



This report is the third official report of the Oversight Commissioner for calendar year 2003 and the ninth official oversight report in a series that began in 2001. In previous reports, the objective of the Oversight Commissioner was to provide a periodic, detailed and methodical evaluation of the progress that was being made in the implementation of the 175 recommendations made by the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (the Patten Commission).

The 175 Patten recommendations are the product of an exhaustive research and consultation process, and were unanimously endorsed by the Independent Commission. In order to fulfil the intent of the Independent Commission, that their recommendations be implemented faithfully and comprehensively, they proposed that an independent Oversight Commissioner be appointed to ensure that all of the reforms be instituted. Since appointment in May of 2000, the Oversight Commissioner has established a policy of rigorous and exacting evaluations. The critical foundation of the oversight review process is the 772 performance indicators, which are utilised to measure progress in implementing the 175 recommendations. The periodic evaluations are carried out by a team of policing experts, and details on how the oversight process is being conducted, and the outstanding qualifications of the policing experts assigned to the Office of the Oversight Commissioner, are set out both in previous oversight reports and our web site at: www.oversight-commissioner.org

Since accepting the position of Oversight Commissioner in May of 2000, I have provided reports in a format that was in essence a "snapshot in time", which provided the exact state of progress for each of the 175 recommendations as measured by the 772 performance indicators. The format of this, the ninth official report, differs somewhat from previous reports. The reason for the change in style and format of this report is that this will be my last report as Oversight Commissioner, although the oversight process will continue until May of 2005. The objective of the current report is to provide a comprehensive summary of the results of three and one-half years of overseeing the implementation of the reforms recommended by the Independent Commission.

It was apparent from the first day of accepting the position as Oversight Commissioner that if the research and ensuing official reports were to be of value, they must be conducted with integrity, objectivity and rigorous professionalism. In order for the oversight process to provide confidence that the recommendations of the Independent Commission are actually taking place as intended, the Office of the Oversight Commissioner must also remain fully independent from the Government, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Policing Board and political institutions. Simply put, if the reports of the Oversight Commissioner are not trusted or are seen to be influenced by external parties, there will be no confidence that the office is meeting the objectives set out for it by the Independent Commission. The Oversight Commissioner and his team have steadfastly defended this independence for the past three and one-half years.

In the course of its detailed evaluations, the oversight team continues to be impressed by the extraordinary consultation and research conducted by the Independent Commission. In fact, with each passing oversight review it has become increasingly apparent that the Patten Commission not only identified the critical areas in need of reform, but proposed solutions that are clearly representative of "best practices" in policing. The recommendations of the Patten Commission and the success of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in implementing them are now being seen as models for many police services around the world. The Oversight Commissioner agrees



with the judgement of Mr. Christopher Patten that the Independent Commission's report was not a political compromise, but rather was developed and tested against policing benchmarks rather than political criteria. As a result, the objective of the Office of the Oversight Commissioner has been to conduct evaluations and produce official reports that meet the same quality of benchmarks that are representative of "best practices" in policing.

The Oversight Commissioner recognises that the scope, magnitude and complexity of the proposed reforms have created a series of tasks that would be an enormous challenge for any government agency or private institution. We also recognise that our own standards of rigorous oversight review have been very demanding for all of the institutions and individuals that are the subjects of the monitoring process. We make no apology for these demanding standards. It is our belief that these high standards will provide confidence to the citizens of Northern Ireland, that the recommendations of the Independent Commission are being implemented in the manner intended.

In the course of our numerous visits to Northern Ireland, we are often asked how the institutions involved in the policing of Northern Ireland, in particular the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Policing Board, the Police Ombudsman and the District Policing Partnerships, are doing with respect to the policing reform process. As a result of the oversight team's detailed and comprehensive evaluations that have been carried out for over three years, it is now possible to provide a reasoned and well-founded answer to this question: in fact, the institutions are doing very well in fulfilling the Independent Commission's recommendations

All of the institutions continue to make excellent progress in implementing a programme of change in policing that may be the most sweeping and complex ever attempted in a modern society. However, the role of the Oversight Commissioner is also to point out those recommendations that remain unfilled. At this stage of the change programme, four years after the release of the Patten Report, the lack of significant progress on some of these important recommendations is of serious concern. Nonetheless, although there has been a lack of progress on several recommendations, it is important to consider these shortcomings in the context of what can only be described as general and substantial progress.

A review of the reforms that either have already been implemented or are moving forward, at a pace we believe meets the Independent Commission's intent in a timely way, demonstrates the dramatic and positive changes that are taking place in the policing of Northern Ireland. The detailed explanation of this progress and, where appropriate, a discussion of the lack of progress is contained in the chapter summaries spelled out later in this report.

A review of recommendations that have already been implemented or are moving forward appropriately demonstrates the enormity of the changes that have already occurred. Individually, the completion of many of the recommendations in and of themselves would constitute a significant achievement. When the reforms are considered collectively however, it is clear that policing in Northern Ireland is moving steadily in the direction intended by the Independent Commission. The following is a brief overview of some important accomplishments that underlie our opinion that overall progress is excellent.

- The Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland have introduced a human rights-based approach to policing, a Code of Ethics which includes a new Oath, human rights

training, appraisal and monitoring systems, and the hiring of a human rights lawyer to provide guidance to the Police Service, and a contracted human rights lawyer to provide advice to the Policing Board.

- A multi-layered system that increasingly holds the Police Service accountable to citizens. This includes the establishment of a Policing Board, Ombudsman and District Policing Partnerships, all of whom emphasise independence and rigorous accountability.
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland, with the support of the Policing Board, the District Command Units and the District Policing Partnerships, has established community policing as a core function including dedicated neighbourhood units, foot patrols and professional crime and complaint analysis.
- The Police Service has begun to initiate a strategy that places an emphasis on devolving authority from headquarters to a cadre of talented and dedicated District Commanders. The new strategy, which places a premium on local authority and responsibility, includes normalised patrol vehicles, less reliance on the military, documented controls on the use of emergency powers, state-of-the-art holding facilities for suspects which includes video surveillance, and inspections by lay custody visitors.
- Also in place are improved methods of public order policing, which include conditions for the approval of parades and research on less lethal alternatives to the plastic baton round. The Police Service has also established detailed standards for assignment, training, deployment and controls of less lethal force. The controls include an independent review by the Office of the Police Ombudsman, with the Policing Board receiving copies of all reports for additional scrutiny.
- Early on the Police Service of Northern Ireland established a sophisticated change management programme, which has continued. Additionally, a new appraisal system, improvements in sickness absence policy and supervision, and a substantial funding source for police widows and injured officers have been achieved.
- The Police Service has begun to make important progress on an information technology infrastructure that was virtually non-existent at the time of the Independent Commission's study.
- The Police Service moved quickly to establish the new District Command Units. The individuals who assumed command of the District Units have already demonstrated excellent leadership and, acting in concert with District Policing Partnerships, provide for the first time a formalised programme of citizen involvement and accountability. The leadership exemplified by the District Commanders, acting in co-operation with their respective District Policing Partnership, is a critical aspect of the policing with the community strategy.
- The severance programme and normal attrition has reduced the size of the Police Service. In addition, there is a time table and plan for phasing out the Full Time Reserve and steps are beginning to enlarge the Part Time Reserve and make it more representative of the whole community.



- The Police Service of Northern Ireland, in conjunction with the Policing Board and a private recruiting firm, has instituted a recruiting programme designed to increase the number of Catholic police officers. Efforts to make the Police Service more representative have received the support of most of the community leaders, political leaders, clergy and teachers. The recruiting programme has been very successful in recruiting talented young men and women to serve as police officers. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) has repealed the rule which prohibited members of the Police Service from joining the GAA. A recruiting strategy for civilian employees utilises the same concepts as the recruitment programme for police officers.
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland has recruited and appointed a new Director of Training who has excellent academic and professional credentials. The Police Service has developed a new twenty-one week recruit training programme and a state-of-the-art tutor officer programme. The Policing Board has established a system of accountability that will be utilised to measure the Police Service training programmes.
- The culture, ethos and symbol changes that took place early in the change process fulfil the intent of the Independent Commission with respect to requiring a new name, badge, uniforms and a more neutral working environment. There is now also a garden of remembrance at the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Headquarters.
- Co-operation between the Police Service and the Garda Síochána has progressed with a formal agreement and legislative framework between the two governments. As well as co-operating operationally on criminal investigations, the police services held two joint policing conferences, as well as cross-border disaster exercises.

Although there is good reason for optimism that all of the Patten recommendations will be fully implemented within a reasonable time frame, there are still some important issues that have not been addressed. Because of the complexity of some of the recommendations, the oversight team recognises that the pace of progress will be impacted by factors beyond the control of the policing institutions, two of which are particularly significant: the first external factor that affects the progress on a number of important recommendations is the need for predictable and adequate financial support. This is an especially critical element in replacing many police facilities, including the existing training college, the condition of which can only be described as deplorable. Where a lack of appropriate financial support is determined by the oversight team to have adversely impacted the fulfillment of a specific recommendation, it will be noted as such in our official oversight reports.

The second external factor that affects the pace of progress is the intimidation of persons involved in policing. The clearest examples are the attempts to use force and violence to deter citizens from becoming police officers, members of the Policing Board or the District Policing Partnerships. Equally destructive to the concept of policing with the community is a climate of vigilante justice, as evidenced by punishment shootings, punishment beatings and, in some cases, brutal executions. This climate of intimidation can only be countered by honest, courageous and committed community leaders, political parties and elected officials who support the rule of law.

The ultimate objective of this strategy of intimidation is clear: to undermine the intentions of the Patten Commission to bring about policing with the community, by a Police Service representative of and accepted by the society it polices.

Despite progress there remain areas of concern. The recommendations of the Independent Commission were published in September of 1999, and subsequently addressed in the Government's August 2001 Implementation Plan. Therefore, where there is a continuing lack of progress, in some instances four years after the release of the Independent Commission's report, it is noted as a cause for concern and spelled out in the sections of this report entitled: "Areas of Concern".

