

TRAINING, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- 16.1** In the preceding chapter we have made recommendations for radical transformation of the policing service in Northern Ireland. The training, education and development of police officers and civilian staff will be critical to the success of this transformation. Until now, recruit training has been geared primarily to the security-related policing which has dominated the work of the RUC. More than ten per cent of the curriculum has been taken up with drill in the military style; and it is symbolic of the militaristic nature of the training that the head of the training establishment has had the title of “Commandant”.
- 16.2** During the life of this Commission, the police introduced a new recruit training curriculum, which entered into effect in June 1999. This represents a significant advance from the previous curriculum and puts the police in step with changes in training elsewhere in the world, with, for example, more focus on developing personal communication and negotiation skills, scenario-based problem-solving exercises, self assessment and peer assessment. It also has a less military flavour; however, although the drill component has been cut by half, it is – at 33 hours – still a large proportion of the total 580 hours of the curriculum and, as we noted in an earlier chapter, contrasts strikingly with the less than 2 hours devoted to human rights. We believe that recruit training needs to be much more radically transformed.
- 16.3** In April 1999 HMIC produced a report on police training in England and Wales¹ which contained several serious criticisms of the way in which training was managed and delivered. Very few police services had any real idea of the cost of their training programmes; training estates were inadequately managed; only a handful of police services had training strategies, or linked training requirements to police objectives; and almost none of them had systems for evaluating the success or failure of the training courses they were running. Many of the observations made by the Audit Commission in that report could also be applied to training in the RUC. In-service training and development is not integrated into corporate planning. The setting of objectives is not accompanied by a training programme to equip officers to accomplish those objectives. Several officers told us that they had received little or no training to support stated policy objectives, for example in community awareness or in human rights. And some officers involved in community work expressed frustration that they had not had access to sufficient training in subjects they would find useful, such as domestic violence or drug abuse.

Strategy

- 16.4** The objectives set out in this report are extensive. We have envisaged a police service dedicated to the protection of human rights and respect for human dignity; a police service that is accountable, responsive, communicative and transparent; a new policing style based on partnerships with the community; a decentralised police service with decision-making responsibilities devolved to beat teams and to district commanders; more flexible management and personnel practices and many other changes. These objectives need to be matched by a training, education and development strategy, both for recruits and for officers already in place. *We recommend that a training,*

¹ “Managing Learning: A Study of Police Training”, HMIC. London 1999

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

Funding

16.5 At the moment there is no comprehensive training and development budget. As the Audit Commission observed in its recent report, this is also the case in several English and Welsh police services. This is indicative of the low priority given to training and development, which is not seen as an integral part of police business. It also makes the funds available for training vulnerable to raiding for other purposes if pressing needs arise, as they do frequently in Northern Ireland. *We recommend that a total training and development budget should be established, covering all aspects of training, and that this should be safeguarded against transfers to other sub-heads.*

A new police college

16.6 The RUC's Training Centre at Garnerville has cramped and inadequate accommodation. A new facility has been under discussion for years. Classroom space is very limited. The residential accommodation is poor. There are no specialist rooms for IT training, interview training, custody suite or courtroom training. There are no proper library facilities. The physical training suite is also inadequate, and there is no swimming pool. On every one of these points the Training Centre is inferior to the Garda Siochana's training centre at Templemore. *We recommend that the Northern Ireland police should have a new purpose-built police college and that the funding for it should be found in the next public spending round.* Garnerville is not a good site for redevelopment, and in any case its facilities will continue to be required while a new college is being built. We see advantage in having the college located away from other police facilities, ideally in an area convenient for links to be established with a university (see paragraph 16.10). We also envisage that the college should outsource some training modules to other educational establishments (social science subjects for example), which would also favour a location close to such an establishment.

Formulating new training

16.7 We do not intend to give detailed prescriptions for the sort of training that should be given either to recruits or to officers already in service. The police service itself should do a detailed analysis of needs as part of the strategy we have recommended. Responsibility for this analysis will lie at every level in the police service. At the most senior levels, police managers should be aware of the extent to which the officers under their command have the skills needed to do their jobs and meet service objectives, or need training to acquire those skills. All line managers will have to identify the mix of skills needed in their own commands, and then work with individual officers to prepare personal development plans as part of the performance appraisal management system.

16.8 Some elements of training and education should be common to all police officers – such as training in basic police procedures, IT, human rights, community awareness, key aspects of the law, and democratic accountability – but many will be relevant only to officers in specialist departments, or appropriate only when an officer reaches management level, and it may well be that different district commands will have variations in the skills they require of their officers.

We therefore recommend that there should be service level agreements between police districts/departments and the police Training Branch, setting out what the Branch is expected to deliver to the district or department concerned.

