (a) Retraining Programme for Police Officers (b) PRRT to Have a Role in this Retraining Programme		✓			✓
109. Opportunities in GB Police Forces for Reservists					✓
110. Opportunities with UN for Reservists					✓



## Composition and Recruitment

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
111. Transfer of Police Civilian Staff					✓
112. Staff of Policing Board, NIO and Police Ombudsman		✓			
113. Support from Community Leaders			✓		
114. Gaelic Athletic Association	✓				
115. Liaison with Schools			✓		
116. Pilot Police Cadet Schemes					✓
117. (a) Contracting Out Recruitment of Police Officers (b) Contracting Out Recruitment of Civilians		✓			✓
118. Recruitment Agency Advertising - in Under-represented Areas		✓			
119. Recruitment Agency Advertising - UK and Republic of Ireland		✓			
120. (a) Selection of Police Officer Recruits (b) Selection of Civilian Recruits Both to Specified Standards		✓			✓
121. Equal Number of Protestant & Catholic Appointments (a) Police Officers (b) Civilians		✓			✓
122. Opportunities for Part Time Working and Job Sharing (a) Police Officers (b) Civilians		✓			✓
123. Child Care Arrangements					✓
124. Length of Recruitment Process		✓			
125. Disqualification from Entry into Police Service		✓			



## Composition and Recruitment

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
126.Registration of Interests					✓
127.Identification of Northern Ireland Officers in other Police Forces by Recruitment Agency					✓
128.Lateral Entry of Experienced Officers					✓

## Training, Education & Development

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
129. TED Strategy (a) Recruit (b) In-service/other		✓			✓
130. Training and Development Budget				✓	
131. New Police College					✓
132. Service Level Agreements on Training				✓	
133. Civilian Input into Recruit Training				✓	
134. Training of Civilian Recruits					✓
135. Achievement of Academic Qualifications by Recruits		✓			
136. Timing of Attestation as a Constable			✓		
137. Reduction of Hours Spent on Drill	✓				
138. Problem-Solving Should be Central to Recruit Training		✓			
139. Community Awareness Training for Police Recruits		✓			
140. Tutor Officer Scheme		✓			
141. Course on Impact of New Constitutional Arrangements, New Policing Arrangements and Criminal Justice Reforms				✓	
142. Instruction in Implications of Human Rights Act 1998 (a) Recruits (b) Police Officers		✓		✓	
143. Management Training for Police Managers					✓
144. Information Technology Training				✓	
145. Joint Training with Civilians					✓
146. Neighbourhood Policing Training Programme				✓	
147. Publication of Training Curricula					✓
148. Public Attendance at Police Training Sessions					✓
149. Pilot Citizens Course					✓



## Culture, Ethos and Symbols

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
150. Name of the Police Service	✓				
151. New Police Badge	✓				
152. Flying of Union Flag	✓				
153. Flying of PSNI Flag	✓				
154. Police Uniform	✓				
155. Police Memorials		✓			
156. Neutral Working Environment		✓			

## Co-operation with other Police Services

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
157. Written Protocols Between Police Service and Garda Síochána			✓		
158. Annual Conference for Police Services in Northern Ireland and Republic		✓			
159. Personnel Exchanges					✓
160. Liaison Officers at Headquarters and Border Areas					✓
161. Co-operation in Training			✓		
162. Joint Disaster Planning			✓		
163. Exchange of Officers and Pooling of Investigative Teams after Major Incidents					✓
164. Establishment of Communications Between Garda and Northern Ireland Police				✓	
165. Joint Database Development with Garda					✓
166. Development of Exchanges Between Northern Ireland Police and Police Services in GB				✓	
167. Training Exchanges and Joint Training Between Northern Ireland Police and Police Services in GB				✓	
168. Links Between Police Training Colleges				✓	
169. Further Development of International Training Exchanges					✓
170. Development of More Training Opportunities for Overseas Police Services					✓
171. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations		✓			



## Oversight Commissioner

Chapter & Recommendation	Implementation Status				
	Rec. Completed	Substantial Progress	Moderate Progress	Limited Progress	Minimal Progress
172.Appointment of Oversight Commissioner	✓				
173.Oversight Commissioner to be provided with objectives and report on progress	✓				
174.Oversight Commissioner to report publicly after each review	✓				
175.Oversight Commissioner appointment for five years		✓			



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