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# Evaluation of the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA): First interim report

Version 1.0

College of Policing Limited  
Leamington Road  
Ryton-on-Dunsmore  
Coventry, CV8 3EN

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# Executive summary

## Key points

- When considering the PCDA as a whole, PCDA student officers have been largely positive about the experience.
- Student officers identified deeper knowledge and understanding, critical thinking, time management and writing skills as benefits.
- Student officers preferred lessons with a direct connection to policing, compared with those where the relevance was less immediately clear.
- Student officers on the PCDA and IPLDP were similar in race, sex and socioeconomic background. While those on the PCDA tended to be younger, most forces recruited this first cohort from an existing pool of candidates.
- Implementation was driven by strategic decision making, strong local governance, collaborative working and effective workforce planning.

## Introduction

The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) is the first of three new initial entry routes for policing developed by the College of Policing (hereafter known as ‘the College’) in collaboration with a range of stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> The first PCDA student officers joined the service in September 2018 and the College is undertaking an evaluation of the programme in seven early-adopter forces. The evaluation will run until 2023 to ensure that the first cohort of recruits can be followed through to completion of the PCDA and into their first year as confirmed police constables.

This interim report presents initial findings from the first year of the evaluation in relation to programme implementation, recruit diversity and the overall experiences of those on the programme. The findings inform and supplement the College’s ‘Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF): Initial entry routes: Learning to date’ report.<sup>2</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Including forces, the Police Federation of England and Wales, the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs’ Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and universities.

<sup>2</sup> College of Policing. (2020). ‘Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date’ [internet]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Documents/PEQF-Learning-to-date.pdf>

provides an overview of PEQF implementation, as well as information on costs, the management of abstraction from frontline duties,<sup>3</sup> examples of good practice and the next steps in PEQF delivery.

## Method

The evaluation aims to understand how the PCDA has been implemented and what outcomes have been delivered. The evaluation is taking place in seven forces and adopts a mixed-methods approach through a longitudinal survey of new recruits and a series of in-depth interviews with those delivering and experiencing the PCDA over four years. The experiences of those on the PCDA will be compared with a cohort of individuals going through the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP), which is the primary entry route used by most police forces prior to the introduction of the PCDA.

This report presents findings from the first survey issued to student officers on the PCDA (n=181, 84% response rate) and the IPLDP (n=137, 68% response rate) shortly after joining the service. In addition, the report draws on interviews conducted with 23 force and higher education institution (HEI) stakeholders, 13 PCDA student officers and five tutors. Interviews with stakeholders were conducted soon after the PCDA was introduced in each of the seven forces. PCDA student officers and tutors were interviewed partway through the first year in three forces. As some PCDA interviewees were only a few months into the programme, the report presents initial experiences of the programme only. Subsequent evaluation surveys will seek to understand the breadth of experiences across the PCDA cohort.

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<sup>3</sup> To provide protected learning time for students and tutor constables to support learning.

# Findings

## 1. Programme experience

The main drivers for joining the police service were consistent across both the PCDA and IPLDP, with new recruits primarily motivated by the opportunity to help people in their community, the excitement of the job and opportunities for career progression.

When considering the PCDA as a whole, encompassing force and university 'classroom' learning and tutorship, PCDA interviewees were largely positive about their experience. Deeper knowledge and understanding, critical thinking, time management and writing skills were identified as benefits. Lessons with an obvious link to policing and delivered by university experts, or those with experience of policing, were well regarded.

Collaborative working between forces and HEIs aimed to minimise perceptions of a 'them and us' approach to delivery. However, all PCDA interviewees favoured practical policing lessons and the shared policing experiences of force trainers, compared with 'less relevant' or 'dry' academic lessons led by university lecturers, who were sometimes viewed as 'outsiders'.

PCDA student officers responding to the survey ranked the opportunity to gain a degree low in the list of motivating factors (ninth out of 12). Interviewees were eager for tutoring and 'real' police work to start. Evaluation forces mainly recruited into the PCDA from an existing pool of candidates, which is likely to have influenced the perceived value of gaining a degree-level qualification, as well as the subsequent value students placed on HEI-led lessons.

A diverse approach to programme design was evident across the different force-HEI partnerships. Feedback from PCDA student officers and tutors suggests that popular design elements included a single tutoring block (10 to 12 weeks), an early immersion week to experience frontline policing and the presence of force trainers during HEI-taught lessons.

Establishing regional force partnerships meant that a force could be without an HEI provider within their force boundary. Force stakeholders highlighted some initial challenges with this approach, including increased travel time for students (though this was not a major issue for PCDA interviewees in this position), online learning alternatives not working, different terminology and processes in partnership forces, and some confusion over responsibilities when HEI staff delivered learning at force training locations.

Overall, the survey suggests that there is little difference in the reported wellbeing of those on the PCDA and IPLDP. Among PCDA interviewees, managing the demands of the PCDA with commitments outside of work was, for the majority, challenging but manageable during the first year.

## 2. Diversity

Evaluation forces have mainly recruited into the PCDA from an existing pool of candidates, or without using targeted strategies to increase workforce diversity. As a result, there is little difference in the demographic characteristics of those on the PCDA and the IPLDP.

The survey findings show that PCDA and IPLDP respondents across the seven forces were similar in the following characteristics: race, sex, socioeconomic background<sup>4</sup> and the likelihood of having a family member in the police service. PCDA respondents tended to be younger than those on the IPLDP, who were also more often married and slightly more likely to have caring responsibilities, possibly due to their age.

One force did use a targeted approach to recruitment, focused on increasing diversity through the PCDA route, which the force reported as successful in attracting a greater proportion of Black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) applicants (22%) to apply when compared with the previous recruitment campaign (12%).<sup>5</sup>

## 3. Implementation

### Facilitators

Implementation in early-adopter forces was facilitated by strategic buy-in, the establishment of governance arrangements, and a commitment to collaborative working between forces and HEIs through face-to-face contact and engagement at all levels. Force interviewees from all seven forces explained the importance of the chief constable in setting the strategic direction for early implementation, with input from senior staff in learning and development (L&D). The decision to implement as an early adopter was reportedly driven by three main

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<sup>4</sup> As measured by type of school attended, highest parental qualification and whether they accessed free school meals.

<sup>5</sup> Data submitted by force as part of: College of Policing. (2020). 'Equality impact analysis: Implementation of the new entry routes for police constables' [internet]. Available from <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Entry-routes-for-police-constables/Documents/Equality-Impact-Analysis-Implementation-of-new%20entry-routes-for-police-constables.pdf>

factors: providing officers with the necessary skills for policing, using the apprenticeship levy and widening access to policing.

## Challenges

Despite stakeholders' overall positivity towards collaborative working between forces and HEIs, reported challenges included implementation timescales, the newness of the PCDA and not having an existing programme to act as a point of reference during the design process. Interviewees across all forces also highlighted the importance of effective workforce planning to balance the requirements and timetable of the PCDA alongside the operational needs of forces. The management of abstraction from the front line was a complex challenge that required careful planning and problem-solving capability prior to implementation. This issue was more pronounced in forces taking on a higher volume of recruits.

Stakeholder interviewees mentioned that communication about the PEQF at a national and force level was a challenge. Force interviewees commented on a lack of awareness and understanding about the new entry routes among the wider workforce and suggested that an effective communication strategy was necessary to create a welcoming environment for new PCDA student officers. On the whole, PCDA interviewees reported being well received on shift, yet there was an isolated instance of an individual interviewee being made to feel unwelcome due to misconceptions about the PCDA and PEQF among existing officers.

## 4. Initial implementation lessons and next steps

One of the aims of the evaluation is to identify lessons for the College, forces and HEIs to inform implementation for subsequent PCDA cohorts and forces.

### Early lessons for design and delivery of the PCDA

- Forces and HEIs need to further emphasise both the rationale for some academic content within the curriculum – in particular, sociology and criminology theory – and the collaborative nature of programme delivery.
- Regional force collaborations help to establish economies of scale (through a greater volume of students) but can leave a force without an HEI provider within their boundary. Alternative learning delivery arrangements need to be well organised and meet the requirements of all forces.
- Student officers greatly valued the time spent with their tutor, who helped support the transition from classroom to operational learning. Structuring this supported learning phase as a single, longer (10 to 12 weeks) block of tutoring was preferable.

- As PCDA student officers move into the second and third years of the programme, they should be reassured of the protected learning time provision.

### Early lessons for police officer recruitment

- Due to the way that forces recruited to the PCDA, and the reliance on cohort demographic data from the evaluation survey, the impact of the PCDA on workforce diversity is not yet known. In one force where the PCDA was introduced with a strategy to attract applicants from BAME backgrounds, a promising increase in BAME applicants has been achieved.
- Student officers on the PCDA are highly motivated and are keen to join policing and serve their community. It is not yet possible to determine the extent to which a degree-level qualification is attracting people to policing who had not previously considered it as a career.

### Early lessons for establishing the PCDA in forces

- Strategic decision making and strong local governance are essential for progressing towards implementation and providing a stimulus for delivery.
- Ongoing communication with the whole workforce at a national and force level is required to improve understanding of the new entry routes.
- Effective workforce planning is needed to balance and manage the requirements and timetable of the PCDA alongside operational policing needs.
- Collaborative working is a key principle for effective implementation.

The longitudinal evaluation will follow new recruits through the second and third years of the PCDA and into their first year as a confirmed police constable. The next evaluation survey will explore the issues raised by interviewees across a much larger number of student officers. It will also begin to determine whether there are any differences in attitudes, behaviours and wellbeing among those on the PCDA and IPLDP. Interviews with stakeholders and student officers will continue throughout the evaluation period, with learning fed back into programme delivery. The collection of new entrant diversity data remains a priority and the Home Office Police Workforce Census will now request workforce data for the new entry routes. The College will continue to work with forces and stakeholders to gather diversity data that can inform ongoing equality impact analysis.