The Office of Oversight Commissioner has continued to request evidence of progress or completion on several unresolved recommendations, often without success. Although our reports continually specify that any lack of progress should be measured against an overall record of substantial progress in many areas, it is increasingly difficult to explain the lack of resolution in certain important recommendations. This lack of results can undermine the otherwise excellent progress that has been made on the vast majority of recommendations. The following is a brief summary of the most important unresolved issues:

- The conditions of many police stations in Northern Ireland are so seriously below standards for modern day policing that they are in need of immediate replacement. There has been little progress in establishing police facilities that are accessible to the public, congruent with a programme of policing with the community and safety for Police Service employees. Both the community being served and the officers serving in these deteriorating facilities deserve better. The Police Service of Northern Ireland still does not have a coherent short or long term strategy for addressing this need, and the Government has not provided an adequate funding source to remedy the problem.
- There is a continuing problem of not providing a significant number of District Commanders and their officers with all their civilian support staff. In addition, the Police Service's policy on devolution of authority is still not as clear as it should be. There has been a devolution of responsibility, but it has not always been accompanied by the authority and resources to make it work. The District Command Units acting in concert with the District Policing Partnerships are the key to the reforms of policing in Northern Ireland, which is why the support for this programme is so essential.
- One of the key strategies in dealing with complaints of police misconduct or brutality is the analysis of historical trends. These "early warning" systems allow police leaders to continually monitor the activity of police officers. Information from citizens, police supervisors and personnel records affords the Police Service the opportunity to intervene when the issues are relatively minor, rather than simply reacting to more serious events after the fact. The Office of the Ombudsman provides the Police Service with information that is adequate to support such an early warning system. The Police Service has conducted extensive research on the construction of such prevention systems. However, as of September 2003 the Police Service had yet to develop a concrete plan for the implementation of an early warning system on police conduct.
- The Independent Commission was very clear about the need to restructure Special Branch in order to make it part of the overall Police Service strategy of combating organised crime and drug trafficking, as well as terrorism. Subsequent studies and reports concerning the Police



Service of Northern Ireland's Special Branch have been remarkably consistent with the Patten recommendation about the need for significant structural and policy reforms in Special Branch. Unfortunately, the initial Police Service of Northern Ireland proposal to address the intent of the Commission recommendation was inadequate. Although the Office of the Oversight Commissioner noted the inadequacy of the proposal in May of 2002, there was little or no evidence of progress provided to our office as recently as our evaluation visit in September of 2003. In the September visit, the Oversight Commissioner again stressed the need for the Police Service to provide a detailed plan that addressed the Independent Commission's intent, as well as a firm timeline for implementation. However, on 14 November 2003 the Police Service provided us with a detailed plan. Although it was not possible within the time available to analyse this plan, it appears to be a well thought-out document that establishes firm timelines for the implementation of reforms designed to meet the Independent Commission's recommendations relating to Special Branch. The November 2003 plan is a first step and evidence of a good faith effort to fulfill the intent of the Independent Commission.

- The importance of the issues involving the structure of Special Branch are such that failure to implement the recommendations of the Independent Commission in a timely manner can significantly impact the perception of success in the overall programme of police reform.
- In view of the planned phase out of the Full Time Reserve, it is important for the Government and the Police Service to provide the members of the Full Time Reserve with appropriate severance and retraining to facilitate their transition to other careers. Understandably, members of the Full Time Reserve have considerable uncertainty about their future and it is critical that the Police Service ensures that employment counselling and retraining assistance is provided in a similar manner to that afforded to regular police officers.
- Although the recruiting programme for new constables has been very successful, there is still a need for complete and full support from the entire Northern Ireland community. The Policing Board recently released a community attitudes survey that demonstrates the adverse impact intimidation and fear can have on recruiting.
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Policing Board will need to address the problem of attracting and retaining Catholics in the direct recruit civilian staff. The number of such direct recruit civilians went from 791 in 1999, which is 23.3% of total civilian support staff, to 1,704 in 2003, which is 48.8% of civilian support staff. However, as a percentage of all categories of civilian employees, this increase resulted in only a 1.4% rise in Catholics among all civilian employees, in other words from 12.3% in 1999 to 13.7% in July of 2003. This pace of change will not achieve a representative and balanced civilian workforce in the foreseeable future.
- The existing Police Training facilities at Garnerville and Sprucefield are inadequate by any reasonable standard. The Independent Commission recognised this problem and strongly recommended a new state-of-the-art facility. In May of 2000 the Government stated it would take three to six years to build a new police training college. Now, over three and one-half years later, it will be at least 2007 before the project is completed. There is no reasonable explanation for such a delay in providing the Police Service with a training facility it truly needs and richly deserves.

- There is a need for the Police Service's Training Branch to provide courses and programmes for the decentralised District Command Units. The Independent Commission recognised the need for local District Commanders to tailor programmes unique to their district. Operating under the concept that "one size does not fit all," the Independent Commission recommended Service Level Agreements for training. Unfortunately, there has been little or no progress and local commanders continue to express their disappointment in fulfilling local training needs.

In view of the fact that this ninth official report represents my last evaluation as Oversight Commissioner, I thought it important to publicly recognise all of those who have provided continued assistance to the oversight effort. Since accepting the position of Oversight Commissioner in May of 2001, members of the Independent Commission have been extremely generous with their time and wisdom in providing the Office of the Oversight Commissioner with the context and rationale that were the basis for their 175 recommendations. I have also interacted with three Secretaries of State. Although each was unique in his relationship with the Office of the Oversight Commissioner, all were unfailing in their support of the oversight process and perhaps most importantly, each recognised the need for the process to be fully independent. This was further evidenced by the complete co-operation that was extended by the representatives of the Northern Ireland Office, in particular the Patten Action Team.

The position of Chief Constable in Northern Ireland is undeniably one of the most challenging positions in contemporary policing. The two chief constables that I have dealt with in my role as Oversight Commissioner have impressed me with their leadership skills as they faced the unprecedented challenge of initiating a series of reforms and changes in the policing of Northern Ireland. They both deserve proper credit and appreciation for leading the policing institutions through this very difficult period of change.

The unit of the Police Service of Northern Ireland responsible for managing the implementation of the Patten recommendations, and responding to our demanding requests for evidence of progress, is the Change Management Team. To my knowledge, there was no existing model of policing reform of this scale that this small team could adapt to their needs. Yet due to its talent and experience developed over time, this unit has developed a model for managed change that many police agencies throughout the world will be looking to emulate. The mid-level command staff of the Police Service of Northern Ireland has continued to impress the oversight team with its talent and dedication. This is especially true of the District Commanders, whose leadership and activities we have commented on positively in previous reports.

However, when all is said and done it is the effort and performance of rank and file constables and first line supervisors that will be needed to create a sense of confidence that there is a new era in the policing of Northern Ireland. In our evaluation visits to virtually every police facility in Northern Ireland, we have had the opportunity to meet with large numbers of these police officers. It is obvious that they find the many reforms that they are required to carry out on a daily basis to be unsettling and at times threatening. This is to be expected, but with proper leadership and state-of-the-art training resources, they should be able to carry out the required changes. Like police officers everywhere they have an underlying reason for entering the law



enforcement profession, namely a desire to protect the innocent victim from the violent criminal. We should make no mistake, policing is an inherently dangerous occupation, and those who serve and have served in Northern Ireland have suffered great losses. In order for police officers throughout the Police Service to achieve their collective goal of serving and protecting the public, the support of every citizen and the entire community will be essential.

In each of my numerous visits to Northern Ireland, I have had the privilege of meeting with the leaders of all of the major religions. It is always humbling to be in the presence of individuals who believe so fervently in the principles of decency, in both a worldly and spiritual sense. They have always provided me with excellent guidance, and their prayers on my behalf have given me a sense of strength in carrying out the challenging task of oversight. This was especially true during my visit in September of 2001, when I learned that so many of my fellow countrymen and some close friends had been killed in the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York. I will always recall the kindness extended to me by the clergy in Northern Ireland at this difficult time in my life and the life of my country.

As should be obvious from comments in my previous reports, I have been very impressed by the institutions of accountability that resulted from the recommendations of the Independent Commission. The Policing Board, the Office of the Police Ombudsman and the District Policing Partnerships have made outstanding progress in a relatively short period of time. The efforts of all who serve in these institutions of police accountability will be critical in developing the long-term confidence of the public in the professionalism of their Police Service.

Sadly, it has become common in many democratic societies for citizens to be critical of political parties and their leaders. My experiences in Northern Ireland, however, on the issues of policing lead me to a different opinion. As part of the oversight process, I routinely meet with key leaders of all of the major political parties. They all have an excellent grasp of the policing issues facing Northern Ireland and are intensely interested in the change programme. They have been very professional and reasoned in all of the oversight briefings, and each of them appears interested in the safety of all the citizens of Northern Ireland. In order for the policing reforms to really take hold in a manner envisioned by the Independent Commission, it is essential that all of these political leaders provide leadership and support to all of the changes recommended by the Independent Commission.

After close to four years serving as Oversight Commissioner, I think back to my first visit to Northern Ireland. When accepting the position in May of 2000, I had only a superficial understanding of the complexities of the peace process and, in particular, the role that policing reform played in ensuring a permanent peace.

The difficult challenges inherent in such a massive change in the policing of Northern Ireland and the enormous responsibility of the Office of Oversight Commissioner were immediately apparent. When I arrived in Belfast, the implications of the reforms required by the Patten Commission were the subject of intense and sometimes divisive debate. In my very first public appearances and private meetings, I was advised by some that I had accepted the "poisoned chalice" and that the oversight process was not adequately supported and doomed to failure.

However, it was clear to me that if the oversight evaluation was carried out in an independent, honest, objective and rigorous manner that was consistent with the spirit of the Patten

recommendations, the Office of Oversight Commissioner could provide confidence that reforms were taking place as intended. The achievement of that rigorous standard of integrity and professionalism is in large part a result of the dedicated efforts of the team of policing experts who agreed to become part of the oversight team. They are an incredibly talented group of individuals who have dedicated themselves to overseeing the progress of policing reform. Although they have been mentioned in previous reports, it is appropriate to identify them once again in this, my last report as Oversight Commissioner:

- David Bayley, former Dean of the School of Criminal Justice, State University of New York at Albany
- Roy Berlinquette, former Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Al Hutchinson, Chief of Staff to the Oversight Commissioner, and former Assistant Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Gil Kleinknecht, a former Director of the US Marshals Service and past treasurer of the IACP
- Robert Lunney, a past president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and a retired Chief of Police
- Mark Reber, Director of Research for the Oversight Commissioner and seconded from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by Commissioner G. Zaccardelli
- Charles Reynolds, a past president of the IACP and a retired Chief of Police.

We often fail to sufficiently recognise the administrative and clerical staff who work so diligently to support our efforts. The oversight team includes a small group of dedicated professionals who provide the administrative, clerical and secretarial support so essential to our evaluations and the oversight process in general.

To further enhance the quality of our oversight reports, we were able to secure the guidance and support of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The International Association of Chiefs of Police is the world's pre-eminent organisation of police executives representing 17,500 law enforcement executives from 96 countries. As a result, a number of leading police executives were part of an International Association of Chiefs of Police delegation that met with the oversight team in the capacity of a peer group review.