Recruit training

- 16.9** Without seeking to prescribe in detail what training curricula should comprise, we believe that there are a number of aspects of recruit training which need to be addressed. The new curriculum introduced in 1999 is an improvement over the old, but problems remain. First – and this is a point which applies to many police services apart from the RUC – there is very little civilian input into recruit training. Police recruits are trained exclusively with other police recruits, in a police training centre co-located with other police institutions, primarily by police officers. We recognise that much of what recruits need to learn is specific to police officers and needs to be taught by police officers; but there is also much that they need to know which need not, and arguably should not, be taught by police officers or at least not exclusively by police officers. We also understand – and this is a point put to us by several other police services – that it is important for recruits to be instilled with a sense of police teamwork, loyalty and camaraderie; but we would also consider it vital that police recruits should continue to consider themselves, and the police service as a whole, to be an integral part of the community.
- 16.10** *We recommend that there should be a high degree of civilian input into the recruit training programme. We recommend that the director of the training centre (and the new college when this is opened) should have both academic qualifications and management expertise, and that civilian instructors be employed, or brought in as necessary, to conduct as many elements of the training programme as possible. We further recommend that some modules of recruit training should be contracted out to universities and delivered on university premises, ideally together with non-police students;* instruction in constitutional matters, human rights, and aspects of the criminal justice system are examples of what we have in mind.
- 16.11** *We recommend that civilian recruits to the police service should also attend the police college, and do some of their training together with police officer recruits.* The reason for this is to instil a sense of common purpose and teamwork between officers and civilians, an area where our cultural audit identified deficiencies.
- 16.12** An important recent change has been that the RUC Training Centre has become an accredited training centre, and qualifications acquired there can therefore be counted as credits towards academic qualifications. We welcome this. *We recommend that recruits who do not already have degrees should be encouraged to acquire appropriate academic qualifications during the first two years of their career,* with the recruit training course counting as the first module towards such a qualification. *We also recommend that encouragement be given to those officers who wish to go on to study for further relevant qualifications.* The police service as a whole should see itself as an organization that values education.
- 16.13** At present recruits are attested as constables on the first day of their training course. They therefore have the status and powers of constables – albeit as probationers – before they have received any training. In other jurisdictions – Canada and the Republic of Ireland, for example – attestation does not take place until the end of the initial training period. The failure rate in the

RUC recruit training course is zero. However good a recruitment process may be, one would expect some degree of failure. Taking the Canadian example again, failure rates are typically around 10%. We believe that the successful completion of the training course should be a meaningful achievement, not a foregone conclusion, and that attestation should mark graduation from the training course. *We recommend that attestation as a police officer should take place only upon successful completion of the recruit training course; that a sufficiently rigorous standard be required for success in that course; and that the completion of the course be marked by a graduation ceremony, (rather than by a “passing-out parade” as at present).*

16.14 We have already noted that drill remains a relatively large component in the recruit course – 33 hours, which is nearly twice as much as in other United Kingdom police services or elsewhere. *We recommend that the hours spent on drill be considerably reduced.*

16.15 One of the overseas police training programmes that impressed us was developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) – a community policing, problem-solving model named CAPRA (clients – analysis – partnership – response – assessment). From the beginning of their basic training, RCMP recruits are taught to: define a problem in the light of their clients’ needs; acquire and analyse information; consider how partnership with others can help resolve the problem; then develop their response; and finally assess and evaluate the outcome. This model is deployed in scenario exercises incorporating the various dilemmas and decisions that confront police officers and the values that they are expected to uphold. CAPRA training precedes the more technical aspects of police procedure in the RCMP course.

16.16 There are other problem-solving models: we have mentioned SARA, used by the Thames Valley Police among others, in an earlier chapter. Again, we do not want to be too prescriptive: and the Northern Ireland police service should develop its own approach as others are doing. But *we do recommend that problem-solving and partnership approaches should be central to the recruit training course, and that scenario exercises be further developed as training tools.* We also underline the importance – recognized in both the models we have mentioned – of assessment and evaluation after police action has been taken.

16.17 Community awareness training has been a feature of RUC recruit training for some years. It has involved clergy, politicians, journalists, community representatives and members of voluntary groups, and is widely seen as a useful initiative although, as the police themselves recognize, it is a work in progress and needs to be developed much further. The training seminar witnessed by this Commission in our view understated the extent and depth of the difficulties that the recruits would face in their work with some communities. One problem is that it has not been possible to get representatives from certain significant sections of the community to work with the police to educate their recruits. We repeat our observation that, if the police service is to be transformed in the way envisaged in this report, it is vital that community leaders – politicians, clergy, schoolteachers and all others with influence – should actively assist in that transformation. *We therefore recommend that community awareness training for police recruits be developed to include representatives of all the main political and religious traditions in Northern Ireland. Moreover, community awareness should not be seen as a stand-alone element of recruit training; it should be integrated into all aspects of training.* People from each of the main communities should have ample opportunity to learn about the history, traditions and outlook of the other. Those wishing to learn the Irish language, and for that matter other languages, should be helped to do so.

Racism awareness (see also the MacPherson report²) and awareness of the concerns of the gay and lesbian community (including the phenomenon of homophobic crime) should also be part of community awareness training.