# 1. Introduction

The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) is the first of three new initial entry routes for policing developed by the College of Policing (hereafter known as ‘the College’) in collaboration with stakeholders. The first PCDA student officers joined the service in September 2018 and the College is undertaking an evaluation of the programme in seven early-adopter forces. The evaluation will run until 2023 to ensure that the first cohort of PCDA recruits can be followed through the entirety of the PCDA and into their first year as confirmed police constables.

This interim report presents initial findings from the first year of the evaluation in relation to programme implementation, diversity and the overall experiences of those on the programme. The evaluation findings inform and supplement the College’s ‘Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF): Initial entry routes: Learning to date’ report,<sup>6</sup> which provides an overview of PEQF implementation, as well as information on costs, the management of abstraction from frontline duties, examples of good practice and the next steps in PEQF delivery.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. The Policing Education Qualifications Framework

Working in partnership with the police service and the higher education sector, the College has developed a new portfolio of entry programmes for recruitment into the rank of police constable. The three new entry routes are as follows.

- **The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) (Level 6)** enables new recruits to join the police service on a three-year apprenticeship programme and achieve a formally integrated degree in professional policing practice on completion.
- **The Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) (Level 6)** for degree-holders whose first degree is not a degree in professional policing. The programme operates as a two-year

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<sup>6</sup> College of Policing. (2020). ‘Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date’ [internet]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Documents/PEQF-Learning-to-date.pdf>

'conversion programme' to the profession of policing and recruits achieve a Level 6 graduate diploma in professional policing practice.

- **Pre-join Degree in Professional Policing (pre-join degree) (Level 6)** involves completion of a three-year knowledge-based degree in professional policing, delivered by licensed higher education institutions (HEIs), prior to the candidate's recruitment to the police service. Practice-based operational competence is achieved post-join.

## 2.2. The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship

The PCDA is a professional degree apprenticeship, enabling new recruits to join the police service as an apprentice police constable, completing the degree in professional policing practice during their three-year apprenticeship programme.

The structure, content and academic progression of the practice-based professional degree embedded within the apprenticeship is based on the national curriculum for the role of police constable. This is contextualised to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship entry route (further detail on the PCDA curriculum is included in Annex A).

Delivery of the degree-level apprenticeship requires a formal professional collaboration between a police force and a procured HEI. Recruits are assessed against national assessment criteria to demonstrate achievement of Independent Patrol Status (IPS) and Full Operational Competence (FOC), as an integral part of their degree apprenticeship.

A successful recruit to the police service via this entry route is subject to a three-year probationary period, as specified in Police Regulations. Subject to satisfactory achievement of the probationary performance requirements of their serving force, a police constable apprentice is confirmed in post upon successful completion of their apprenticeship.

Certification of the degree qualification will be awarded at the end of the apprenticeship.

The delivery of the PCDA in forces is discussed further in the introduction to section 4.1, which presents evaluation findings on implementation.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1. Research aims and method

The evaluation aims to understand how the PCDA has been implemented and what outcomes have been delivered. More specifically, the interim report is concerned with understanding factors that have facilitated implementation and any challenges faced, the

diversity of new recruits, and how the PCDA has been experienced by those on programme. To address these questions, the following mixed-methods approach has been adopted.

- **A four-year longitudinal survey of PCDA student officers and comparison with the IPLDP cohort.** The first survey has captured initial information on participant demographics, motivations for joining the service, attitudes and wellbeing. The survey was distributed to recruits in the first weeks of their employment. It has been completed by 318 out of 418 officers: 181 on the PCDA (84% response rate) and 137 on the IPLDP (68% response rate).
- **A series of interviews with key force and HEI stakeholders, as well as PCDA student officers and their tutors.** In total, 41 interviews have been completed. Of these, 23 interviews were completed by force and HEI stakeholders (shortly after the PCDA start date in each force), 13 by PCDA student officers and five by tutor constables (between June and August 2019).

Findings from the evaluation will be used to refine the implementation approach and to identify lessons for forces that will be introducing the PCDA at a later date.

The following table provides an overview of the evaluation approach, survey response rates and fieldwork completed to date. Further detail on the evaluation methodology can be found in Annex B.

Table 1. Methods overview

Force	PCDA start date	Survey respondents (cohort size)		Interviews		
		PCDA	IPLDP	Force and HEI stakeholders (from start date)	PCDAs (Jun-Aug 2019)	Tutors (Jun-Aug 2019)
Nottinghamshire	September 2018	35 (47)	22 (49)	4	4	3
Northamptonshire	November 2018	19 (19)	44 (53)	2	4	2
Northumbria	March 2019	49 (51)	20 (24)	4	4	-

Force	PCDA start date	Survey respondents (cohort size)		Interviews		
		PCDA	IPLDP	Force and HEI stakeholders (from start date)	PCDAs (Jun-Aug 2019)	Tutors (Jun-Aug 2019)
South Wales	March 2019	23 (27)	10 (14)	5 <sup>7</sup>	1	-
Gwent	March 2019	5 (5)	10 (26)	2	-	-
Staffordshire	June 2019	21 (34)	5 (10)	3 <sup>8</sup>	-	-
West Midlands <sup>9</sup>	July 2019	29 (33)	26 (26)	3	-	-
<b>Survey response rate</b>		<b>84%</b>	<b>68%</b>			
<b>Total participants</b>		<b>181 (216)</b>	<b>137 (202)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>
		<b>318 (418)</b> <b>76% response rate</b>		<b>41</b>		

### 3.2. Limitations

The evaluation aimed to include forces of different sizes, across a range of geographic locations. Evaluation timescales have therefore been dependent on forces implementing the PCDA. The evaluation has been flexible in recruiting additional forces, which has increased the survey sample and representation of early-adopter forces. By July 2019, seven out of 10 forces that had introduced the PCDA were in scope for the evaluation.

However, the variation in PCDA start dates across the seven evaluation forces, from September 2018 to July 2019, means that forces are at different stages of implementation and a staggered approach to fieldwork has been required. With the PCDA in the early stages

<sup>7</sup> HEI interview covers South Wales Police and Gwent.

<sup>8</sup> HEI interview covers Staffordshire and West Midlands Police (WMP).

<sup>9</sup> Hard copy surveys were distributed in WMP by force trainers and returned to the College. Hard copies were distributed to all IPLDP student officers at the training school at the time.

of delivery in most evaluation forces, it is not yet possible to capture the full breadth of experiences across each of the seven forces.

Due to different PCDA start dates, student officers' experiences – and perspectives on the delivery approaches – have only been explored in detail across three forces. The interviews reported here were conducted relatively early on in the overall three-year programme and initial views on learning may change over time. This report therefore only presents emerging learning, particularly in relation to the views of student officers. The evaluation survey and interviews will continue to inform our understanding of how the programme is experienced during years two and three of the PCDA.

The timing of this report also means that only the first survey is reported on. As this was issued as close as possible to the cohort start date, the data gathered does not cover views relating to the programme curriculum or policing practice. These aspects will be addressed in future surveys.

In addition, survey responses were often chased several weeks after the survey had initially been sent, which means that findings may not be a true reflection of views on joining, and may be influenced by several weeks already spent in force. A higher response rate was achieved for PCDA respondents compared with those on the IPLDP. Possible reasons for this discrepancy include IPLDP students leaving the training school earlier and an awareness among PCDA students that findings will inform programme delivery.

Evaluation forces have mainly recruited from an existing pool of candidates. Currently, only the PCDA cohort initially surveyed is in scope for the evaluation. It will be important to understand the diversity of subsequent cohorts once the PCDA is established and any targeted recruitment approaches are introduced. Although a high PCDA response rate has been achieved, the survey does not provide data for all PCDAs recruited and the Home Office Annual Data Return (ADR) does not gather data on type of entry route. The Home Office Workforce Census has the potential to address this gap and deliver more robust data on workforce demographics at an entry route level. A lower response rate among IPLDP recruits means comparisons between the cohorts should be treated with some caution.

## 4. Findings

Findings are presented in six main subsections covering:

1. PCDA implementation
2. Survey respondent demographics
3. Reasons for joining the police service and undertaking the PCDA
4. PCDA student officer experiences of classroom learning
5. PCDA student officer experiences of tutoring
6. PCDA student officer wellbeing

### 4.1. PCDA implementation

#### Introduction

This section presents findings on PCDA implementation from interviews with force and HEI stakeholders. Interviewees included senior L&D and HEI leads responsible for introducing the PCDA, as well as those in force designing the programme. The forces included in the evaluation all agreed to be early adopters of the PCDA. Interviews sought to understand how the PCDA was introduced and any issues faced.

#### PCDA delivery overview

As part of the PCDA, all forces were required to:

- enter a collaborative partnership with an HEI
- complete a Quality Standards Assessment with the College to determine if the core requirements for delivery are met
- once an HEI has been procured, design a PCDA programme to achieve learning outcomes set out in the PCDA national curriculum<sup>10</sup>
- provide 20% protected learning time, when a student officer is allowed time for study during their normal working day<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Annex A1 for further details, including an overview of the PCDA curriculum.

<sup>11</sup> Protected learning time is a requirement under the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency rules. The management of protected learning time and abstraction is covered in further detail in: College of Policing. (2020). 'Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date'.

- engage in regular tripartite meetings with the student and HEI to discuss progress and establish any additional support requirements

Throughout the programme, the student officers work to achieve full operational competence. A key stage to be achieved by the end of the first year is IPS. This is the point at which the PCDA student officer demonstrates sufficient competence in the role to be able to function independently, safely and lawfully in the workplace, alongside their policing colleagues. To work towards IPS, PCDA student officers undergo a period of tutoring with a tutor constable, for which they are assessed.<sup>12</sup> Tutor constables will be required to support students during tutorship and will therefore not be fully deployed on frontline duties while performing this role.