In the 44 months that have passed since accepting the position of Oversight Commissioner, it is now very clear that I definitely was not given a "poisoned chalice." Rather, I was provided an opportunity to be a part, no matter how small, of a peace process that is being watched closely by the entire world. During my tenure as Oversight Commissioner, I have witnessed progress in the implementation of the Patten recommendations at a pace which I would not have thought possible in such a relatively short time. Everywhere I travel the evidence of general progress is apparent, such as in the construction of new buildings, hotels and restaurants. I see the people who obviously feel free to move about on nights and weekends, and this further demonstrates a sense of confidence on the part of large numbers of citizens.



In December of 2002, I advised the Secretary of State that the concept of a permanent Oversight Commissioner would not, in my opinion, be in the best interests of the citizens of Northern Ireland. However, since there were a number of recommendations that would not be completed by May of 2003, I recommended the oversight position be extended for at least one year. I also advised the Secretary of State that I would not be able to serve past the end of 2003. The decision to leave the position of Oversight Commissioner at the end of 2003 was a difficult one. I have grown very fond of the people of Northern Ireland, and they have always treated me with graciousness and hospitality.

However, as I have explained to many, my wife and I have a large family of six children and thirteen grandchildren. In the course of my 43 years in law enforcement, including 20 years as a senior executive, my family has made numerous sacrifices to allow me to serve. I have now reached the time to step back from major responsibilities. My successor, Al Hutchinson, a former executive in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, is a talented and dedicated individual who, along with the team of policing experts who have agreed to continue to serve, is fully capable of carrying out the oversight process in a professional manner.

Although I have mixed emotions about leaving Northern Ireland, I will always have the memory of meeting and working with some of the finest people I have ever had the privilege of meeting. I feel privileged to have been able to work with them to create the prospect of a lasting peace and a Police Service that has the confidence and support of all of the citizens of Northern Ireland.

Thomas A. Constantine
Oversight Commissioner

December 2003

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ALR	Armoured Landrover
DCU	District Command Unit
DPP	District Policing Partnership
FTR	Full Time Reserve
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
IACP	International Association of Chiefs of Police
IT	Information Technology
ICS	Information and Communications Services
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
PBR	Plastic Baton Round
PTR	Part Time Reserve
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
SECAPRA	Security, Ethics, Community/Client, Acquire/Analyse, Partnership, Respond, Assess
SLA	Service Level Agreements
TED	Training, Education and Development
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
UK	United Kingdom
VSSU	Voluntary Severance Support Unit

▶▶ **human rights**



Background

Quoting the 1998 Belfast Agreement, the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland noted in its 1999 report 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 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 in Northern Ireland policing. They were:

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

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service had continued to develop its human rights agenda with a demonstrated positive commitment. A human rights lawyer was appointed in October of 2001 and advises the Police Service on the human rights implications of new policies, operations and training. A Code of Ethics was drafted by the Police Service and approved by the Policing Board in September of 2002. An Assistant Chief Constable is responsible for the development of the human rights programme, and is assisted by a Human Rights Section. Human rights training for recruits has been expanded and incorporated into many of the simulations used by the Police College. Since September of 2001, police recruits have also been administered the new oath at the Police College's graduation exercises. The recruit training programme is supervised by the University of Ulster, with some of the human rights teaching being done by individuals outside the Police Service. Human rights are taught as a specific subject and integrated into recruit training modules like police-community relationships and criminal justice. The programme is the subject of an ongoing evaluation being conducted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The Police College appointed an Audit Observations Team to support and help standardise human rights instruction throughout its programmes. The Police have sponsored three public human rights conferences in October of 2001, October of 2002 and March of 2003.

By September of 2003 the Police Service of Northern Ireland had circulated a comprehensive Human Rights Implementation Plan that was endorsed by the Policing Board. The Plan will be published after it has been reviewed by the Board's new human rights advisor. The Police Service has developed and distributed a Code of Ethics, which replaces the old disciplinary code. The Code of Ethics includes the new police oath to which new police officers attest. The Police Service has also obtained signed statements from serving police officers indicating that they

understand the new oath. This will be subject to oversight verification. In April of 2003 the Police Service also implemented a personnel appraisal system that incorporates a human rights component. Although the impact of these measures on behaviour will need to be assessed at regular intervals, interviews of police recruits and serving police officers conducted to date by the oversight team indicate that police personnel are familiar with the requirements of human rights legislation, and regularly bring them to bear in the course of their work.

The final human rights recommendation of the Independent Commission called for the Policing Board to develop and implement a plan for the on-going evaluation of the compliance of Police Service personnel with human rights legislation. A framework for such a plan has been developed by the Policing Board's human rights advisor. This was scheduled for approval by the Policing Board in early October of 2003 and, subject to ongoing consultation and development; the plan will come into effect in December of 2003.

Areas of Concern

Formative and ongoing training is the way in which police officers are brought to an understanding of their duties and obligations. Lessons once learned are reinforced throughout the organisation, and over time organisational cultures are moulded and adapted to changing circumstances. Human rights training is particularly critical to the Independent Commission's vision of a new beginning to policing in Northern Ireland, and the Police Service of Northern Ireland has made a great deal of practical progress in the area of human rights training, especially with respect to police recruits.

However, as of 30 September 2003 the Police Service had not provided the information requested in September of 2001 which would allow an evaluation and verification of actual progress. Specifically, a description of the content of human rights training being provided to recruits, in-service personnel and civilian staff was not provided. In addition, a human rights training resourcing plan, time lines for achieving training objectives and an account of the courses in which new human rights material had been incorporated were not provided. This information has been requested since September of 2001. The oversight team also requires more information on plans for verifying the delivery of human rights training at an acceptable level, and a plan for evaluating the impact of human rights training on police personnel. Finally, we will continue to assess the pace at which members of the community and others are permitted to observe or participate in such training.

▶▶ **accountability**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland devoted 35 of its 175 recommendations to providing oversight mechanisms designed to ensure the accountability of policing to the public and the law. Its recommendations cover the creation of a Policing Board, District Policing Partnerships, a Police Ombudsman, a commissioner and complaints tribunal for covert law enforcement operations, and the strengthening of financial accountability.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 a number of important milestones had been reached, including the establishment of the Policing Board in November of 2001. Appropriate legislation in the form of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA), with oversight provisions, is in place to deal with Covert Law Enforcement on a uniform UK-wide basis. Associated 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.

In addition, the Policing Board developed and published its first strategic plan for the Police Service for 2002-2005. The Policing Board also published a "Code of Practice for the Exercise of Functions by the District Policing Partnerships". 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 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.

By September of 2003 significant progress had been made on creating institutions that ensure the accountability of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Policing Board, constituted as called for by the Independent Commission, has developed annual as well as five-year strategic plans, including requests for necessary financial resources. It has created procedures for "holding the Chief Constable to account," including regular submission of reports, establishment of independent financial auditing, and development of "best practice" reviews. The Policing Board has also rigorously selected and appointed several senior officers, including the Chief Constable himself.

The Policing Board has successfully established District Policing Partnerships (DPPs), which are crucial to ensuring that the Police Service fulfils its commitment to policing with the community. As of 30 September 25 of 26 DPPs had been established, the exception being the Dungannon DPP. In consultation with local District Commanders, DPPs are beginning to prepare their own strategic plans, which will in turn be reflected in annual policing plans published by the Policing Board. The Policing Board has also provided for the initial training of DPP members. Since their inception DPPs have shown a useful flexibility in adapting the format of their public meetings in order to facilitate the expression of community opinions.

Whereas the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships ensure that the Police Service is accountable to the community for achieving organisational goals, the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland investigates complaints made against police officers. As we have noted in the past the Police Ombudsman is performing her critical duties with professionalism, and the role is

crucial to the accountability structure envisioned by the Independent Commission. The Ombudsman has striven to ensure that her Office provides an independent, impartial police complaints service in which both the police and the public can have confidence. Police accountability ultimately depends on the public and designated oversight bodies having extensive and reliable information about what the police are doing. Additionally, information-sharing about police complaints is a crucial first step toward the Police Service creating an "early warning system" about potential violations of the police oath and the Code of Ethics. The Ombudsman provides trend information to the public regarding complaints, and more specific information to the Police to allow them to fulfil their internal accountability responsibilities. The publication of the Police Service's Transparency Policy in April of 2003 was also a critically important development in this direction.

Areas of Concern

The Independent Commission called for community accountability at two levels: the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships. Threats against members of the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships continue to be a concern. Particularly troubling is the fact that threats are made against those members of the community who have courageously accepted the obligations of citizenship. Such threats and acts of intimidation are orchestrated attempts to undermine the fundamental concepts of police reform and community involvement, and if allowed to continue will have long-lasting and negative implications for policing. Unless the DPPs are supported and allowed to perform their crucial function, self-serving and violent criminal organisations will increasingly seek to determine the extent and degree to which policing will occur in Northern Ireland.

In future, particular attention will be paid to the development of the District Policing Partnerships, through visits to their public meetings and interviews with officers and members. Also of interest is the level of collaboration that will be achieved between the DPPs and the wide array of community associations interested in public safety, such as Community Police Liaison Committees, Community Safety Partnerships, and Consultative Forums. While Northern Ireland is fortunate to have so many interested citizens and active groups in this area, the managing and co-ordinating of the activities of these organisations to the community's collective benefit will require time and effort on the part of the Police Service and the DPPs.

▶▶ **policing with the community**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission recommended that policing with the community be the core function of the Police Service and of every police station. Crucial to the new beginning envisioned by the Independent Commission, the theme of policing with the community has implications for the structure of the Police Service, for its management, culture, recruitment and training. The long term goal 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.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service had conducted research into the principles and practices of policing with the community and consulted broadly with representatives of all ranks within the Police Service. The Policing Plan 2002-2005 released in March of 2002 committed the Policing Board and the Police Service to implementing policing with the community as the principal service delivery model. Formal commencement was in September of 2002. District 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 completed a number of significant community-based crime prevention projects. 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. The Police Service has developed a sound capacity for crime and complaint pattern analysis, and each District Command Unit now has the benefit of a professionally trained and qualified crime analyst, supported by appropriate computer technology.

By September of 2003 the Police Service has made significant gains in its transition from a police operation with an intense focus on security, to a policing with the community style as recommended by the Independent Commission. Observable changes include a devolved organisational structure based on 29 District Command Units, a proliferation of community and institutional partnerships, adoption of problem solving practices, higher visibility of police patrols in public places, increased numbers of walking beat patrols, the restoration of beat patrols in disputed urban neighbourhoods, and an evolving, state-of-the-art crime analysis programme.

The indicator for success is measurable progress against the objectives of the Policing Plan. Beat officers are conducting regular foot patrols on busy inner city streets during daylight hours. In neighbourhoods where support for the police is minimal, foot patrols are conducted in teams with vehicle back-up. For example, through the Get Home Safe campaign, developed co-operatively between the Police Service and operators of licensed premises in South Belfast, instances of public disorder at closing times were significantly reduced. Progress like this also led to the Police Service winning two of a possible three UK-wide Tilley Awards for Community Policing. This commendable success indicates an excellent beginning to the Police Service's evolution to a community-oriented policing organisation.

