



Sergeants' Matters

Guardians of Excellence



August 2009 Edition One



Chairman's update

John Giblin

Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of the Sergeants' newsletter, which we hope to produce twice a year.

The pivotal importance of the rank of sergeant as the 'Guardians of Excellence' is highlighted in three influential reports in 2008: Sir Ronnie Flanagan's Review of Policing, HMIC's Leading From the Frontline Thematic and the Home Office's From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together. All three emphasise the importance of effective, efficient and robust supervision, leadership and professionalism of the sergeant rank in maintaining standards and improving policing. They also indicate that sergeants would need to be supported through better training and stronger focus on their development.

We particularly welcome the HMIC Thematic as the catalyst for real and progressive change in valuing, appreciating and respecting the importance of the rank and its role within modern British policing.

Sir Ronnie stated that the role of the frontline sergeant is critical to public reassurance and safety. The rank who leads, 24/7, make a fundamental difference to the quality of service experienced by local people in communities when they call upon the police for help. Similarly, the document reinforces the key role of the frontline sergeant in translating vision and strategic intent into day-to-day policing reality. The quality of leadership provided by frontline sergeants to their teams is the one key factor that makes the difference.

The Sergeants' Central Committee is pushing to develop further stakeholder work on clarifying the role of the sergeant, promotion, PDR's, standards, training and critical incidents. We will continue to work with the government, HMIC, ACPO, NPIA, Skills for Justice, Superintendents' Association and Sergeant Branch Board colleagues to improve the welfare of sergeants as a consequence of these reports and in particular the momentum that the thematic has generated in enhancing and professionalising the role of the sergeant.

In terms of what we have achieved we could not speak about issues impacting on sergeants without referring to Sections 120 and 121 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, which included the designation of powers to Police Authority employees to act as custody sergeants with all the responsibilities and duties of the role. The fact that the Police Minister repealed it back in July last year was a victory for policing and the judicial system as a whole. This showed that not only did the Minister listen to the concerns of many bodies involved in this important piece of work

including the Federation, Superintendents' Association and the Federation's National Custody Forum, but it marked a significant and common-sense move towards recognising the extremely important work that the custody sergeant does as the 'Custodians of Excellence.'

However, we are concerned by some aspects of the PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) review. Whilst we welcome that custody sergeants will remain in charge of custody units, we remain suspicious that there are those who wish to civilianise the role of custody sergeant by the back door. We maintain that only the custody sergeant should have the power to authorise detention, carry out risk assessments of detainees and decide on matters regarding charge or bail and we will make sure our views are heard on your behalf.

In my first address at our annual conference in Bournemouth this year, I called for clear national guidelines to be developed to govern the use of acting sergeants and tackle a system which is currently open to nepotism and abuse. Too often a vacancy drives the consideration for likely candidates, rather than a robust selection process with a pool of officers identified in advance through talent spotting and succession planning. I also reiterated the importance of newly promoted sergeants possessing the skills, knowledge and understanding to be competent in the role and warned that there are over 43 variations in forces when it comes to training sergeants. Disgracefully, nearly two thirds of sergeants have had no role-specific training. We shall seek to progress these issues in the coming year.

Members of the Sergeants' Central Committee are also very active in many areas with key stakeholders at all levels, especially in the work of the various sub-committees representing our male and female members.

National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF)

We have always supported the principle of work based assessment being part of the promotion process for the ranks of sergeant and inspector. Our position has always been to support the roll-out of work based assessment to replace OSPRE Part II when it has been evidenced to our satisfaction that the time is right and that all the relevant structures are in place. We have actively engaged with other stakeholders to develop an effective and robust promotion process that can be implemented consistently and with sustainable national standards. The Police Promotion Examination Board (PPEB) were recommending a national roll-out of the NPPF process to the remaining 36 forces, in addition to the original 7 trial forces, from 1 April this year.

However, the Police Federation and Superintendents' Association had concerns and wrote to the Police Minister and Chair of the PPEB in February. As a consequence, at the March meeting of the PPEB, it was agreed to trial a promotion framework in the current seven trial forces and an additional three forces over the next two years.

The new trial, which incorporates the best of OSPRE and NPPF, will be set within the context of a holistic approach to promotion backed by the new Police College of Leadership. This approach has the support of all stakeholders, including the Police Federation.

Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP)

The CLDP team are currently reviewing the workbook material and making links with the National Occupational Standards (NOS) in readiness for the National Police Promotion Framework process. This work was scheduled to be completed by April 2009. A full review of the whole CLDP process is scheduled to be completed by 2010.

All change in No 2 region

The SCC has a new representative in No 2 Region. Malcolm Taylor from North Yorkshire has replaced Michael Downes, who has returned to West Yorkshire to take up the position of Chairman of the Joint Branch Board.

Mal, who was previously the Joint Branch Board Secretary in North Yorkshire comes from a strong operational background. During 25 years in the operational environment, he served as a constable for 14 years, in uniform CID and operational support and upon promotion to Sergeant, he was deployed in uniform, custody and operational support.

Mal's Federation career commenced in 1999 when he was elected as the divisional Sergeants' representative for Scarborough, he went on to hold the positions of Deputy Secretary and Chairman of the North Yorkshire Sergeants Branch Board.

In 2005 he was elected to the full time position of Deputy Secretary and Treasurer of the North Yorkshire Joint Branch Board. During this period he led for the JBB on equality issues and managed a test case with HMRC in relation to maternity provisions for police women.