Forces and HEIs have some flexibility in how the PCDA is delivered, including the location and mode of delivery, timetabling, and staffing. Annex A2 provides further detail on the different delivery models in relation to staffing. Force trainers and HEI staff may deliver different aspects of the programme. Secondment of police trainers for HEI teaching and the upskilling of trainers, tutor constables, coaches and mentors will all play a part in the delivery model.

Academic progression in the first year is assessed through successful completion of all first-year degree modules, including elements of practical professional performance.

The second and third years involve more advanced learning and deployed rotations across five areas of professional practice: response policing, policing communities, policing the roads, information and intelligence, and conducting investigations. A work-related evidence-based research project will also be completed in the third year.

An overview of PCDA delivery in evaluation forces, gathered from force and HEI interviews and force documentation, is presented in Table 2.

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<sup>12</sup> National guidance has been published on how professional competence at IPS may be measured.

Table 2. Force delivery overview for initial PCDA cohorts in scope for the evaluation

	<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Northumbria</b>	<b>South Wales</b>	<b>Gwent</b>	<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>
<b>Start date</b>	September 2018	November 2018	March 2019	March 2019	March 2019	June 2019	July 2019
<b>HEI and force collaboration</b>	HEI delivering to more than one force (collaboration forces not included in evaluation).	Single HEI/force.	Single HEI/force.	HEI delivering to more than one force. In collaboration with Gwent.	HEI delivering to more than one force. In collaboration with South Wales.	HEI delivering to more than one force. In collaboration with West Midlands.	HEI delivering to more than one force. In collaboration with Staffordshire.
<b>HEI and force delivery</b>	Collaborative design. HEI and force deliver separate sessions. Force trainers sit in on lectures.	Collaborative design. HEI and force deliver separate sessions. Force trainers gain qualifications to teach.	Collaborative design. HEI and force deliver separate sessions. Force trainers sit in on lectures.	Collaborative design. Primarily force delivery in year one.	Collaborative design. Primarily force delivery in year one.	Collaborative design. HEI and force deliver separate sessions.	Collaborative design. HEI and force deliver separate sessions.

	<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>Northumbria</b>	<b>South Wales</b>	<b>Gwent</b>	<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>
<b>Location</b>	HEI outside force boundary. Force delivery at force training site.	HEI within force boundary. Force delivery at force training site.	HEI within force boundary. Force training delivered at HEI.	HEI within force boundary. Force delivery at force training site.	HEI outside force boundary. Force delivery at South Wales training site.	HEI within force boundary.	HEI outside force boundary.
<b>Tutoring timing and number of weeks</b>	Week 22. Split two weeks of six.	Week 26 classroom. Single block of 10 weeks.	Week 21. Immersion visit during week four.	Week 26	Week 26	Week 8. Six/eight-week duration.	Week 8. 10-week duration.
<b>PCDA tutor training</b>	By HEI	None	By HEI	By force	By force	By force	By force
<b>Rotations in areas of policing practice</b>	Years 2 and 3	Years 2 and 3	Years 2 and 3	Years 2 and 3	Years 2 and 3	From Year 1	From Year 1
<b>Recruitment of PCDA cohort</b>	Specific recruitment targeting BAME groups.	From existing pool. Given choice of PCDA or IPLDP.	Mixed. From existing pool and new positive action drive (introduced pre-PCDA).	Specific PCDA and DHEP recruitment. BAME not targeted.	From existing pool.	From existing pool.	From existing pool. Given choice of PCDA or DHEP.

### 4.1.1. Rationale for early adoption of the PCDA

Strategic buy-in from the chief constable was evident in each of the evaluation forces. In most forces, senior L&D lead interviewees reported that the decision to implement as an early adopter was made by the chief constable, with senior L&D leads giving input. They reported having a role in influencing the thinking of their chief constable and the police and crime commissioner (PCC). Generally, force interviewees suggested that they were keen to lead change. One senior interviewee stressed that, ultimately, forces were responding to a national policy change and were required to carry out changes to initial learning.

Across the evaluation forces, the decision to introduce the PCDA was reportedly driven by three main factors: providing officers with the necessary skills for policing, using the apprenticeship levy and widening access to policing.

#### Officer skills

Interviewees from all forces described the PCDA as an opportunity to innovate and develop new initial learning for officers. Among senior interviewees, there was a recognition that policing is changing and becoming more complex, and that the initial learning provided to officers needed to reflect these demands and address the limitations of the IPLDP. The PCDA was viewed as an investment in the workforce, providing the necessary skills for the job upfront. Interviewees commented that by providing a Level 6 education, the PCDA would provide officers with deeper knowledge and develop critical thinkers and reflective learners within the force.

[The PCDA will]...help us create an officer who can problem solve at the point of contact, who can understand vulnerability from a social context, not just the context of what they find in front of them, and individuals who can question things and demand more from our support services, such as IT, etc. So, it was very [much] a discussion about the story of what the future would look like.'

(Force stakeholder, force C)

[...] there was an absolute acknowledgement from the majority, including myself, that policing has changed. It is more complex and actually the nature of crime has changed. We need to up the education level, and we're out of sync with other organisations.'

(Force stakeholder, force D)

## Apprenticeship levy

Drawing the apprenticeship levy and demonstrating responsible use of public funds was reported as important by interviewees from all of the English forces in the evaluation. There was some concern that losing the levy, or inefficient use of the levy, could lead to reputational risk in the context of broader discussions around funding across policing.

‘If forces are saying, “We don’t have money, we need more money,” on the one hand and then there’s stuff in the paper about our apprenticeship levy not being used effectively, that’s arguably confusing for the public. And it puts forces in a bad light in terms of, “Why should we give you more money when the funding that you’ve got you’re not able to use effectively?”’

(Force key stakeholder, force F)

Interviewees in the Welsh forces included in the evaluation, where the apprenticeship levy does not apply, were keen to ensure a two-tier system did not develop, with different standards between England and Wales. Interviewees from the Welsh forces reported that they had adopted a regional partnership, which allowed for costs to be reduced by increasing cohort numbers.

## Widening access

Force stakeholder interviewees viewed the PCDA as an essential entry route option and one that would widen access amid concerns that the DHEP or pre-join could potentially narrow the recruitment pool. Force and HEI interviewees commented that the PCDA would provide a route that was open to a broader range of candidates, with diverse life experiences and backgrounds. The PCDA was also viewed by force interviewees as a new opportunity to specifically increase workforce diversity and provide a new impetus around the engagement of BAME groups. Force interviewees commented that the PCDA represented an attractive offer, which could encourage those who had not previously considered a career in policing. One force subsequently adopted a targeted recruitment strategy, which is discussed in further detail in section 4.1.4 on recruitment.

### 4.1.2. Establishing the PCDA

#### Strategic force/HEI collaboration and regional partnerships

Of the seven forces, five were in regional partnerships with other forces to procure a single HEI (for example, Staffordshire and West Midlands Police). The remaining two forces were, at the time of interview, involved in a single force-HEI collaboration. Where forces were in

regional partnerships, senior interviewees from these forces explained that they took this decision to maximise purchasing power, deliver value for money and avoid procurement competition between neighbouring forces.

In most circumstances, the HEI subcontracted the force as a training provider and, as the awarding body, HEIs set forces key performance indicators to meet. In the one force that declined to be subcontracted by the HEI, the force interviewee reported apprehension over relinquishing control to the provider, as the PCDA delivery model was new and unproven. Generally, both force and HEI interviewee views towards collaboration were positive and there was a strong desire to develop an integrated programme.

'They own the qualification so the model we went down was making sure that we're embedded with them and working with them but we're the customer. The employing force is the customer, so we very much worked with them to get the programme we wanted that fulfilled our needs but also satisfied the QA [quality assurance] process for the university and the College.'

(Force stakeholder, force B)

The HEI-force collaborations were established through open procurement exercises, or through appropriate existing framework arrangements. HEI interviewees generally valued pre-tender engagement with the force and stated that building personal relationships at all levels was important to the success of the collaboration. Face-to-face contact and engagement throughout the development phase was viewed by force and HEI interviewees as particularly important.

### Governance and administration

Senior interviewees from all forces described the establishment of project management teams that were responsible for implementation and acted as a conduit between the HEI, regional partners and the College. Internal and external governance meetings, at a strategic and operational level, were formed early on and included membership from Human Resources, L&D, workforce planning and finance. Project governance groups also provided a channel to report to the chief constable. These governance meetings have overseen the design of the programme in all forces and, once new recruits have started, review learner progress.

Overall, a project management infrastructure was viewed by interviewees from all forces as a key aspect of implementation. Introducing and maintaining the PCDA was considered to have increased bureaucracy and administration within forces compared with the IPLDP. In part, this was due to the IPLDP being well established in its delivery, but also due to the

PCDA requiring forces to provide additional information to meet apprenticeship standards set by external bodies.<sup>13</sup>

Across the seven evaluation forces, interviews with L&D leads suggested that project managers were key roles. However, one regional collaboration was in the process of disbanding the implementation project team at the time of interview, a few months after gaining licences for the PCDA and DHEP. Some concerns were expressed by interviewees in different roles over the potential impact, such as a lack of oversight leading to deviation from the agreed lesson materials and inconsistent delivery.

### Workforce planning and abstraction

Interviewees across all forces highlighted the importance of effective workforce planning, to balance the requirements and timetable of the PCDA alongside the operational needs of forces. Interviewees in one force regarded managing protected learning time and abstraction from the frontline as a serious challenge that needed to be resolved ahead of implementation, though perspectives on the issue differed between forces.