Those members of Neighbourhood Policing Teams interviewed during recent oversight visits express confidence in their ability to extend community policing services to all communities, regardless of challenging conditions in some. Some units are consciously promoting efforts to "brand" their services, through continuity and consistency of style, the building of trust with community members and displays of locality markings on uniforms and vehicles. Beat officers are

authorised to speak with the media on local events, thereby heightening their individual profiles and also improving relationships with local newspapers. Consultative forums are flourishing and the Police Service is involved in a wide variety of partnerships with institutional partners including public safety agencies, social services and housing authorities. The newly created district partnerships are quickly establishing themselves as formidable bodies in the cause of public safety.

Areas of Concern

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. Some DCUs have established integrated sets of goals, while others have yet to provide an opportunity for their community to collaborate in this process. Another factor, which impedes the policing with the community programme generally, is the lack of appropriate training for the police officers delivering the service. For example, of the approximately 300 police officers meant to undergo specific training in Neighbourhood Policing, only roughly 100 have completed the training course. In some instances courses are not filled to capacity, while in others officers in attendance are called back to duty without being allowed to complete the training course. Additionally, Districts are required on numerous occasions to divert recruit officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams they are assigned to following police training.

Although an inspection of problem solving folders afforded encouraging impressions of dedicated efforts to identify issues of concern to the community, there are issues of content and form that require attention. All folders examined were still hand written, which represents an outmoded and inflexible approach to information management. Now that all units have access to common terminals, the Headquarters policy centre has an opportunity to develop a standard problem solving folder format. Information sharing within neighbourhood policing teams appears to function well. Also, as of 30 September 2003 training for members of the community in problem solving had not been completed, however the Police Service did arrange for familiarisation training for DPP members on 20 November 2003.

Finally, despite repeated requests, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have not been finalised between Training Branch and the District Command Units. The Independent Commission noted that different District Commanders would have variations in the skills that they require of their police officers. SLAs allow front line supervisors to identify both the type of training and how this training will be provided; particularly training aimed at first and second-line supervisors. These individuals are critical not only with respect to the day-to-day functioning of the Police Service, but to the ultimate success of the Police Service's change programme as a whole.

▶▶ **policing in a peaceful society**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland made several recommendations covering the appearance of police stations, appropriate types of patrol vehicles, and the need to increase devolved authority to District Commanders. In addition, recommendations included those on Army support, the use of emergency powers, administration of detention facilities, and other issues affecting the ability of the Police Service to deliver the kind of law enforcement service a peaceful society would require.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 evidence of an increased usage of police cars in place of armoured Landrovers was provided. Considerable progress was made by the Police with the adoption and distribution of General Order 37/2001, The Terrorism Act 2000 - Human Rights and Monitoring Issues. The Police Service provided information on persons stopped and searched, arrested or detained, premises entered or searched, and items seized under emergency powers. Similar information had been provided by the Army through the Police Service. The Police Service constructed a temporary custody suite at Lisburn DCU, pending the opening of a permanent 20-bed joint custody facility at Antrim DCU, and had extended the Lay Custody Visiting Scheme to include custody and interrogation suites. Lay Custody Visitors have received training for visiting detained terrorists suspects. Also, a pilot custody suite video recording project was undertaken at Musgrave Street station, with a view to providing the experience necessary to introduce video recording in other suites.

By September of 2003 the Police Service continued to demonstrate progress on substituting armoured Landrovers (ALRs) with regular police cars, ordering 158 unarmoured and 80 armoured cars between April and August of 2003. As a result, the number of ALRs transferred either to depots or strategic reserve has increased considerably.

The Police Service continues to make progress on re-branding and renovating station enquiry offices. Several enquiry offices have been completed and the Police Service has advanced additional business cases to the Northern Ireland Office for funding reviews on a case-by-case basis. The Police Service has also made progress on recruiting civilian Station Enquiry Assistants (SEA). The recruiting process is now being done by Grafton Recruitment, which completed its first recruitment campaign in June of 2003. This campaign provided the Police Service with a merit pool of 227 qualified candidates for 60 SEA positions. 20% of applications came from Catholics.

Although a timetable for completing the replacement of all 260 positions identified has not been provided, a limited plan for the DCUs was provided by the Police Service and covers 94 positions for 2003. In addition, the Police Service provided a policy document in early September of 2003 which detailed how SEAs were to be utilised, and how a corresponding number of police officers might be redeployed to operational duties following the successful civilianisation of enquiry office positions. Finally, a training programme for new SEAs has been developed to ensure they are equipped to deal with their new responsibilities.

Areas of Concern

In its 1999 report the Independent Commission noted that some police stations were visibly dilapidated, and that the police estate was generally in poor condition. It therefore recommended

that police stations needed to be more accessible to the public and less fortress-like in appearance. Improving the appearance of police stations generally will support community policing goals, community involvement and recruiting. In addition, ensuring that all police stations meet minimum health and safety standards will have a positive impact on both the health and morale of police officers and civilians assigned to work there.

A key implementation measure is the development of a comprehensive strategy by the Police Service to address these issues. The Police Service provided a number of documents, which describe rebuilds, renovations, station closures and related appearance issues. However, these documents do not individually or collectively represent an organised plan that would fulfil the intent of the Independent Commission's recommendations on the police estate, nor do they represent a comprehensive strategy that addresses all relevant issues. In some instances the documents provided are both inconsistent and contradictory. For example, the police station at Kilkeel, County Down is simultaneously slated for interior refurbishment and expansion, but also for demolition and eventual replacement.

Another important aspect of a comprehensive estate strategy that remains unresolved as of 30 September 2003 was the Police Service's future detention requirements, with the final number of regular and super custody suites not yet determined. The Police Service currently operates 22 separate custody suites, but is considering reducing that number to 18, or possibly as low as eight. Also critical to progress in this area is ensuring that the Police Service is provided with the appropriate level of fiscal support from the Government. A three-year business plan for the installation of CCTV in 22 custody suites has been prepared, before the Police Service's actual need for custodial space has been conclusively established.

A number of past oversight reports have noted that the detention facilities at Castlereagh, Strand Road and Gough Barracks were closed. These closures were verified during evaluation visits in the autumn of 2002. Gough Barracks in particular was found to be in such a state of disarray that further use as a holding facility would clearly have been inappropriate. However, the Independent Commissioner for Detained Terrorist Suspects then reported that Gough Barracks had indeed been in use on 18-21 January 2003, following its re-designation by the Secretary of State. It was also in use on 1-2 September 2003, however without obtaining the necessary re-designation. The Police Service now considers Gough Barracks not as closed, but rather as a "mothballed" facility, and Gough is essentially equipped and ready to be re-opened on short notice. This not only fails to meet the Independent Commission's intent with respect to Gough, but also any standard definition of a "closed" facility.

There is a critical issue, from an oversight perspective, arising from the changeable status of Gough Barracks. The issue is that once we are informed that a recommendation has been implemented, and subsequently shown that it has been implemented, the entire reform monitoring process is undermined if accomplishments are then undone without the necessary officials being made aware. The Policing Board has recognised the lack of notification as a problem, and is establishing a process that will ensure immediate notification takes place as required. As it stands, the Independent Commission's recommendation with respect to the closure of Gough Barracks is not fulfilled.

▶▶ **public order policing**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland recognised that the public order policing experience of Northern Ireland's Police Service differed significantly from that of any other police force. It therefore saw the need for research into 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 for identifying equipment that might be utilised by the police to better deal with public order situations and other emergencies.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service had issued General Order 46/2000, Issue, Deployment and Use of Baton Rounds in Situations of Serious Public Disorder which includes directives to effectively manage and record the deployment and use of PBRs. In addition, an 18 member Steering Group set up by the Northern Ireland Office had prepared and distributed an excellent report in response to the Independent Commission's recommendations on public order equipment. The Policing Board and the Police Service developed an effective set of policies and procedures for accomplishing the many issues for dealing with public order situations.

This was followed up on 15 August 2002 when the Chief Constable distributed General Order 50/2002, Requirements for Early Reporting to the Policing Board, which requires the prompt reporting of the discharge of PBRs. The Police Service had limited the number of police officers authorised to fire the plastic baton gun, and a training component for Commanders, supervisors and police officers has been established to cover all aspects of effective PBR deployment. A report released in May of 2002 by the Police Ombudsman detailed the investigation of seven 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.

By September of 2003 the NIO's Steering Group, which was formed to conduct research and identify a broader range of public order equipment in response to public order situations, had released its third report entitled: "A Research Programme into Alternative Policing Approaches towards the Management of Conflict". The NIO advises that a fourth report on the study of alternatives to the plastic baton round (PBR) will be released in December of 2003. As the fourth report will conclude this research, it remains important that the Government and the Police Service work toward developing a definitive time line for reaching a final decision(s) on alternatives to the PBR.

Based on the research conducted by the Steering Group, the Police Service has purchased six vehicle-mounted water cannon similar to those on loan from the Belgian Federal Police for the marching seasons of 1999-2003. The six vehicles purchased for the Police Service were specifically designed for use in Northern Ireland. Two of the six vehicles have been delivered and are undergoing various tests. The Police Service has prepared an operational policy and guidance for the deployment and use of water cannon in serious public disorder situations. This policy has been validated in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. The authority to deploy or use the water cannon will be the same or

similar to the guidelines for the deployment of baton guns and PBRs. A small number of officers and supervisors have received interim training on how to operate the equipment, but the manufacturer will provide complete training when the two initial vehicles become operational in late 2003.

The way in which the Police Service has operationally addressed the deployment and use of baton rounds has improved considerably. The Police Service has provided good baton gun training, the numbers of police officers authorised to fire the baton round has been restricted, and there are now sound protocols in place for the deployment and authorisation of the use of baton rounds. Police supervisors have also received training on PBR use, and all use is reported to the Police Ombudsman immediately, providing for both transparency and police accountability. The policy directives and training provided are in compliance with the intent of the Independent Commission.

The NIO, Policing Board and Police Service continue to demonstrate progress in implementing the Independent Commission's recommendations for improving police performance during public order situations. General Order 50/2002 outlines in detail Police Service policy and mechanisms for providing early reports to the Policing Board on the discharge of all PBRs and/or incidents of public disorder. District Commanders are required to include detailed circumstances and justifications in their reports as to the need to discharge baton rounds. The Policing Board will be receiving, along with the reports, the Commanders' justification supporting use of the PBR. The Police Service reported that the number of public order arrests has decreased in 2003 as compared to previous years.

Documentation has been received demonstrating that the Policing Board actively monitors police performance in public order situations and when it deemed necessary has requested and received follow-up reports from the Chief Constable. A recent report provided by the Police Service indicates that no PBRs have been fired since September of 2002.