- 16.18** Unlike police services in the rest of the United Kingdom and in North America, the police in Northern Ireland have not until very recently had a system of “tutor constables” or “field training officers” to whom recruits are attached for their first assignments after completing their recruit training. The purpose of this is to continue the recruit’s training on the job, under the guidance of an experienced officer skilled in the task. UK and US police services are now developing the system further, by training the tutor officers rather than simply relying on natural qualities for the task, and in some cases by offering financial incentives to the tutors. We note the recent introduction of a rudimentary tutoring scheme in Northern Ireland but believe this needs to be further developed. *We recommend that the Northern Ireland police should introduce a comprehensive tutor officer scheme, and that the tutor officers should be carefully selected, according to their commitment and adaptability to the new style of policing, and trained.*

In-service training

- 16.19** What we have said about not wishing to be prescriptive in detail applies even more strongly to the training of officers already in service than to that of recruits. The police service itself must analyse its needs and form a strategy to meet them; and individual officers and line managers should have opportunities to bid for the training to meet their own personal development objectives. But the following general elements will, we believe, be necessary.
- 16.20** First, every officer and civilian in the transformed police service will need to have a full understanding of the impact on policing of the new constitutional arrangements in Northern Ireland, the new policing arrangements as set out in this report, and the reforms of the criminal justice system that result from the review of that system being conducted at the same time as this review. *We recommend that, as soon as possible, every member of the police service should have a course for this purpose.*
- 16.21** *We also recommend, as a matter of priority, that all members of the police service should be instructed in the implications for policing of the Human Rights Act 1998, and the wider context of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Human dignity training, along the lines of that offered by John Jay College in New York to the New York Police Department and police services from some fifty countries, should also be provided. Like community awareness training, human rights and human dignity should not be seen as an add-on to training, but as a consideration affecting all aspects of training.
- 16.22** We have envisaged a substantially different style of management within the Northern Ireland police. Middle managers will have more authority devolved to them, including responsibility for budgets; as the RCMP pointed out to us, it is not sensible to devolve budgets without giving the necessary training to those who are to be responsible for them. At more senior levels, managers will need to delegate much more than they have been accustomed to delegating in the past. A senior US police commander told us how difficult this had been for him and his colleagues – “climbing to the top of the organization only to find the game had changed”; it had taken some

² “The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry”, *op.cit.*

getting used to, but eventually the benefits of having senior management focussed on strategy rather than detail had become evident. *We recommend that all police managers should have management training, as appropriate, and that every manager should at some stage of his/her career do a management course in a non-police environment, such as a business school or university. We also recommend the use of management workshops, so that managers can discuss and develop with each other how best to reshape the police organization.* This technique has proved successful in Boston, where the police have an organizational psychologist in their command team.

16.23 Having recommended a substantial upgrading of information technology (IT) in the Northern Ireland police, *we recommend that every officer and civilian in the service should undergo adequate training in IT.* Training in specific police applications may need to be conducted in the police college (though not necessarily by a police officer), but some IT training – such as data analysis – may be better done elsewhere, and *we recommend that opportunities be taken for joint training with civilian analysts, and members of other police services.*

16.24 Neighbourhood policing could be a difficult transition for officers who have known only security policing in their careers so far. It has proved a difficult transition in police services which have not experienced anything like the security threat faced by the police in Northern Ireland. In Boston, the police department has begun a programme of bringing each neighbourhood “beat team” in for training, the team being trained as a unit and with input coming from other neighbourhood police officers with proven records of success. We mention this as an example rather than a prescription, but *we recommend that the Northern Ireland police should draw on the success of neighbourhood policing in such places as the Markets area of Belfast in developing a neighbourhood policing training programme for all members of the police service.* There may be some merit in inviting input from successful neighbourhood police officers from other police services, and at any rate exchanges of ideas with some of the more advanced police services in this area would be sensible. *We recommend that standard training for neighbourhood officers should include modules on such community problems as domestic violence, child abuse, rape, drugs and youth issues, and that this training should be updated as necessary.*

Transparency

16.25 *We recommend that the training curricula for the police service should be publicly available, and easily accessible, eg. on the Internet.*

16.26 *We recommend that some training sessions should be open to members of the public to attend, upon application, priority being given to members of the Policing Board or District Policing Partnership Boards, Lay Visitors, or other bodies, statutory or non-governmental, involved in working with the police.* It is important that people joining such bodies should be able to learn more about police work, and desirable that other interested members of the public should be able to get to know their police better if they wish. Several police departments in the United States have “citizens academies”, running evening courses of 6 – 12 weeks for the public. These courses familiarise members of the public with police procedures, explain the legal environment in which the police operate and the constraints placed upon them, and show how community-police partnerships can work to best effect and how a citizen can be actively involved in policing. *We recommend that the new police college should offer a pilot citizens course, to assess demand in Northern Ireland.*

16.27 The training of part time reservists should reflect that given to their regular colleagues. There may well need to be more training than in the past, particularly if the demands on the Part Time Reserve are to include substitute duties for regular officers during large-scale public order incidents.