In one force, a senior force interviewee viewed the discussion around abstraction as a positive challenge, regarding the PCDA as a long-term investment in the workforce. They suggested that in-force discussions had moved from concerns over frontline abstraction to a more nuanced understanding of whether officers were considered 'fully deployable'. For example, the PCDA was viewed by the interviewee as an opportunity to improve the training received by officers and address issues around the level of support that sergeants were required to provide early-career officers, particularly on response teams.

'I think that [abstraction] misses the strategic point that actually it's about producing a different type of police officer, not about deployable resources.'

(Force stakeholder, force C)

Forces and HEIs had agreed a flexible approach to course start dates, which made provision for multiple, staggered cohorts. One force interviewee explained that the force had total control over recruitment timescales prior to the PCDA, but that the flexible approach adopted by HEIs helped to manage the flow of new recruits into the forces and eased initial concerns.

In contrast, interviewees from another force expressed concern at the complexity of the workforce planning challenge and associated level of abstraction. Given the high volume of new recruits required by the force, this was viewed as the main issue that needed to be

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<sup>13</sup> For example, the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

resolved in the early stages of implementation. A senior interviewee commented that workforce planning had become more complex due to the three-year duration of the PCDA, the facilitation of protected learning time, tutor responsibilities and the need to undertake tripartite reviews with the student officer and HEI. As a consequence, the interviewee suggested that the availability of frontline resources would fluctuate to a greater extent than under the IPLDP.

According to interviewees from the force, the seriousness of the issue was a result of the force's size, and was likely to be less of an issue in smaller forces that could more easily incorporate the PCDA into existing structures. For example, an L&D lead from the force estimated that 10 additional staff were now required to manage tripartite reviews. The interviewees explained that the resolution of these concerns about abstraction while introducing the PCDA in forces had taken substantial effort, requiring careful planning and problem-solving capability. Earlier engagement from the force's PCDA project team with operational stakeholders in frontline policing teams and workforce planning managers would have provided more time to work through these challenges, according to one senior interviewee.

'I suppose, again, my point about scale is that that's fine if you're recruiting 100 people a year, so that is a small proportion of your workforce, because actually for 100 people you can just subsume that into somebody else's job. When you're recruiting 500 people a year, the scale of it starts to make it far more challenging, actually.'

(Force stakeholder, force F)

### 4.1.3. PCDA course design and delivery

#### Collaboration on design and delivery

Force and HEI stakeholders interviewed across all forces described a collaborative approach to designing and delivering the PCDA programme. Experiences of collaboration were positive, with force and HEI interviewees describing a commitment from all parties to work together, identify solutions, and reach consensus. Collaborative working was viewed as essential for developing a cohesive course with a natural flow between components and a steady increase in complexity. All force-HEI collaborations co-designed lessons, albeit to varying degrees, with the aim of presenting the programme as a joint venture and avoiding a 'them and us' approach.

A collaborative approach was also applied to course delivery. In most forces, interviewees reported that the intention was for force trainers to attend lectures, though this often didn't happen due to competing pressures on their time. It was indicated by interviewees that the presence of force trainers would allow for academic learning to be placed in an operational context and linked to police practice. This commitment reflected a 'holistic' approach to delivery, with the intention of connecting theory and practice in every lesson, as well as forming close working relationships between academic and force leads for each module. However, the attendance of force staff in HEI lectures was reported as a well-established standard practice in only one force.

An alternative year-one delivery model was adopted by one regional partnership whereby the majority of classroom lessons were delivered by force trainers. The rationale provided by a senior force interviewee was in part to manage costs, but also to prioritise force culture and identity early on in the programme. It was suggested that the first period of 26 weeks learning, at Level 4, could be delivered by force trainers and a more integrated approach would follow in years two and three. One interviewee from the force explained that the initial weeks of the PCDA had a clear emphasis on force culture, establishing basic police knowledge and discipline.

'When I talk about culture, it's about our people strategy; it's about what are our values, what are our aims, our code of ethics, our principles. I think for a learner, the first six months, they only truly get the feel from serving police officers of that culture, what our challenges are. Because yes, we are teaching a curriculum that is translated into a learning programme with learning outcomes, but we want more than that. We want them to have a sense of what [the force] is all about.'

(Force stakeholder, force D)

## Location

The establishment of regional force partnerships was a key factor in the location of PCDA delivery. In three of the seven evaluation forces, the HEI was situated outside of the force's geographical boundary following the creation of a regional partnership with a single provider.

As a result, in two of the forces, PCDA student officers were required to travel into the neighbouring force area to attend lessons. An interviewee from one force where students travelled across boundaries for all aspects of the PCDA suggested that additional travel time

(up to three hours) was causing some frustration among the cohort.<sup>14</sup> The interviewee also raised additional concerns with this approach, which stemmed from a perception that the force was the minority partner in the collaboration (due to the force's smaller size). According to the interviewee, combining cohorts from both forces led to some confusion over terminology, policies and procedures used in teaching, which could differ by force. The interviewee suggested that PCDA student officers would have to refresh learning on return to their home force to ensure that learning was consistent with practice in force.

In another of the forces, rather than students travelling across force boundaries, course content would either be delivered online or by HEI staff at the force's training base. Remote, online learning was proposed to increase flexibility and minimise travel requirements for students. However, at the time of interview, the technology was not in place due to technical issues between force and HEI systems, and lessons were being reconfigured for face-to-face delivery. Delivery at the force's training centre was, according to one force stakeholder interviewed soon after the PCDA had started, not running smoothly and was characterised by a lack of coordination.

'There's no ownership of these students. Nobody knows who's in charge of them and the welfare side of things. They're receiving lectures but there's no big picture. There's no ownership. Different people are coming in to deliver different lectures.'

(Force stakeholder, force F)

In contrast, force and HEI stakeholders from another force were enthusiastic about the new opportunities for enhanced content, integrated lessons and access to better facilities arising from increased collaboration. As part of a single force-HEI collaboration, the force had moved almost all initial learning to a dedicated police education centre at the university campus, in recognition of the superior facilities. They reported that this enabled role-play exercises to be conducted in a purpose-built and realistic 'skills' house, as opposed to an in-force classroom setting. Interviewees from the force and HEI also suggested that integrated lessons would draw on HEI subject experts and place the learning in an operational context. An example provided by one interviewee was that learning on law and legal processes within the PCDA programme was designed to improve the quality of statement taking, something recognised as a priority area for professional development in the force, as well as to develop critical thinking skills.

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<sup>14</sup> PCDA interviews were conducted in only one of the three forces where students were required to travel. The student experience is covered in section 4.4.1.

‘They’ll observe a court in session, and then they’ll have the debrief at the end. The judge will talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the case and the student will understand why. They get the “why” right from an early stage and we’re focusing on giving them their “why” to policing early, helping them understand it [...] When they get the further learning around statement taking, when they do the interviews, when they do their practical interviews in class, we’ve got interview rooms they can use. When they’re putting case files together based on a case study they’re doing a module for, they will have a great understanding of the real need to have that file solid because a vulnerable victim needs that. By the way, our force priority is vulnerability investigation, problem solving, which are threads that run through all of this.’

(Force stakeholder, force C)

### Collaborative working challenges

Despite the overall positivity towards collaborative working, interviewees reported that the process had been challenging, mainly due to implementation timescales, the newness of the PCDA and not having an existing programme to act as a point of reference during the design process.

‘The challenge was, as I keep saying, there was nothing to benchmark it against, if you know what I mean, really. That was a challenging process of it, of knowing you come up with ideas, but there was no real evidence to say what’s right or wrong, if you know what I mean.’

(Force stakeholder, force A)

Interviewees from forces and HEIs gave examples of how concepts were understood differently by each party, including the College, and commented that, over time, a shared understanding and common language would emerge. HEIs, for example, may have certain expectations of what a lesson might look like based on traditional approaches to delivering lectures. There was a concern from one force interviewee that, without full collaboration, lessons might not always be practically relevant. Another force interviewee in the same HEI collaboration emphasised that delivery in the force would be focused on interactive workshops, rather than long lectures delivered to students.

‘Say, their traditional policing degree, they’ll talk about some legislation or concept, and it’s more of an abstract way, whereas we’re saying, “Right, when you deliver this, the student needs to be able to use it, so they need to know it more in depth,” because there’s a difference between just talking

generally about theft compared to actually knowing it well enough that you can use it and arrest someone for it.'

(Force stakeholder, force G)

While HEI-force collaboration was welcomed by interviewees overall, there was an isolated criticism by one force interviewee that the level of cooperation had not been as expected at the delivery level. They felt there was a lack of student-HEI contact and that force trainers had not received sufficient direction on some course material.

Interviews with force stakeholders also identified that the curriculum could be challenged by those delivering training. Interviewees in two forces commented that the relevance of some lessons was not always clear to them. Some trainers regarded the balance between theory and practice as not always preparing students for the job.

'I think some of it, we've looked at it and think, "Well, what relevance is it to them?" But we've got to appreciate that they're doing a degree as well, so they need that level of knowledge. I think our concern, certainly, from our point of view is, "Where is the frontline policing aspect of the lessons?" You know? Some of it, for us, is a bit too theory-based without that practical element.'

(Force stakeholder, force D)

### Scheduling of year-one tutoring and rotations

Interviews with force stakeholders, as well as review of year-one schedules shared by forces, showed that the timing of the first tutoring<sup>15</sup> phase varied across forces. Most forces opted to commence tutoring between weeks 21 and 26. In most forces, the response tutoring period was typically a single block of 10 to 12 weeks, similar to that on the IPLDP.