Additional progress has been made by the Police Service in the establishment of an internal post-utilisation review of each incident involving the use of the PBR. An internal policy directive has established a committee, chaired by a senior police officer, to review all discharge of firearm reports sent to the Chief Constable by the Police Ombudsman under Regulation 20 of the RUC (Complaints etc.) Regulations 2000. After the Police Ombudsman forwards a report on a PBR incident, and provided there are no criminal or disciplinary proceedings pending, the Regulation 20 Committee reviews the findings contained in the report as well as any internal police reports. The review will determine if there are any policy, discipline, human rights or training matters that should be addressed. This is generally considered a best practice with respect to the use of lethal and less than lethal force.

Areas of Concern

Our Report No. 3, released in December of 2001, reported that the NIO stated that it would be the summer of 2002 before a decision was made on an alternative to the baton round. In April of 2003 the Government then amended this target date, stating that a decision would be reached by the end of 2003. It remains important that the Government and the Police Service maintain this schedule so that this issue may be resolved as soon as possible.

▶▶ **management and personnel**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland called for extensive change to the management style of the Police Service, including devolving authority to district levels, enhancing the internal accountability structure, reducing lengths of tenure in specialised positions such as public order and security duties, and a more comprehensive sickness absence programme. Further recommendations proposed a rigorous programme of civilianisation to release uniformed police officers for patrol duties, as well as various other efficiency measures.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service had established a Change Management Team under the direction of a senior Assistant Chief Constable, with a mandate to direct, manage and support the change process in its initial stages. The Police Service also introduced a comprehensive Managing Attendance Policy in February of 2001. The Change Management Team has engaged in a continuing process of renewal and 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. A Professional Standards Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, and includes representatives from the Ombudsman and the Policing Board, was created to monitor integrity issues. In July of 2002 the Professional Standards Committee approved an Integrity and Professional Standards Strategy. A substantial fund was established by the Government to help injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families, as well as police widows. Finally, the Widows Association was provided with an office on police premises, and a source of finance adequate to run their organisation.

By September of 2003 responsibility for Change Management had devolved to the ACC Corporate Development. On balance the Police Service's change process has been successfully launched and well-managed to date. The creation of the 29 District Command Units is also a success. The devolution of decision making to District Commanders is one of the key aspects of the change programme recommended by the Independent Commission (see also Areas of Concern). In the period since April of 2001, District Commanders have assumed leadership roles with their respective communities, re-structured sector boundaries, changed shift work patterns, determined the most effective use of static versus mobile patrols and modified call management practices and patrol methods. Progress to date has been described by district command staff interviewed as a major cultural shift. However, this does not diminish the challenges that still exist in managing this kind of change.

Financial Service Level Agreements are in place, which govern the relationship and respective responsibilities of District Commanders and the seven branches of Finance Department. A comprehensive management system now provides detailed monthly reports and consolidations for all categories of expenditure. Consultation meetings with other Departments and District Commanders are held regularly. Finance Department operates a continuous consultation and feedback system. This has proven effective at both surfacing problems and finding solutions.

The Police Service issued three General Orders in July of 2003, which provide updated and detailed guidance to Commanders, supervisors and officers on all features of the Police Service's sickness absence policy. The intent is to ensure greater managerial consistency across the organisation. Training for the roll out of sickness absence recording is linked to general computer

training for DCU staff, scheduled for completion by late September of 2003. A Managing Attendance Distance Learning Module and a Lesson Plan were released in July of 2003 for the assistance of line managers.

As of 31 March 2003 the sickness absence figures for regular and Full Time Reserve officers were an average of 20.14 days lost per officer per year. Absence figures for the Police Service's civilian staff were 15.95 days lost per employee per year. These figures were above targets that had been set previously by the Policing Board, which were 18.5 days for police officers and 14 days for civilian staff. However, statistics on sickness absence compiled from 1 April 2003 to 30 September 2003 do reflect a downward trend. For example, the average working days lost per officer in the six month period to 30 September 2003 was just over eight days, compared to 10.76 for the same period in 2002. It will be important for the Police Service to ensure this trend is maintained.

The Police Service reports a total of 273 conversions of police posts, including Full Time Reserve posts, to civilian status in the period 1 April 2000 to 16 September 2003. An updated list of posting opportunities for civilianisation and optimisation was produced by Human Resources in April of 2003. Additional areas targeted for conversion to civilian status include 130 Station Enquiry Assistants, 24 Holmes Indexers, 20 Communications Officers and 15 Transport Assistants among others. Funding for an additional 300 civilian posts, out of an original target of 650 laid out in the Human Resources Planning Strategy, had not been secured as of 30 September 2003, however a funding bid has been submitted to the NIO.

Areas of Concern

The key process of devolving decision-making authority to District Commanders was impeded early on by a lack of established devolution mechanisms. In order to hold District Commanders fully accountable for results, there must be adequate policy and support mechanisms in place. As of 30 September 2003, Police Service had not revised or updated its temporary guidance policy on devolution for District Commanders.

Adequate specialised support is also required to enable District Commanders to effectively carry out their responsibilities. However, as of 30 September 2003 the 29 District Command Units had only 15 permanent civilian Business Managers and 17 permanent civilian Personnel Officers. This is a concern we have already noted on several occasions. The remaining DCU Business Manager and Personnel Officer positions have been filled through temporary arrangements such as acting appointments, or are covered by staff from Headquarters or from neighbouring DCUs. However, the lack of permanent, professional civilian staff in these positions does not allow for continuity or the kind of skills development that will ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the District Commands Units.

Another concern is that, as of 30 September 2003 the Police Service had not developed an effective "early warning" system for managing complaints and tracking police officers with potential problems. As noted in our previous reports, the Independent Commission's intent regarding these recommendations was to underscore the Police Service's need for internal accountability mechanisms which would increase public confidence in the police and also provide for the better overall management of police personnel. The Independent Commission saw the use of trend information on public complaints and other indicators for police officers as an integral part of



such a managerial accountability mechanism. Information produced by such systems allows police supervisors to intervene at an early stage if they feel that an officer requires assistance or guidance, or to determine whether administrative discipline proceedings are necessary.

It has already been determined that appropriate data are being provided to the Police Service by the Ombudsman, and it is difficult to understand why the Police Service has not yet achieved even a manual early warning system. Both the Ombudsman and the Police Service have agreed on the manner in which information on complaints against individual officers will be reported, and also on the way this information will be disseminated. Initial guidelines to District Commanders, describing procedures for tracking officers who may be having difficulty in their interactions with members of the public, were also provided, however meaningful progress on an early warning system is lacking.

Additional and more definitive policy, as well as coaching for managers and supervisors on how such a system is best employed, will be required before its advantages can be realised by the Police Service. Information Services has earmarked a budget for a more comprehensive case management system, with outsourcing anticipated.

Finally, despite some progress in managing down the incidence of sickness absence within the Police Service, levels continue to be relatively high compared to other parts of the UK, at 20.14 days per officer per year for the Police Service compared to a 2002 average of 11.8 in England and Wales. This represents a significant resource drain on the organisational and operational capability of the Police Service, which in turn impacts on its ability to provide front line operational policing services.

▶▶ **information technology**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland 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 3 to 5 years.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service has completed a report entitled: "Information Systems Strategy 2000/01 to 2004/05", which documents its efforts to meet current and future IT needs. An independent validator was engaged and an initial report issued on 7 August 2001. A record of funding estimates was developed which forecast expenditures to 2003/04. A comprehensive list of objectives, along with detailed time lines, was also provided to the oversight team. An updated strategy list was then developed, and included as objectives, the widespread availability of word processing, e-mail, a Police Service intranet, an integrated Crime Information System reporting, and crime mapping tools for the Police Service.

By September of 2003 implementation had focussed on the partial provision of IT infrastructure, for example personal computers for police officers, data and radio networks. The roll out of 3,388 personal, or common, computer terminals to the Regions and DCUs is now scheduled to be completed by early January of 2004, bringing the grand total of installed terminals to 5,000 across the organisation. 3,000 e-mail accounts have been created on the new system, and the new police radio system is on schedule to go live in February of 2004.

Areas of Concern

By September of 2003 the Independent Validator had reported serious concerns about the progress of implementing the original plan developed by the Police Service, to meet the requirements of a fully integrated technology system readily accessible to all staff, and taking advantage of the best available analytical and communications systems. While the plan had been endorsed with some reservations by the Validator in August of 2001, his status report to the Policing Board in January of 2003 raised significant concerns.

A further report from the Independent Validator in August of 2003 outlined the critical issues and barriers to success more precisely. With a view to correcting problems and restoring confidence in the Police Service's Strategic IT Plan, the Validator advised that:

- the ICS (Information & Communications Services) function needed overhauling and reorganisation;
- the active and discerning involvement of senior users needed to be restored;
- the ICS Committee, chaired by the DCC, needed to be re-established; and,
- the cumbersome decision-making process applied to the project as a whole needed to be abandoned.

This required the Police Service's most senior managers to intervene on a regular basis and to give the project practical support. The Police Service presented a recovery plan that requires a

major reorientation to the work programme and priorities. The original target date for the achievement of objectives was March of 2005. However, the Police Service has had to advise the Policing Board that, under the circumstances, a revised target date of August of 2006 was more realistic, some one and a half years after the original target, and some six years after the original recommendation by the Independent Commission.

Since the original release of the Strategic Plan in August of 2001 major changes have been made to the objectives, priorities and business practices of operational users, and new demands are continuing to emerge. Putting the strategy back on track will require a new dialogue with operational managers, front line police officers and other partners. The emerging requirements of the Criminal Justice Review, particularly the Causeway Project, and the Schengen Convention for Information Sharing across the European Union, are crucial challenges to which the IT Strategy will need to respond.

Among other issues remaining to be addressed are securing funding for the project, the availability of specialised human resources, implementing the systems integration project, the calculation and monitoring of risk, and noting the critical interdependencies between the various implementation projects. With respect to the need for specialised human resources, the Police Service is addressing this by contracting to outside service providers as much of the work as possible. The Independent Validator had also expressed concerns regarding other aspects of the IT Strategy, including:

- the main grant not being aligned to the Independent Commission's recommendations, with the exception of the common terminal project, at £3 million;
- over 40% of the available time has elapsed against the original target date for completion;
- only 25% of financial resources have been applied;
- strategy implementation is significantly behind schedule;
- there remain 80 current vacancies in ICS;

A recovery plan that includes a strategy realignment component, the reorganisation of Information Services and a best practice governance system was proposed to the Policing Board in August of 2003. Implementation is now proceeding, with the Board receiving bi-monthly update reports.