In 2007 Mal became the JBB Secretary and Discipline Liaison officer and has represented officers in all areas of discipline including misconduct hearings, Chief Constables' reviews and police appeal tribunals.

He is looking to utilise his skills and experience to successfully represent the rank of sergeant, both in the regional and national arenas during his tenure on the Sergeants' Central Committee. Mal has been allocated the following portfolios and sub-committees as a member of the SCC: Legislation, Professional Standards and Health & Safety. He will also be representing the JCC on the CID Practitioners' Group.

Mal has two children, Bethany who is studying at Sheffield University and Lloyd who is in the Royal Air Force. He lists his hobbies as cricket, rugby league and walking his German shepherd dog, Fergus.

Police Federation National Custody Forum

The National Custody Forum was formed five years ago at the request of the Sergeants' Central Committee, recognising that the role of the Custody Sergeant is unique to our rank and indeed the only role that a sergeant has, that is "rank specific". It is therefore imperative that the Police Federation plays a pivotal role in ensuring that sergeants performing the role are protected and informed on all aspects of this demanding and challenging position.

The original plan was that in order to disseminate best practice and current issues, each force should ideally have a "Custody User Group" and each region a "Regional Custody Group". These groups should consist of practitioners and meet regularly to ensure that any issues affecting custody sergeants could be addressed and resolved.

It was anticipated that a representative from the regional group would then attend the newly formed National Custody Forum. This was the original plan and although it operates in some forces and regions, in other areas there does not appear to be force or regional custody meetings operating. The value of these groups is enormous and provides valuable material to the national forum and regions are encouraged to form Custody User Groups.

The National Custody Forum meets three times a year and meetings are attended by Kevin Huish and Steve Evans of the Sergeants' Central Committee. Their attendance ensures that issues from the forum can be put before the SCC for their attention and expertise and used to form SCC Policy. The forum also invites speakers to assist the forum in its work. Speakers have included John Wadham and Nick Long (IPCC), Professor Ivan Topping (Queen's University, Belfast) and Paddy Craig (HMIC/HMIP Joint custody inspection team).

The forum also provides two members, David Kember (Kent) and Kevin Huish (SCC) to work as members of the PPSMG Custody Design Group (Police Property Service Managers). Indeed the group cannot now meet unless one of the two forum members is present to put forward the practitioner's view.

The forum played a major part in aiding Kevin (Thames Valley Federation) and the JCC (through John Coppen) to ensure that the civilianisation of the custody sergeant role did not take place and the latest on this is that enabling legislation will be repealed by end of May 2009. This work is still ongoing to ensure that civilianisation of the role by stealth does not occur.

Mental health detainees and our strong and enduring belief that they should not be held within police cells under the

provisions of S136 Mental Health Act is a continuing "work in progress" with much work going on behind the scenes to ensure that health authorities should take this on rather than rely on the police service.

The forum has also assisted in reviewing the safer detention document, ensuring that the Police Federation's viewpoint and advice was included.

The forum's agenda at each meeting is always full and the level of interest and enthusiasm that exists for the ongoing progression of the role of custody sergeant is self evident.

The forum's current issues include the following:

- Custody sergeant training
- Mental health detainees within custody
- Ongoing PACE and codes of practice review
- Police disposals/HMIC custody inspections
- Use of body armour in custody/custody staffing models
- Risk assessments/virtual courts

National Custody Forum members and regions:

Chair: PS Julian Clapp

Secretary: PS Paul Herdman

No.1 Region - Phil McAlister, Eddie Entwistle

No.2 Region - Will Scarlett, Andy Ward

No.3 Region - Rich Hopkins, Chris Jones

No.4 Region - Kev Walker, A.N. Other

No.5 Region - Dave Kember, Andy Goodwin and Julian Clapp

No.6 Region - Ed Stokes, Paul Green

No.7 Region - Paul Herdman, Ian Hearne

No.8 Region - Mark Acford, Geoffrey Owen

SCC members are Kevin Huish and Steve Evans.

Scotland: Jim Foster, Guernsey: Geoff Austin, Isle of Man: Cathryn Bradley. The new PSNI member is to be confirmed.

Critical Incident

A new critical incident training package has been put together by ACPO and the NPJA in consultation with stakeholders including the Sergeants' Central Committee.

The package was the first to come from the newly created National College of Police Leadership and is designed to teach frontline sergeants how to deal effectively with potential critical incidents.

The decision to create the new training was sparked by HMIC's Leading from the Frontline Thematic, which was critical about how prepared many sergeants are when it comes to dealing with high-profile cases.

As a result, the new critical incident sergeants' awareness course was launched in June, now available to all forces in England and Wales.

The NPJA has said all sergeants should note the key points contained in the package but has stopped short of making it mandatory.

SCC Who's Who



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John Giblin (Chairman)

No. 7 Region (Gwent)



**Adele Kirkwood
(General Secretary/
Treasurer)**

No. 3 Region (West Midlands)



**Julia Roper-Smith
(Vice Chairman)**

Women's Reserve (Derbyshire)



**John Coppen
(Deputy General Secretary/
Treasurer)**

No. 6 Region (Wiltshire)



Ian Rennie

No. 1 Region (Greater Manchester)



Malcolm Taylor

No. 2 Region (North East)



Steve Evans

No. 4 Region (Derbyshire)



Kevin Huish

No. 5 Region (Thames Valley)



Martyn Mordecai

No. 8 Region (Metropolitan)



Paul McKeever

No. 8 Region (Metropolitan)

Representing and promoting nationally the pivotal work of the sergeant