One force opted to split tutoring into two six-week blocks separated by classroom learning. A force interviewee explained that this was originally intended to provide student officers with experience of response and neighbourhood policing. On review by a senior officer, the force decided to opt for tutoring in response only to provide continuity, yet the split structure remained.

Two forces, as part of a regional partnership, introduced tutoring at week eight and commenced rotations in the first year, with interviewees stating that this would spread students across the force. The force interviewees reported that early deployment was

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<sup>15</sup> Also described in forces as the supported learning phase or coached patrol.

intended to minimise academic and practical distinctions, by reducing the length of learning blocks, and to help students consolidate classroom learning.

‘I think it helps consolidate their learning a hell of a lot, really, because doing different sessions on legislation and what policing is isn’t a substitute for actually seeing what it’s like out there, and in terms of adapting to situations, you know there’s so many spontaneous events that can happen, and you can’t predict what’s going to happen.’

(Force stakeholder, force G)

Another force adopted an alternative approach and introduced an immersion week early on in the PCDA, which placed student officers with frontline teams. The force interviewee reported that the immersion week aimed to provide hands-on experience of policing to inform and contextualise subsequent classroom learning. Other force interviewees commented that it was not always practical or desirable to arrange time on shift so soon into the programme.

### Dissertations and evidence-based policing

To complete the PCDA, student officers are required to complete a work-related evidence-based research project in the third year of the programme. Interviewees from three forces had already started to think about how a strategic approach to third-year research projects could be taken by the force. These interviewees stated that force oversight of PCDA undergraduate projects would ensure that students’ research addresses evidence gaps or research priorities within the force, providing additional research capacity. Some interviewees reported that they already had an evidence-based practice board that could commission research from the students.

‘Yes, the third-year projects, and we’ve already set up with the evidence-based practice board here looking at how we can commission that research a little bit through the students. So, what would be needed within the force will be taken through the student intake, as well as external.’

(Force key stakeholder, force F)

### Student support

All force and HEI interviewees described a range of support available to students. HEI interviewees reported providing study skills support through online resources or library teams. Force and HEI interviewees explained that teaching staff, both from the HEI and

force, were accessible and students were actively encouraged to make contact if they required support or had questions.

Interviews were undertaken with stakeholders at the start of the PCDA. At the time of interview, there were concerns over how students who fail to meet the academic requirements might be managed. A small number of force interviewees asked for clarity on Regulation 13,<sup>16</sup> which would cover such performance issues, amid concerns that the first students in such a situation could serve as a test case for the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW).

Another force interviewee commented that attrition from the PCDA should be expected, for various reasons, as with other police entry routes or general university programmes. They felt, however, that the challenge in the early years of the PCDA was to understand what represents an acceptable attrition rate, without any programme data to base judgements on. Data would need to be gathered from HEIs over a number of years to provide an accurate assessment of attrition across providers.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.1.4. PCDA recruitment

Five out of the seven evaluation forces recruited into the PCDA from an existing pool of candidates, who had attended a SEARCH® assessment centre without knowledge of the PCDA.<sup>18</sup> Interviewees from these forces explained that the main reasons for doing so were the time pressure to implement quickly and, with the IPLDP ending, to provide an entry route pathway for those who had already applied.

‘Now, fortunately or unfortunately, we still had about 40 candidates through SEARCH® who’d been brought in, advertised and recruited under the old route. So, it wasn’t advertised as an apprenticeship and the like so we then did a separate series of exercises to recontact them, bring them into this station, hold an awareness evening.’

(Force stakeholder, force C)

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<sup>16</sup> Regulation 13 of the Police Regulations 2003 provides that, during their period of probation in the force, the services of a constable may be dispensed with at any time if the chief officer considers that they are not fitted, physically or mentally, to perform the duties of their office, or that they are not likely to become an efficient or well-conducted constable.

<sup>17</sup> Data on attrition will be gathered by the College’s PEQF implementation team as part of project monitoring.

<sup>18</sup> The Police SEARCH® Recruit Assessment Centre is a rigorous and standardised process to assess potential to perform the role of a police constable effectively. Between April 2018 and October 2019, some forces across England and Wales piloted a new assessment centre format, called the Day One Recruit Assessment Centre.

As a result, the majority of PCDA student officers within the evaluation cohort had not been aware of the PCDA prior to submitting their original application to the force. The decision to recruit from an existing pool has implications for how the findings should be considered throughout this evaluation report, particularly sections covering participant demographics data, motivations and experiences of the programme.

Where candidates had been taken from an existing pool, forces typically delivered a series of information events to raise awareness and understanding of the PCDA. In one such force, where the IPLDP was still in use alongside the PCDA, applicants were given a choice of entry route. A force interviewee explained that the opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification and to undertake rotations in different areas of policing – which could help prepare students for roles in specific policing areas that might be of interest, such as investigation – were promoted as benefits of the programme. However, the interviewee reported that attendees at information events also expressed some uncertainty about the PCDA, based on a lack of clarity on pay at the time, as well as the pressure associated with the degree-level qualification. In two forces, the PCDA was running alongside the DHEP, and those with a degree were placed on the DHEP route. Across the evaluation, selection decisions were then mostly, but not always, made in partnership with HEIs. Joint selection will be standard practice across all forces for future cohorts.

As mentioned above, a few forces viewed the PCDA as an opportunity to increase the ethnic diversity of the workforce. However, only one force ran a PCDA recruitment campaign that targeted BAME communities specifically.

For future cohorts, force interviewees across the evaluation suggested that a more proactive approach would be adopted. In the force that ran a targeted strategy, the approach was approved by the chief constable and included:

- events with community leaders, such as religious leaders, housing associations representatives and councillors (though not potential recruits themselves)
- direct engagement with schools to approach school leavers
- targeted adverts and social media
- a flexible approach to assessing applications without competency-based question marking<sup>19</sup>

The approach was viewed as promising by a force lead, with data submitted to the College as part of the PEQF equality impact assessment suggesting that a higher proportion of

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<sup>19</sup> Due to BAME candidates potentially being disadvantaged.

BAME applicants applied for the PDCA.<sup>20</sup> The force reported that the PCDA attracted 22% BAME applicants compared with 12% in the previous campaign. The force interviewee also commented that the events and workshops with community leaders that were run by the force had identified potential barriers and reluctances to considering policing as a career. This differed depending on how the profession was viewed by community leaders and was informed by their experience of policing. While the PCDA was viewed by some community leaders as an attractive offer, there was also some apprehension that negative interactions with police officers can undo work that seeks to engage BAME communities on recruitment.

‘It’s not... you know, “We want to send our children to go and do medicine or law, those kinds of professions.” It’s not seen as professional enough. For the black community, it was around the barriers with the perception of the police being unfair, stop and search, impact on the local community. So, yes, different barriers for different communities. For those where English isn’t the first language it was around the recruitment process, the application, getting through those kinds of barriers.’

(Force stakeholder, force A)

Most interviewees from evaluation forces did not raise any challenges in relation to the volume of recruitment required by the force. However, one force with high demand found it difficult to attract new officers. At that time, the force was experiencing fewer applicants than expected, which interviewees from the force considered to be a serious concern. One senior interviewee suggested that the PEQF was having a negative impact and, while accepting that a decision on education level had been reached, suggested that the entry requirements to access the PCDA were too high. The low level of applicants in the force was also considered by the interviewee to be influenced by how policing was viewed as a career and by a perceived negative media portrayal of the force and policing. Consequently, the interviewee suggested there was a risk that the force was restricted to a narrower pool of applicants than in previous recruitment rounds, with those joining from a previous career, and without the necessary entry qualifications, being particularly disadvantaged.

‘I think from a PCDA point of view, I think we’ve drawn our qualifications bar slightly too high. I get that, because it’s a Level 6 qualification, university wouldn’t accept a leap from GCSE to higher education. But by requiring 64

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<sup>20</sup> Data submitted by force as part of: College of Policing. (2020). ‘Equality impact analysis: Implementation of the new entry routes for police constables’ [internet]. Available from <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Entry-routes-for-police-constables/Documents/Equality-Impact-Analysis-Implementation-of-new%20entry-routes-for-police-constables.pdf>

UCAS points, we are alienating a massive proportion of the population. I think that is having a material impact on our ability to recruit people.'

(Force stakeholder, force F)

#### 4.1.5. Communication and engagement

Communication was raised by interviewees across all forces as an issue, both in terms of the national messaging from the College and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and, at a force level, how information about the PCDA and PEQF was disseminated among the workforce.

At a strategic level, several force interviewees commented that the case around 'professionalising' policing, as well as the introduction of the three new initial entry routes, needed to be clearer at the outset. As a result, some interviewees stated that conversations around the value of the new entry routes were happening alongside, rather than prior to, implementation.

'I'm not talking chief officer teams. They understand what's happening. But the broad brush of how this will change things, I don't think that that has yet fully... shall we say, fully infiltrated the consciousness of the wider organisation?'

(Force stakeholder, force A)

Force interviewees reported that forces typically communicated with the workforce through email or intranet updates. Podcasts had also been used by one force. Overall, interviewees recognised that communications did not always land effectively with the intended audience. Some interviewees suggested that written communication from the chief constable may be more effective than from L&D teams, though one L&D lead from a small force had success with face-to-face communication and engagement (made possible by the force's size).

Interviewees in all forces explained that among the wider workforce, misconceptions around 'needing a degree' were common, as was confusion over the term 'apprenticeship' and how it applied in practice. Explaining the requirements of the PCDA, and how the workload differed to the IPLDP, was also viewed as essential in helping to create a supportive environment within the force. A smaller number of stakeholder interviewees were also concerned that any misunderstanding of the nature or purpose of the PCDA – as well as the missed opportunity to articulate the continuing professional development opportunities for the wider service – could potentially have an impact on how new PCDA student officers were perceived by their peers.