▶▶ **structure of the police service**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland recommended restructuring to encourage and facilitate policing with the community, including de-layering of the operational command organisation and a slimmer structure for Headquarters. Recommendations also called for the significant delegation of authority to District Commanders, including control over a devolved budget and all police resources within their district. Particularly important was the proposal of an amalgamated command for Special Branch and Crime Branch, in order to improve the organisation's ability to deal with rising levels of violent and organised crime. Also recommended was a substantial reduction in the number of officers engaged in security work. Other recommendations proposed the phasing out of the Full Time Reserve and the concomitant enlargement of the Part Time Reserve.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the 29 District Command Units were in place and operating. The Chief Constable approved a restructuring and redeployment plan within the context of the Human Resource Planning Strategy, one of his goals being to increase the number of regular police officers working in DCUs to 5,400 by March of 2005. The Police Service began to implement the Independent Commission's recommendations on Special Branch by placing Special Branch and Crime Branch under the command of a single Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) in April of 2001. At this time the ACC in command of Crime Department had direct responsibility for six branches and a departmental support unit. A new system for briefing District Commanders had also been put into place, and District Commanders verified that the intelligence they now received was generally of a higher quality than had been the case in the past.

By September of 2003 Special Branch had reduced in numbers by a total of 17%, although largely through severance and natural attrition. In July of 2003 the Police Service initiated further organisational changes that proposed two new departments, Crime Operations and Criminal Justice, as well as two rather than three policing regions across the province. The new organisational structures were intended to address recommendations made in the HMIC, Stevens and Blakey reports. Approval of the new structure took place in November of 2003 (see also Areas of Concern).

In its 1999 report the Independent Commission recommended that the Police Service's Full Time Reserve (FTR) be phased out over time, and that members of the FTR should have an opportunity to apply as regular police officers. The Policing Board and the Police Service agreed in November of 2002 that the FTR will be retained until April of 2005, at which time it would be phased out over an 18-month period, subject to the security situation. The Police Service also presented a plan for the deployment of 2,500 members of the new Part Time Reserve (PTR) in all 29 DCUs to the Policing Board. The Police Service contracted the Consensia Partnership, a private recruiting firm, to conduct the recruiting. In January of 2003 Consensia began a pilot PTR recruitment competition in Banbridge, Coleraine, Lisburn and Newtownabbey DCUs (see also Areas of Concern).

The Police Service submitted a Business Case to the Northern Ireland Office in July of 2003 seeking funding for costs associated with the new programme. The Business Case seeks £12-13 million in order to recruit and appoint 1,569 members of the PTR over a three-year period. As of

March of 2003, the actual strength of the existing PTR was 921 members.

Areas of Concern

As of 30 September 2003 District Commanders do not have an updated policy that clearly defines the responsibilities and authorities for the allocation of resources and staffing in the new devolved decision making structure. While transitional policy in the form of General Order 13/2001, Transitional Arrangements for the Introduction of District Command Units, served to bridge the gap between the pre- and post-devolution Police Service, the General Order does not elaborate on the roles and responsibilities of the District Commander, and the specific limitations of the Commander's authority. The Independent Commission had recommended a greater delegation of decision-making authority to District Commanders, including control over devolved budgets and police resources within their district. However, as noted, interim directives in place have not been replaced with definitive new authorities for Regional ACCs and District Commanders.

While Headquarters staffing trends indicate a reduction in the total number of posts assigned to Headquarters activities this may result from the effects of recent severance initiatives and natural attrition, rather than a conscious effort on the part of the Police Service to reassign personnel to DCUs. However, anticipated changes to certain Headquarters functions, such as Criminal Intelligence, may work against the Police Service's stated intention of reducing the size of Headquarters.

In its 1999 report the Independent Commission noted that Special Branch has played a crucial role in countering security threats over the years and preventing terrorist attacks. It also noted that the Police Service must remain equipped to detect and deal with terrorist activity, and for this the police need a good intelligence capacity. However, the Independent Commission also noted that a decrease in paramilitary-related crime is frequently offset in a peaceful situation by a growth in other types of organised crime, often involving violence. The four recommendations made by the Independent Commission relating to Special Branch were based on the recognition that, in order to effectively combat increasingly violent organised criminal groups, Special Branch and Crime Branch be brought together, and more importantly that Special Branch focus on supporting criminal investigations as well as security matters.

As illustrated by the following chronology, progress in fully implementing the 1999 Independent Commission recommendations has been slow. The oversight team first identified in September of 2001 the need for a strategy, plans and policies that would be utilised to achieve the amalgamation of Special Branch and Crime Branch. In April of 2001, the Special Branch and Crime Branch had come under the command of one Assistant Chief Constable (Crime), who was responsible for six branches including Special Branch. In January of 2002 the Police Service provided a proposed plan, however this plan was found to be inadequate and it did not meet the intent of the Independent Commission. A revised plan was therefore requested. In May of 2002, the Police Service advised that they would not provide a revised plan until outside reviews relating to Special Branch (HMIC and Stevens reviews) were complete. The Policing Board agreed to a November of 2002 delay. In November of 2002, the HMIC (Crompton) review of Special Branch was completed and contained 11 recommendations, which were accepted by the Police Service and Policing Board. In April of 2003, the Police Service reported limited progress on the HMIC (Special Branch) recommendations. Additionally, the HMIC (Blakey murder enquiry structures) and Stevens (Special



Branch enquires) recommendations had been released. Although there were differences in the recommendations of the three reports, there was also a core consistency with the recommendations of the Independent Commission. In July of 2003, the Chief Constable announced a re-organisation of the Police Service structure, including Special Branch.

On 14 November 2003 the Office of the Oversight Commissioner received a detailed report from the Police Service explaining how they will deal with the implementation of the Independent Commission's recommendations relating to Special Branch, while also incorporating to the extent possible the recommendations from other outside reviews. Although the November of 2003 report was received too late to allow for a thorough evaluation, it does appear that the Police Service's plan is a well-researched and considered attempt to address the recommendations relating to Special Branch. All changes are scheduled to be in place by May of 2004. It will be important that the scheduled implementation occurs as planned, and our close monitoring will continue along with a full evaluation of the plan.

As noted by both the Independent Commission and on a number of occasions by the Oversight Commissioner, any modern police service needs a well-resourced, well-trained and fully supported intelligence capacity to deal with terrorist and other threats to national security. However, the Police Service must also balance this need with the need to combat organised and violent crime, and other crimes that victimise communities.

Although phase out plans for the Full Time Reserve (FTR) have been announced and negotiations between the NIO and the Police Federation regarding retraining and severance arrangements have commenced, considerable uncertainty remains among FTR members regarding their future. As of 30 September 2003 decisions to provide employment counselling, retaining, assistance with transition and entitlements similar to those of regular police officers leaving the Police Service, had not yet been finalised.

With the concurrence of the Policing Board the Police Service selected four sites to implement a pilot Part Time Reserve (PTR) recruitment programme, with initial appointments to take place in June of 2003. The four sites were selected with the belief that recruitment efforts would be successful, and that the experience gained would then be used to strengthen a wider recruitment process. Upon review however, this initiative appears to fall short of the Independent Commission's recommendation for PTR recruitment, in that none of the four test sites could be categorised as areas where PTR members are currently under-represented. Unfortunately the Police Service's hiring programme for members of the PTR is not as successful at attracting Catholic candidates as its hiring programme for regular police recruits. Nonetheless, a merit pool of 268 applicants was established for 176 available positions. This will permit the enlargement of the PTR as recommended by the Independent Commission. 19% of applicants were Catholics and 45% of applicants were women. The Police Service will seek the participation of the Policing Board in selecting any future sites for recruitment in an attempt to achieve the Independent Commission's intent. It should be noted that the 50:50 hiring criterion, applied to regular police recruits and civilian employee competitions of six or more posts, does not apply to the recruitment of PTR members.

By September of 2003 there had been no appointments, and the Police Service has sought a legal opinion as to how it should progress with appointments. The NIO advised the Police Service that the PTR Business Case could not be finalised for transmission to the Treasury until the Chief Constable, in consultation with the Policing Board, reached a decision in relation to the long-term PTR recruitment exercise.

▶▶ **size of the police service**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland compared the strength of Northern Ireland's Police Service with those in the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and recommended that if the security situation did not significantly deteriorate the Police Service be reduced in size over the next 10 years. The model proposed included an initial downsizing over three years through an early retirement or severance programme, and a phasing out of the Full Time Reserve (FTR).

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Police Service had implemented the proposed severance arrangements recommended by the Independent Commission, for both regular police officers and members of the Full Time Reserve (FTR). A complete set of policies, directives, documents and booklets has been employed by the Voluntary Severance Support Unit to assist in the administration of the severance programme.

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 Policing Board approved the suspension of the severance programme for one year. In order to improve on severance arrangements, the Northern Ireland Office also conducted a review of the first three years of the programme. In fulfilling its monitoring role, and recognising the priority of human resources issues and the urgent need to address patrol capacity, 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 650 police positions; and, (4) short-term adjustment in the timing of officers leaving under the severance provisions.

By September of 2003 significant progress had been made in achieving the 10-year plan recommended by the Independent Commission for the total number of regular police officers. The Commission recommended that the Police Service achieve a complement of 7,500 regular police officers, and the Policing Board agreed on a Human Resource Planning Strategy prepared by the Police Service to achieve this level of staffing by 2005. The Strategy incorporates the continued appointment of an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic police recruits each year, and a modified severance programme that allows deferment of severance for certain police officers.

The Independent Commission projected that by fiscal year 2003/2004 the Police Service would have 7,221 regular police officers available for duty, once the Full Time Reserve (FTR) had been completely phased out. As of 27 August 2003 the Police Service had approximately 7,303 regular police officers and 1,721 members of the FTR at its disposal. This represents a total complement of 9,024 police officers. Contracts for members of the FTR have been extended until 31 March 2005, when the Police Service intends to phase out the FTR over an 18-month period.

The Independent Observer appointed to monitor the Human Resource Planning Strategy has also concluded that the revision of the severance scheme and recruitment of 540 police recruits per year should help achieve the target of 7,500 regular police officers within the planned time frame. The Strategy includes a plan to increase local police resources by deploying regular police officers from Headquarters, among other areas, to the District Command Units (DCUs), thereby increasing the number of police officers in DCUs from approximately 4,620 as of September of 2003, to 5,400 by 2005.

As recommended by the Independent Commission, the Police Service successfully implemented its early retirement or severance programme of eligible police officers and Reserve members in January of 2001. During the first four years of the severance programme a total of 2,119 regular and reserve police officers applied for voluntary severance or early retirement. The NIO has agreed to extend the severance programme to the year 2010, unless its objectives are met before then. The Voluntary Severance Support Unit (VSSU) was also established, to manage the implementation of the Independent Commission's recommendation on severance, and the administrative processes related to outplacement. In addition, steps will be in place to ensure that appropriate training will be provided for those filling posts vacated by officers leaving under the severance programme.

During Year Four of the severance programme the number of police officers leaving the Police Service was significantly reduced in order to retain officers with certain skills and to ease shortages. The Police Service has agreed with the Policing Board that any future severance plans will be organised in such a way as to reduce disruption. As severance continues, and assuming the recruitment of 540 recruits each year, the Police Service has agreed to permit around 380 officers to retire each year.

During the first four years of the voluntary severance program, 670 police officers were approved to participate in external training plans. Of this number 146 actually attended the training courses. This represents moderate progress toward providing measures for police officers seeking other employment. The Police Service plans to increase the role and usage of the Police Retraining and Rehabilitation Trust, in order to expand the availability for training and job placement.

Areas of Concern

The decision to phase out the FTR over an 18-month period beginning in April of 2005 has been communicated to each member of the Full Time Reserve by letter. As noted in previous oversight reports, all of the current reserve members need to be fully informed of the options that might be open to them.

The Police Service conducted a survey of reserve members in October of 2001 to determine the degree of interest in employment with other police services in Great Britain. Of those responding, 51% indicated an interest in such employment. The Police Service reported that a new survey would be conducted to gauge interest in other police services, however by September of 2003 no progress on this second survey initiative was reported to the oversight team. Now that the decision has been made with regard to the future status of the FTR, there is no reason why reserve members should not be allowed to seek new employment before their contract expires,



however evidence of a detailed plan with time lines is still required. Finally, although negotiations with the Police Federation in regard to severance packages and retraining for members of the FTR are currently in progress, they too need to be concluded soon if reserve members are to make timely decisions critical to their future.

▶▶ **composition and recruitment**



Background

In September of 1999 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 of achieving a representative Police Service is a sound and successful recruitment programme that reaches, attracts and is supported by all segments of the population, especially those segments that are under-represented. Several recommendations address the various components of a sound recruitment programme that will attract, fairly test, objectively vet, and select applicants in a way that results in a diversified Police Service that is representative of, and can be supported by, the community.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the Northern Ireland Office, Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman had each established plans and practices to ensure that their staffs were 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. 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 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. The Secretary of State appointed an independent assessor to validate disqualification decisions in cases where an applicant is aggrieved. The Police Service continued 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 saw increasing interest. In addition, the Gaelic Athletic Association's removal of its ban on police officers from Northern Ireland becoming members was a positive development in meeting the Independent Commission's recommendation.

By September of 2003 the recruitment programme has been operating with continued success. The strength of the programme can be attributed to the professional skill of Consensia and the close working relationship that has developed between Consensia and the Police Service. Of particular note has been the persistence and subsequent success of Consensia in convincing newspapers in areas historically under-represented in the Police Service to accept police officer recruitment advertising. In addition the participation of carefully selected lay assessors who possess broad ranging experience has strengthened the selection process and is an essential component of the recruitment programme. The involvement of lay observers has proven to be a strength and has contributed to the overall success of the programme.

During the summer of 2002 Grafton Recruitment was selected for the recruitment of civilian support staff. Grafton's recruitment programme is also well designed and meets contemporary policing and human resources standards. Independent community observers check the testing facilities to ensure adequacy, and evaluate whether assessment processes follow established

protocols. An external contractor has been engaged to monitor civilian recruitment and assessment procedures for quality assurance. Using information gained from focus groups, Grafton has developed an innovative and imaginative advertising strategy designed to reach groups who are currently under-represented in the Police Service. The strategy includes on-line and press advertising in specifically designated professional publications related to the positions being advertised. The strategy primarily covers Northern Ireland, but also includes the Republic of Ireland.

Grafton's programme, to the extent used by the Police Service, has proven to be successful. Under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Police Service is required to recruit an equal number of Catholic and other than Catholic applicants according to the 50:50 principle, in each competition for six or more posts. By September of 2003 Grafton completed eight competitions for civilian support staff that fall under the 50:50 requirement, however Grafton has also completed recruitment competitions which do not fall under the 50:50 requirement. Each of the competitions that falls under the 50:50 requirement, and for which applicants are entered into a merit pool, has been sufficient to meet the recruiting goal.

The most significant competition was for Station Enquiry Assistants, envisaged by the Independent Commission as replacing police officers assigned to enquiry desks. Following an internal trawl that produced 32 transfers, in February of 2003 the Police Service requested that Grafton undertake a competition to fill a further 60 of these positions. Grafton received requests for 6,217 application packs, which resulted in 1,892 subsequent applications. A merit pool of 227 qualified applicants available for appointment has been provided to the Police Service. Grafton also completed competitions with sufficient merit pools of qualified applicants for appointment as Press Officers (6), IT Specialists (16), Driving Instructors (6), Trainee Police Analyst (10), Personnel Officers (14), Business Managers (14) and Telecommunications Engineering Technicians (14).

The success of the recruitment programme for civilian support staff, similar to that for police officers, can be attributed to the professional skill of Grafton Recruitment and the close working relationship that has developed between Grafton and the Police Service. In addition, the careful review of each competition conducted by Grafton is used as the basis for making continued improvements in the selection process.

Areas of Concern

The Police Service is working closely with the Consensia Partnership and Grafton Recruitment to recruit police officers and civilian support staff from the entire community, and are making strides in that regard, particularly with the recruitment of police officers. However, future and continued success in attracting applicants representative of the community is dependent upon the encouragement of broadly based, cross-community support. Support has been forthcoming from many segments of the community, but has not been forthcoming from all, and in certain areas there have been refusals to accept, and requests to remove, recruitment advertising.

Potential recruits have been openly discouraged from joining the Police Service and new recruits have been discouraged from remaining with the Police Service. Of Catholics questioned as part of a Community Attitudes Survey recently published by the Policing Board, fully 72% cited fear of intimidation or attack on themselves or relatives as a reason for not joining the Police Service. It



should be noted that the Police Service has generally acted in good faith to fulfil recommendations on its composition, and it is vital that all of the groups and institutions that have an interest in carrying out the required police reforms provide the support needed to realise the Independent Commission's vision of a new beginning for policing in Northern Ireland.

Although the Police Service is systematically making good progress in the recruiting of police officers, it appears that the recruitment of a representative civilian support staff remains a longer-term concern. Specifically, the Independent Commission's recommendations will not be achieved in the foreseeable future. In September of 1999 the Independent Commission recommended that, similar to police staff, civilian staff of the Police Service be balanced and representative of the whole community in Northern Ireland. The Independent Commission noted that it would be illogical to argue for diversity among police officers: "while leaving civilian staff unchanged, especially if many jobs now held by officers are to be progressively civilianised". At the time, the majority of Police Service civilian staff were either members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) seconded to the Police Service, or members of the public directly recruited by the Police Service.

In 1999 civilian staff consisted of 2,601 civil servants and 791 direct recruits. The Independent Commission noted that at the time, 12% of civilian staff were Catholic. Since most civilian staff were members of the NICS, the Independent Commission suggested that it should be possible to effect "early and substantial change" by encouraging civil servants to transfer to other NICS Departments, and recommended that the NICS co-operate with the Policing Board and the Chief Constable to facilitate the transfer of civil servants out of the Police Service and into other Departments.

The Government's August of 2001 Implementation Plan partially agreed with these recommendations, however committed the Northern Ireland Office, the Police Service and the Policing Board to developing a "package of measures" the cumulative effect of which would be the achievement of a more representative civilian workforce and one which would be more effectively integrated into the Police Service. Measures include the transfer of civil servants to other government jobs, civil servants converting to direct recruit status when accepting a promotion within the Police Service, and the hiring of direct recruits on a 50:50 basis for positions of six or more posts.

The numbers in the direct recruit category did rise significantly between 1999 and July of 2003, from 791 (23.3% of the total civilian workforce) to 1,704 (48.8% of the civilian workforce). The engagement of Grafton Recruitment by the Police Service in June of 2002 accelerated the increase of Catholics among direct recruits hired. Concomitant with the rise in direct recruits, the number of Northern Ireland civil servants with the Police Service fell between 1999 and July of 2003, from 2,601 to 1,786. However, when the two categories are combined (i.e. civil servants and direct recruits together) representation of Catholics among civilian staff rose only 1.4% between 1999 and July of 2003, from 12.3 % to 13.7%. By contrast, in January of 2002 Catholics made up 42.5% of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

In our Report No. 7, released in May of 2003, we noted that at the current pace of hiring, it was unlikely that civilian staff of the Police Service would be representative of the broader community in the near future. Our concern remains that the early and substantial change toward achieving a

balanced and representative civilian workforce envisioned by the Independent Commission has not come about, nor is it likely in the near future.

The Police Service has prepared an update to a January 2003 business case to secure funding for 300 additional civilian support staff as part of their programme to civilianise a total of 650 posts over three years within the Police Service (i.e. posts presently staffed by police officers). However, the business case for the 300 additional civilian staff has not yet been approved. The recruitment of 260 Station Enquiry Assistants (SEAs), which is included in the Business Case, will represent progress toward a more representative civilian workforce and will also relieve police officers for crime control and community policing activities. Funding for the recruitment of an initial 60 SEAs has been approved and hiring is underway.

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission recommended the registration of interests and associations. Citing a number of reasons, the Police Service did not begin to implement this recommendation until August of 2003, when it announced that a policy requiring the registration of memberships by police officers in seven specific organisations was being implemented. However, as of 30 September 2003 the Police Service had not communicated the requirements of this new policy directly to the police officers. During the evaluation visit conducted in September of 2003 the Police Service advised the oversight team that Guidance Books would be sent to each police officer by 1 October 2003, and that preliminary registration data would be available for the oversight evaluation in December of 2003.

▶▶ **training, education and development**



Background

In September of 1999 the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland addressed the subject of Training, Education and Development and focussed on the restructuring of this critical area as being pivotal for a successful transformation of the Police Service. The Independent Commission recommended the development of a Training, Education and Development (TED) Strategy for both the recruit and in-service training programs. The TED Strategy was to clearly demonstrate the inter-connection between the overall aims of the recommendations, and the objectives and priorities set out in the future policing plans of the Police Service and the Policing Board. The Independent Commission also emphasised the importance of a new state-of-the-art Police College as critical to the long-term success of the training programme and the transformation of Northern Ireland's Police Service. The new Police College was seen as the cornerstone to providing the recruit officer as well as seasoned police and civilian personnel with the environment conducive to modern learning and development techniques.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 the TED Primary Reference Document had been approved by the Policing Board. This was an important first step in ensuring that a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) could be undertaken by the Police Service. The recruit foundation-training programme had also been established and was well underway, as had the Tutor Officer programme.