‘What I worry about the change is, if it’s not done right, all the new people who come in will be seen as special and different and will be treated differently. And I don’t think that is fair on all the new recruits and it’s not fair on the existing staff. The existing staff need to have some benefits for why we’re doing this, and that needs to be articulated really clearly up front, so that they don’t feel like they’re being overlooked.’

(Force stakeholder, force F)

Concerns about the reception of PCDA officers on shift was raised by a small number of PCDA interviewees, and is covered in further detail in section 4.6 on wellbeing.

#### 4.1.6. Tutor recruitment and training

PCDA training for tutors was included in almost all evaluation forces. This often involved HEI delivery as part of the overall contract with the force, and included an overview and explanation of the PCDA. Training typically covered course content, assessment criteria and use of assessment software. In one regional collaboration, a Level 3 qualification was awarded. Interviewees reported that the training was part of an effort to increase the status of tutoring and to make tutors feel supported, though tutor shortages were reported as an issue by most force interviewees.

Despite shortages, a few force interviewees stressed the importance of selecting tutors who were supportive and open-minded about the programme. Force interviewees considered it important to establish a supportive culture between tutors and students, as well as an environment in which tutors could serve as advocates for the PCDA programme on shift.

‘We’ll be looking for people who are keen, passionate about this, who have got PCDA equivalent... I’m looking for somebody who supports change, who will look at this programme and think, “Wow. I really wish I could have that.” They’ll see the real benefits that the student officers are going to get from that. They’re going to go back to shift and be an ambassador for the programme and explain to their supervision and the team and their peers what this person is going through and the benefits of it. At the same time as being conscious that we’re not going to try and say, “They’re better than you mate.”’

(Force stakeholder, force C)

Generally, tutors who were interviewed were keen to pass on knowledge and develop others. Training acted as an incentive for some tutor interviewees and influenced their

decision to become tutors. Two interviewees also discussed monetary incentives that were available in their force. Tutoring was considered as a development opportunity, with one force interviewee explaining that tutoring provided them with additional confidence, allowed them to support others and gave them the opportunity to gain feedback to support future promotion applications. For others, tutoring was a way to add variety to their substantive role.

‘With my personality, I quite like to be going to new things and doing something proactive. So it doesn’t always give you the proactive opportunity, but you’re definitely dealing with different stuff every day, and new experiences.’

(Tutor interview, force B)

However, some interviewees indicated that the PCDA training provided to tutors could be improved. They suggested that further information on university-led content could have been included, to give a better understanding of the programme and a more rounded view of students’ workload. Others mentioned that assessment software was not fully operational, which limited the effectiveness of training, and that more information around assessing students could have been provided.

#### 4.1.7. College Quality Standards Assessment process

The College Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) considers evidence from the force-HEI collaboration to determine whether the core requirements for delivery, as set by the College, are being met. Overall, force and HEI stakeholder interviewees acknowledged that the QSA process was a necessary and useful mechanism to provide feedback that could improve programme design. However, several interviewees commented that the process could be burdensome and required a level of detail that HEIs were not required to provide for their own internal processes. For example, most HEI interviewees observed that the detailed information required to specify PCDA learning outcomes contrasted with a current trend in universities and higher education towards specifying fewer programme learning outcomes. Some interviewees suggested that holding a combined exercise for force-HEI collaborations, rather than individual QSA panels, would make the process more efficient.

## 4.2. PCDA and IPLDP survey respondent demographics

### Introduction

This section presents data from the first evaluation survey issued to new recruits close to their in-force start date. An online survey was sent to seven evaluation forces, to send to individuals on the PCDA and IPLDP entry routes. The survey was designed to collect data on the nine protected characteristics, as well as a range of other demographic characteristics (for example, socioeconomic background). The primary purpose of collecting demographic data through the survey was to understand whether different groups experience the PCDA – and the IPLDP – differently over the four-year duration of the evaluation. Collecting demographic data from individuals also helped to fill gaps in the data submitted by forces to the College PEQF Implementation Team as part of the programme monitoring.

Out of 418 officers, 318 responded to the survey across the seven forces (response rate 76%), with 181 out of 216 (84%) on the PCDA and 137 out of 202 (68%) undertaking the IPLDP. The sample of respondents is broadly similar to all ‘new joiners’ in 2018/19 in the evaluation forces, based on demographic characteristics collected for the Home Office Annual Data Return<sup>21</sup> (ADR). The survey findings must be considered alongside how forces recruited to the PCDA, often from an existing pool of candidates.

### Summary

- PCDA and IPLDP cohorts were broadly similar across the following characteristics: race, sex, socioeconomic background (school type, highest parental qualification and free school meals) and having a family member in the police service.
- PCDA respondents tended to be younger than those on the IPLDP. IPLDP respondents had higher qualifications, were more often married and were slightly more likely to have caring responsibilities. In each case, this is likely to be in some part related to their older age profile. PCDA respondents with caring responsibilities were more often older and female.

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<sup>21</sup> Workforce statistics for the seven evaluation forces are included in Annex C. These were derived from ADR police workforce statistics. Home Office. (2019). ‘Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2019 second edition’ [internet]. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019>

### 4.2.1. Protected characteristics

The following table provides a summary of the protected characteristics of PCDA and IPLDP survey respondents. Where data is available from the Home Office ADR, this is included for 'new joiners' from the seven evaluation forces as a comparison. Where the number of respondents is less than five, the exact figures are not reported to maintain anonymity. A full set of tables for the demographic survey data are included in Annex B.

Table 2. Survey respondent protected characteristics summary

<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>PCDA student officers (%)</b>	<b>IPLDP student officers (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>	n=181	n=137
18-24	44	28
25-34	46	58
35-44	7	9
45-54	n<5	4
Prefer not to say	n<5	0
<b>Disability</b>	n=181	n=137
Disabled	n<5	4
Not disabled	96	94
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	n=181	n=137
Gender identity same as given at birth	99	99
No	0	0
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	n=181	n=137
Single	52	45
Cohabiting	25	24
Married	17	26
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	n<5	n<5
Civil partnership	n<5	n<5
Prefer not to say	4	n<5

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<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>PCDA student officers (%)</b>	<b>IPLDP student officers (%)</b>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity leave</b>	n=181	n=137
No intended leave	96	93
Maternity leave	0	n<5
Paternity leave	n<5	4
Adoption leave	0	0
Shared parental leave	0	0
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
<b>Race</b>	n=181	n=137
White	88	91
BAME	10	8
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
<b>Religion</b>	n=181	n=137
No religion	58	60
Christian	28	32
Muslim	6	n<5
Sikh	0	0
Jewish	0	0
Hindu	n<5	0
Buddhist	n<5	n<5
Prefer not to say	8	5
<b>Sex</b>	n=181	n=137
Female	36	39
Male	63	61
Prefer not to say	n<5	0
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	n=181	n=137
Heterosexual/straight	90	88
Gay/lesbian	3	7
Bisexual	n<5	n<5
Prefer not to say	5	n<5
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>137</b>

## Age

PCDA respondents were younger, with 44% (n=80) aged 18 to 24 compared with 28% (n=39) of those on the IPLDP. The majority of respondents were 25 to 34 years old: 46% (n=84) of those on the PCDA and 58% (n=80) on the IPLDP.

## Disability

The vast majority of respondents on both entry routes reported having no disability: 96% (n=174) on the PCDA and 94% (n=129) on the IPLDP.

## Gender reassignment

Almost all respondents – 99% on both the PCDA and the IPLDP – reported that their gender identity matched their sex registered at birth.<sup>22</sup>

## Marriage and civil partnership

Data for the marriage and civil partnership protected characteristic was collected by asking respondents about their marital status. Less than five respondents on both the PCDA and the IPLDP reported being in a civil partnership.

In both entry routes, most respondents were single. The PCDA cohort were more often single (52%, n=94) compared with those on the IPLDP (45%, n=62). Those on the IPLDP were also more likely to be married (26%, n=36) compared with those on the PCDA (17%, n=31), which could be due to the age profile of each cohort.

## Pregnancy and maternity leave

Most respondents did not intend to take any type of leave associated with pregnancy or adoption: 96% (n=174) on the PCDA and 93% on the IPLDP (n=127). Less than five respondents on each of the entry routes reported that they were intending to take maternity leave.

## Race

The proportion of BAME<sup>23</sup> officers was similar on the PCDA (10%, n=20) and the IPLDP (8%, n=11), and was broadly representative of BAME 'new joiners' in 2018/19 ADR across the seven evaluation forces (9%).

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<sup>22</sup> Questions based on Equality Challenge Unit (now known as Advance HE) guidance for collecting equality data in higher education institutions.

<sup>23</sup> BAME includes all non-White ethnicity categories.

## Religion

The majority of respondents across both entry routes reported having no religion (n=187): 58% (n=105) of PCDA and 60% (n=82) of IPLDP. Respondents who identified as Christian comprised 28% of the PCDA and 32% of the IPLDP cohorts. The percentage of Muslim respondents was higher in the PCDA cohort (6%) than in the IPLDP cohort (3%).

## Sex

The proportion of male and female respondents was similar across both the entry routes: 36% (n=65) female on the PCDA and 39% (n=54) female on the IPLDP. The sex distribution of the survey sample is broadly consistent with 'new joiners' in the evaluation forces (37% female).

## Sexual orientation

The majority of respondents were heterosexual in both the PCDA (90%, n=163) and the IPLDP (88%, n=121).

### 4.2.2. Other demographic characteristics

The following table provides a summary of other demographic characteristics collected from PCDA and IPLDP survey respondents.

Table 3. Survey respondent other demographic characteristics summary

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>PCDA student officers (%)</b>	<b>IPLDP student officers (%)</b>
<b>Caring responsibilities</b>	n=181	n=137
Caring responsibilities	19	26
No caring responsibilities	81	74
<b>Highest level qualification on entering the service</b>	n=181	n=137
Undergraduate degree and higher	27	42
Level 4/5	14	15
A levels and other Level 3	45	27
GCSEs and other Level 2	9	12
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
Other	3	n<5

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>PCDA student officers (%)</b>	<b>IPLDP student officers (%)</b>
<b>Socioeconomic background – parents' highest-level qualification</b>	n=181	n=137
One or both have a degree-level qualification	31	30
Qualification below degree level	38	35
No formal qualifications	11	9
Don't know	18	20
N/A	n<5	n<5
Prefer not to say	n<5	4
Other	0	n<5
<b>Socioeconomic background – eligibility for free school meals</b>	n=180	n=135
Yes	18	19
No	71	64
Don't know	8	n<5
N/A	n<5	13
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
<b>Socioeconomic background – school type</b>	n=181	n=137
State run/funded – selective	14	18
State run/funded – non selective	75	74
Independent or fee-paying school – bursary	0	n<5
Independent or fee-paying school – no bursary	n<5	0
Attended school outside UK	3	n<5
Don't know	3	n<5
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5
Other	n<5	0

Characteristic	PCDA student officers (%)	IPLDP student officers (%)
<b>Socioeconomic background – perceived lower socioeconomic background</b>	n=180	N=135
Yes	20	10
No	62	73
Don't know	14	10
Prefer not to say	4	7
<b>Family member in policing</b>	n=180	n=135
Yes	26	27
No	72	70
Prefer not to say	n<5	n<5

### Caring responsibilities

Respondents on the IPLDP (26%, n=36) were slightly more likely to have caring responsibilities, compared with those on the PCDA (19%, n=35). Of the 35 PCDA respondents, 22 were the primary carer of a child or children (under the age of 18).

For those on the PCDA, caring responsibility increased with age, with 22% (n=19) of those aged 25 to 34 having caring responsibilities, compared with less than five aged 18 to 24. Caring responsibilities were also more often undertaken by female respondents. Of the 64 female respondents, 16 (25%) had caring responsibilities, compared with 17 out of 114 males (15%).

### Highest-level qualification

Survey respondents were asked to state their highest qualification on entry to the service. Those on the IPLDP entered with higher qualifications overall, with 42% (n=58) holding an undergraduate degree or higher, compared with 27% (n=48) on the PCDA.

The majority of PCDA respondents had A levels or another Level 3 qualification as their highest qualification (45%, n=81), compared with 27% (n=37) of the IPLDP. Level 2 qualifications were held by 9% (n=17) of PCDA and 12% (n=17) of IPLDP respondents.

## Socioeconomic background

To identify if there were any differences in the socioeconomic background of those on different entry routes, respondents were asked survey questions recommended by the Cabinet Office.

Respondents were asked the highest qualification that either parent (or guardian) received, commonly used to measure socioeconomic background due to the impact that education level – and consequently, salary – can have on upbringing.<sup>24</sup>

Respondents were also asked if they were eligible for free school meals, which is a common measure of disadvantage,<sup>25</sup> and the type of school they attended.

Across these measures, the socioeconomic background of PCDA and IPLDP respondents was broadly the same. 31% (n=57) of PCDA respondents had at least one parent with a degree-level qualification, compared with 30% (n=41) of those on the IPLDP.

Likewise, 18% (n=32) of PCDA and 19% (n=25) of IPLDP respondents were eligible for free school meals. The type of school attended by both cohorts was also similar, with 88% (n=160) of PCDA respondents having attended a state-run school, compared with 91% (n=125) of those on the IPLDP. Less than five respondents on both the PCDA and the IPLDP attended an independent school. The remaining respondents attended school outside of the UK, didn't know the school type or preferred not to say.

Respondents were also asked how they perceived their own socioeconomic background.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to consistent findings presented in the measures above, 20% (n=37) of PCDA respondents identified themselves as coming from a lower socioeconomic background, compared with 10% (n=14) on the IPLDP.

## Family member in police

The different entry routes also included a similar percentage of those who had had a family member in the police, with 26% (n=47) of PCDA respondents and 27% (n=37) of those on the IPLDP.

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<sup>24</sup> Cabinet Office. (2018). 'Annex A – Evaluation of measures of socioeconomic background' [internet]. Available from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/713739/Annex\\_A\\_-\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_measures\\_of\\_Socio-economic\\_background.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713739/Annex_A_-_Evaluation_of_measures_of_Socio-economic_background.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Cabinet Office testing of this question suggests some respondents may have difficulty recalling whether they were eligible for free school meals and policy changes over time make comparisons across generations difficult.

<sup>26</sup> While more subjective, the Cabinet Office found that this is a measure that respondents felt comfortable with and wanted to use.

## 4.3. Reasons for joining the police service and undertaking the PCDA

### Introduction

The evaluation aimed to identify the reasons why new recruits joined the police service, and whether responses differed by entry route. The survey asked respondents to score, from one to five (low to high), how influential a range of factors were in their decision to join the police service. Table 3 below presents the percentage of those recording a high influence (a score of four or five) for each factor. Interviews with 13 PCDA student officers in four forces explored motivations in further detail, including the reasons for undertaking the PCDA.

#### 4.3.1. Motivations for joining the police service: survey findings

Across both entry routes, new recruits reported the same factors as the main reasons for joining the service, with the top four for each being: the opportunity to help people in the community; the excitement of the work; opportunities for career development; and intellectual curiosity or a desire to learn.

The opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification was less influential as a motivating factor for PCDA student officers, ranking ninth out of 12. This finding is likely to reflect how evaluation forces often recruited to the PCDA from an existing pool of applicants who were not aware of the opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification at the point of application. However, those without an existing degree more often reported the opportunity to gain a degree as a high influence (41%, n=53) compared with those already holding a degree (22%, n=11).<sup>27</sup>

Intellectual curiosity or a desire to learn was the fourth ranked factor for both PCDA and IPLDP respondents. This may reflect the way that PCDA student officers were selected from an existing pool, having applied to join the police service without knowledge of the PCDA.

Overall, these findings were echoed in the evaluation interviews, where all but one of the PCDA student officers had always wanted to be a police officer, regardless of whether they were at the start of their working life or had spent time in previous careers. These issues are explored further below.

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<sup>27</sup> See Table 21 in Annex C.

Table 4. Motivations for joining the police service (PCDA and IPLDP respondents)

	PCDA		IPLDP	
	Respondents who scored 4 or 5 (%)	Rank	Respondents who scored 4 or 5 (%)	Rank
The opportunity to help people in the community	94	1	94	1
The excitement of the work	92	2	88	2
Opportunities for career advancement	89	3	84	3
Intellectual curiosity or a desire to learn	61	4	74	4
Support from my family	56	5	53	6
Salary prospects	47	6	39	8
Status of the job	45	7	56	5
An opportunity to earn while learning	46	8	40	7
The opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification	36	9	-	-
The training was funded by the police force	26	10	17	10
Knowing friends or family who are police officers	22	11	25	9
Lack of other career alternatives	9	12	7	11
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>179</b>		<b>135</b>	

#### 4.3.2. Motivations for joining the police: interview findings

All but one of the 13 PCDA student officers interviewed stated that they had always wanted to be a police officer, regardless of whether they were at the start of their working life or had spent time in previous careers. Where policing had not been a previous career aspiration, the interviewee expressed the desire for a career change and matched their own skills – for example, being a good communicator – against what was required for the role. This suggests that among those interviewed, the PCDA had not attracted individuals for whom

policing was a new or alternative career aspiration. This reflects that most forces recruited from an existing pool of candidates that had applied to the force prior to the introduction of the PCDA.

For almost half of interviewees, the excitement of the work and not wanting to be in a regular 9-to-5 office job were prominent factors in their decision to join the service. Mentioned less often, but influential for those who did so, was a desire to help and make a difference. Both of these motivating factors reflected interviewees' initial expectations and understanding of the role, where policing was viewed as an action-orientated job, fighting crime and protecting the public.

'From when I was in school, I always looked towards going into the police, and then I think it was primarily to help people, and to actually do something, like not just sit in an office, to actually get out and do stuff and help people.'

(PCDA interview 3B)

Aside from the nature of the job, the opportunities for career progression and development offered by policing was raised by almost half those interviewed. This was framed both through the prospects for promotion through a clear rank structure, which was well understood, and the breadth of roles on offer. However, interviewees were not always aware prior to their application of the different career pathways presented by the different areas of policing, with this additional understanding gained as they progressed through the recruitment process.

'I didn't realise at the time of joining but now I do... the police is really, really broad, you can go... I will be a 24/7 [response] cop and I'm hoping to go into probably safeguarding or something like that, up to now, but you can go into firearms, you can go into traffic, it's like there are loads of many different areas which you can go and that's quite appealing.'

(PCDA interview 2C)

'I think the opportunity to be able to go into a variety of areas and get that support was enormous. And after speaking with a number of officers in the initial stage of the recruitment process, whether it was a general PC, a sergeant and an inspector, they all gave me the same response, which was that the opportunity for development in huge.'

(PCDA interview 4C)

### 4.3.3. Reasons for undertaking the PCDA

Interviewees had mixed reasons for undertaking the PCDA as an entry route, largely – but not exclusively – dependent on the approach to recruitment in their force. Of the four forces in which PCDA interviews were undertaken, two had recruited to the PCDA from a pool that had previously applied to the force. While the opportunity to gain a degree was ranked ninth out of 11 in the list of motivating factors presented in the survey, the degree-level qualification was generally more positively received among those interviewed.