By September of 2003 the Policing Board, aware of the need for improved training programmes, had appointed a consultant to specifically monitor the ongoing implementation of the TED Strategy. The consultant was engaged in March of 2003. The aims of the Policing Board's monitoring system include: ensuring the integration of the performance targets and the Independent Commission's recommendations in TED plans and activities, the establishment of the Policing Board's own performance indicators to ensure objective and accurate monitoring, and the validation of Police Service training budget forecasts and expenditures. The consultant has developed a comprehensive monitoring framework to achieve these objectives. The Policing Board is expected to approve its monitoring framework as the primary instrument for ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Service's delivery of training, education and development.

The Police Service had also engaged a new Director of Training, Education and Development, effective 1 April 2003. The Police Service had submitted a costed Training Plan to the Policing Board. This Plan was the first attempt to cost all TED activities covering fiscal year 2003/2004. Since this is the first such plan, the baseline it represents has yet to be validated against future expenditures. Following its review of the Costed Training Plan, the Policing Board endorsed the Plan in March of 2003. In addition, the Training Needs Analysis has been outsourced with results scheduled for December of 2003. These results will determine the organisation's comprehensive future training strategy.

Training Branch has developed a Registry System to track crucial information relating to training activities. No such system had existed in the past, making it extremely difficult to retrieve data on up to 259 learning programmes offered by four separate faculties, together delivering approximately 10,000 training days annually. The Registry will be linked to the organisational finance system, which will enable the production of accurate future expenditure forecasts and facilitate the provision of accurate and up-to-date training information to members of the public.

As reported in our Report No. 8, released in September of 2003, a Learning Advisory Council was established which provides the Police Service with input and involvement in training activities from community representatives, including individuals from academia, commerce, finance and other private and public sector areas. Training Branch has also developed partnerships with other police training facilities in the UK and Ireland, and also with a number of general educational institutions throughout Northern Ireland such as the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, with a view to providing District Command Units with a range of non-police training and educational opportunities as recommended by the Independent Commission. However, structured agreements are not yet in place.

Training Branch has launched a new initiative to provide training to first and second level police and civilian supervisors under the "Leadership Grid" developed by a private firm from the United States. As of 30 September 85 staff had completed the training. In conjunction with the SECAPRA problem-solving model already adopted by the Police Service, the Grid Programme is intended to enhance employees' understanding and application of other problem solving techniques. Ongoing Leadership Grid training will eventually extend to members of District Policing Partnerships, other Police Service partners and members of the community.

Training Branch has established a Task and Steering Group to assist with the Civilian Development Programme. Early progress has been made in some areas, with joint police-civilian training taking place in communications and first aid training courses. The Police Service's Leadership for Life Programme, developed through the auspices of the Open University, is open to all civilian and police personnel at the managerial level. The Leadership for Life programme is fully accredited by the university and provides participants with contemporary leadership and development learning skills as recommended by the Independent Commission. To facilitate learning within the Police Service it has renovated its Executive Leadership classrooms at Garnerville and technologically integrated them with the Open University's Resource Centre. Finally, the Foundation Faculty's Part Time Reserve training programme also provides for the inclusion of civilians in some aspects of the training.

Areas of Concern

The lack of an adequate training facility remains a serious concern, and has been extensively addressed in previous oversight reports. The Independent Commission noted the critical aspect of this recommendation in its 1999 report, and the Policing Board has also stated that a new Training College is one of the cornerstones of meaningful and long-lasting police reform in Northern Ireland, noting that: "the establishment of a new Police Training College is an absolute necessity in order to ensure that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has a world-class training facility for a modern, first-class police service". The need for a new training facility was underscored during a recent oversight visit, when existing Police Service training facilities were found to be in such dilapidated state that, in some instances, health and safety concerns rather than effectiveness had become the main issues. At present the target date for completion of a new college is 2007 which, given progress to date, seems optimistic. In the interim, the Police Service is bridging the gap by using temporary facilities, itself a significant cost. Arguably these funds would be better spent on a new Training College that would also facilitate the new beginning envisioned by the Independent Commission. It is critical that the construction of a new Police College not fall victim to systemic inertia, and the efforts of all parties involved in the selection



and construction of a new facility should be focussed on making this critical objective a reality, including the provision of adequate funding by Government.

In its 1999 report the Independent Commission recognised that Service Level Agreements (SLAs) would be an important step in the devolution of authority to DCUs. Aside from allowing the Police Service to use its limited training resources rationally and based on need, SLAs would also permit District Commanders to structure their district-level training programmes according to the specific needs of their respective DCU. Moreover, now that DPPs are established and operating, ensuring a clear understanding of what Training Branch is expected to deliver to the districts becomes even more crucial. However, in its public response to our Report No. 8, released in September of 2003, the Police Service noted that training efforts were concentrated in course creation and delivery, rather than on the administrative process of developing SLAs. Although we have requested evidence of SLAs from the Police Service since September of 2001, no approved or final documentation had been provided as of 30 September 2003.

▶▶ **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.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 good planning by the Police Service, combined with diligent work on the part of the Policing Board, resulted in critical early successes to the new beginning envisaged by the Independent Commission. The change of name had come into effect in November of 2001, with the badge and flags being changed in April of 2002. The complete change of uniform was completed in a single day, 5 April 2002. A police memorial policy was established and a Garden of Remembrance was funded and under construction. In addition, policy had been developed to introduce a neutral working environment, with a follow-up audit of all police stations to monitor compliance.

By September of 2003 General Order 7/2003, Neutral Working Environment, issued in April of 2003, had formally mandated the maintenance of a neutral working environment. The new appraisal system introduced on 1 April 2003 required an evaluation of an individual's responsibility for maintaining standards. An audit of 11 DCUs by the Change Management Team in the first quarter of 2003 found police premises compliant with policy, with two minor exceptions, which were immediately corrected. Local maintenance is a command and supervisory responsibility. Monitoring of the level of compliance with Police Service policy on the maintenance of a neutral working environment will continue. In addition, the Garden of Remembrance was officially opened by HRH The Prince of Wales on 2 September 2003. Maintenance of the Garden of Remembrance is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation.

Areas of Concern

Funding for the Museum project designed to complement the Garden of Remembrance was not in place as of 30 September 2003. Progress on final approval for funding will be monitored during upcoming oversight evaluations.

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



Background

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland was asked to make proposals concerning the scope for structured co-operation with An Garda Síochána and other police forces. In September of 1999 the Independent Commission discussion in this area recognised the excellent operational co-operation between the (then) Royal Ulster Constabulary and other police agencies around the world. However, it noted that co-operation could be improved. The Independent Commission also noted that the globalisation of crime required police services around the world to collaborate with each other more effectively, and that the exchange of best practice ideas between police services would help the effectiveness of domestic policing.

Progress and Accomplishments

By September of 2002 an Inter-Governmental Agreement was signed by representatives of the British and Irish Governments. This occurred on 29 April 2002 and the intent of this Agreement was to cover key aspects of policing co-operation. It was subsequently determined that both British and Irish legislative frameworks were required and work commenced in that regard, with a (then) projected completion date of the spring of 2003. A first annual conference between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Garda Síochána occurred in Templemore in the Republic of Ireland in April of 2002. Protocols for short and long-term personnel exchanges were reported between the Police Service and the Garda. The first phase of joint disaster planning was completed with a 'table top' exercise between the two police services, and an actual exercise was planned for the spring of 2003. The Police Service was actively involved in peacekeeping missions. Secondments of police officers, generally at more senior ranks, were occurring from the Police Service to UK police services, however there have been limited results in acquiring secondments into the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Informal training links were being developed, although nothing structured was in place.

By September of 2003, the 'live disaster' cross-border exercise had taken place at a border point, involving the Police Service, the Garda and other emergency responders. This occurred on 21 May 2003. The de-briefing report is awaited. A second annual Police Service-Garda Conference occurred in September of 2003 near Belfast with a theme of 'Policing in Co-operation'.

While British and Irish legislation formalising co-operation had been completed, all regulations were not in place by September of 2003. These are scheduled to be in effect by the end of 2003. Protocols for exchanges between the Police Service and the Garda are agreed. Good operational co-operation and success continues to be demonstrated between the Police Service and other police services, including the Garda Síochána. Outward secondments with UK policing continue, and as of June of 2003 there remained 42 police officers on international peace keeping missions. This number will be reduced to six in central services in the UK by the end of the year, with no overseas assignments planned thereafter.

Apart from formal agreements between the Governments of the UK and the Republic of Ireland that cover generic aspects of co-operation, including training, specific agreements with other police training establishments in Ireland and the United Kingdom have not been developed. However, there are informal links and some ad hoc training is taking place, for example in the areas of crime and communications.

Areas of Concern

As noted in our Report No. 6, released in December of 2002, the Police Service has established informal contacts with several police training facilities. However, by September of 2003 the Police Service had not yet developed formal or systematic collaboration agreements with those institutions, covering issues such as faculty exchanges and joint in-service training. As noted previously, one partnership agreement has been signed with Georgian College, Ontario, Canada. However, specific plans for co-operation had not been formalised by September of 2003. While the focus of the Independent Commission's recommendations on co-operation in training was to open the Police Service to other ideas, the lack of results in this area also reflects on training issues relating to collaboration and openness. While the development of a joint database with the Garda, and cross-border communications needs are understandably complex, results have not yet been achieved. Oversight will continue its monitoring of this area for demonstrated progress.

A longer-term concern relates to the strategic development of the Police Service's capacity to draw on the experience of policing from around the world, while at the same time developing and contributing Police Service experience to global policing issues. As of September of 2003 there were only 2 exchanges into the Police Service from the UK, or elsewhere, and none from the Garda Síochána. The Police Service and the Policing Board have rightly focussed in the shorter term on reducing the international peacekeeping commitments of the Police Service, in order that it can deal better with domestic policing needs. For example, there were 42 police officers on UN or other overseas duty in June of 2003, six are scheduled for 2004 and none for 2005. However, continued retrenchment and an ad hoc approach to the Independent Commission's broader intent of increasing the experience and capacity of the Police Service through North-South, UK and global exposure, is a longer term issue that remains for the Police Service and Policing Board to address. The Independent Commission's recommendation that the Northern Ireland police "should be ready" to participate in future UN peacekeeping operations and other exchanges will continue to be monitored by the oversight process.

Finally, despite the signing of an Inter-Governmental Agreement, legal advice was that legislation was required in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to give effect to the expressed intent. This is not expected until the end of 2003. It will be important to accomplish this so that all real or perceived barriers to formal co-operation are removed, and so the Police Service and the Garda can give some effect to the Independent Commission's recommendations.

▶▶ **oversight commissioner**



Background

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

Progress and Accomplishments

The Oversight Commissioner has established an office and small staff in Northern Ireland, along with a United States and Canadian team of experienced senior law enforcement and academic experts to evaluate and report on the progress of change. This is the third public report for 2003, and the ninth in a series of reports. Full details can be located on our web site at: www.oversightcommissioner.org

Areas of Concern

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

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



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