The opportunity to gain a degree at the end of the PCDA was mentioned by seven of the 13 interviewed as a positive, motivating factor. Of these, a few interviewees, who were mostly younger, already had intentions to undertake a degree and, eventually, become a police officer prior to learning about the PCDA. In these circumstances, the PCDA represented the perfect option, covering both priorities while eliminating the burden of student debt. However, the value of a degree was not only recognised by those most recently out of school, with one interviewee with several years of previous employment experience commenting that the PCDA was a route back into higher education.

'I always wanted to do a degree, but I'm not very academic. Basically I left school and once I left school I joined my employer and that was pretty much as far as my education went. So I was pretty much chomping at the bit, as it were, to get back into education because I thought if I didn't do it now I'm never going to do it.'

(PCDA interview 2C)

To a lesser extent, interviewees also mentioned the opportunity to undertake rotations in different areas of policing as an attractive aspect of the PCDA, with a view to pursuing future career pathways in specific areas of policing, such as becoming a detective.

In light of the way that student officers were recruited, six of the 13 interviewees commented that they had no choice but to embark on the PCDA if they wanted to be a police officer, as there was no IPLDP or DHEP option available. Given the strong motivation to join the service, interviewees would meet any necessary requirements placed on them by the force. However, when interviewees were directed to the PCDA, typically months after their initial application and before the PCDA had been introduced, the decision resulted in mixed feelings. For some, the PCDA was an opportunity to gain a degree and exposure to greater knowledge (as well as being a police officer), while others were deeply frustrated at having to undertake a three-year qualification that they had not anticipated. In one force, the PCDAs

were later followed by an IPLDP cohort, which led to some resentment and claims that the process was unfair among a small number of interviewees.

‘So, there was very minimal information out there. Even in my final interview I didn’t get that much of an input on what the university side was really like. And I definitely would have liked to have had a broader knowledge, been told about another route if that didn’t suit me. It felt like they just wanted to push a lot of people through this one route to try and get them into university.’

(PCDA interview 3A)

Views on the quality of information received about the PCDA prior to joining were also mixed. Where the force had actively promoted the PCDA through social media and events early in the application process, interviewees commented that they were well informed. Yet around a third of those interviewed thought that information was inadequate and they did not fully understand the programme ahead of starting it, although there was some appreciation that the PCDA was new and they were the first cohort in the force. Further detail on hours, the amount of university work and pay were given as examples of where information was not available early on in the recruitment process.

‘But I still think that they gave us everything that they could at the time. I think people did understand the fact that it is a new thing, and things haven’t been completely clarified yet, and that it is going to take some time and it’s not going to be your overnight fix.’

(PCDA interview 4B)

In three of the evaluation forces, there were a range of misconceptions about the PCDA, which led to assumptions about future progression or reinforced the negative views of experienced officers about the PEQF more broadly. These misconceptions included needing a degree to be a detective and having an option to switch to the IPLDP if the PCDA did not work out.

‘To be fair, I wanted to have a degree, so it was a perfect solution. Otherwise, I would have to do it in later years, because I was aware that in order for us to even... Eventually, I would like to become a detective, and always to do that you have to have a degree. It will come to the point where you have to have a degree, so it was a perfect solution.’

(PCDA interview 2B)

'So, if I did find it hard and I was failing at it, then I had in my mind that if it all goes to pot, then I would obviously leave that route and then look at doing the regular route again...I wasn't losing anything. That's what I was thinking.'

(PCDA interview 4A)

## 4.4. PCDA student officer experiences of 'classroom' learning

### Introduction

Interviews with 13 PCDA student officers and five tutors were conducted to understand their experiences of the programme. Overall, PCDA student officer interviewees were largely positive about their experience of the PCDA, when considering the programme as a whole, taking into account both university and force-led provision, as well as tutoring for those who were at that stage.

Interviewees from different forces were at different stages of the programme. In all four forces, the interviewees had completed approximately 20 to 26 weeks of initial classroom learning and force training. In two of the four, tutorship was under way or soon to be completed. Experiences of the learning gained in the 'classroom' – delivered by both university lecturers and force trainers – and of tutorship are explored in more detail below.

### 4.4.1. University-led learning

#### Relevance to policing

The most frequently discussed aspect of the university (or academic) learning among PCDA interviewees concerned the relevance and value of some of the lesson content to their policing role. Overall views were mixed but eight of the 13 interviewees, across each of the forces, questioned the relevance of some university-led learning to practical policing or suggested that the balance needed to shift towards more police-led training. Those interviewees already interested in gaining a degree typically held more positive views. Lectures that covered sociology and criminology theory were most frequently highlighted as the least relevant topic areas.

'And the lecturers keep saying how we're going to go out with this broader knowledge, but I'm talking to my colleagues on my cohort and it just sounds like they're trying to sell it to us, but it doesn't really work in the aspect of if I'm being taught what the arguments of a sociologist says about this crime, I don't

see the relevance of that to practical policing at all. Because I'm not going to go to a victim's house and start telling them what some sociologist has said about what's happened to them.'

(PCDA interview 3A)

Despite the frequently raised challenge over the relevance of content, most interviewees were also able to pick out aspects of the university-led learning. Topics with a more obvious link to policing were singled out as particularly interesting or useful. Lessons on forensics, target hardening, problem-orientated policing, counter terrorism, law and human rights were given by interviewees as examples of particularly good lessons. Gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of an area, and an appreciation of why certain actions or decisions might be taken, were noted by these interviewees as the benefits of such lessons. Interviewees also reflected on the skills gained through university study, such as writing, critical thinking and time management.

'So, I'm able to look at it from both points of view; just like a normal person on the street, and then as a police officer. You've got two heads, and I think uni allows me to put both of them together and see the bigger picture, rather than just seeing... Put the police officer's head on and you've got very tunnel vision, rather than being able to put both heads on.'

(PCDA interview 1B)

While topics may not seem relevant during the early stages of the programme, one interviewee commented that once more practical policing experience had been gained, the relevance may become more apparent. More specifically, the university-led content could become more relevant when on rotation in years two and three, for example, investigations or community policing, which might provide more opportunity than response policing to make connections between lessons and practice.

'I know quite a few people sat there and thought, "How is this going to really link into my role?" I think potentially it's one of those that once you go to different areas, so different areas in policing, it might actually be a bit more relevant. But for response level, it wasn't really too relevant, some of the teaching.'

(PCDA interview 4B)

## Quality of teaching

Three quarters of interviewees commented on aspects of teaching from the university and the learning environment that they perceived to be of good quality. The best-reported lesson delivery was from those considered to be experts in a field, particularly ex-police officers with experience of the job. Where force trainers were present at the university-led sessions, this was highly valued by PCDA interviewees as content could instantly be contextualised for policing by an authentic voice and provide a more engaging lesson.

'So, we had some of the university law lecturers come in and deliver some of it and then obviously [the force trainer] would place it into a policing perspective. So, they'd give you the basics of the law side of it, they'd teach the legislation and then we'd be taught by the police officers how we put that in play. I thought that worked really well. Out of all the modules I think that was the slickest.'

(PCDA interview 1C)

The most common criticism in how lessons were taught concerned the presentation style of those delivering sessions. Five of the 13 PCDA student officers interviewed commented that lessons were at times over-reliant on PowerPoint slide presentations and that the delivery from lecturers was 'dry'. They also suggested that the days were long and there was repetition of curriculum content in different lessons. For those interviewees attracted by the excitement of policing, and opposed to a 9-to-5 job, the style of university learning felt at odds with what they most enjoyed about policing and fed an eagerness to enter the field.

## Location

As discussed in section 4.1.3, the establishment of regional force partnerships meant that some PCDA student officers were required to travel across force boundaries to receive learning. Of the 13 PCDA interviewees, four were from a (single) force where travel to the university location was required. Two PCDA interviewees from the force commented on the travel, which, though inconvenient, was not considered to be a major concern. The force had provided transport for days when lessons were scheduled, though interviewees commented on other ad hoc travel that could be required – for example, to use the library for study – for which the travel was an inefficient use of time.

## 4.4.2. Force-led learning

### Relevance to policing

The learning delivered by forces was consistently viewed as relevant by all interviewees, with the training providing more obvious connections to frontline policing. Training covering various aspects of what interviewees considered to be 'bread-and-butter' policing – such as attending specific job types, legislation and interviewing – was considered to provide the core knowledge and practical skills to perform the role.

### Quality of teaching

In general, the force training staff were well regarded. A few interviewees explained that there was particular value in hearing the first-hand experiences of those who have done the job. Interviewees viewed trainers as culturally similar, in contrast to their perception of university staff, who were considered to be from outside the service.

'...you've still got a respect for them because they've gone out there and they've done it so long. But they still treat you like one of them because we are one of them. They come and sit down and come and have breaks with us and the conversation and the banter and the camaraderie is fantastic. And then you go into a classroom and that continues but it continues in a learning way as well. And that, for me, has been vital, particularly when, like I say, you're having academics come in which is quite a dry process. They come in and they're able to give you those personal experiences, which allows you to learn a little bit more.'

(PCDA interview 4C)

Force learning was generally viewed by interviewees as fast-paced and varied, with quizzes and short tests that were considered helpful in building knowledge. Several interviewees, across different forces, suggested improvements to sequencing of certain lessons. Most commonly they commented that force IT systems were taught too early and needed to be relearned by the time tutorship came around.

## 4.5. PCDA student officer experiences of tutoring

### Introduction

The interviews conducted for the evaluation aimed to understand how tutoring had been experienced on the PCDA, from the perspective of both PCDA student officer and tutor.

Depending on when evaluation forces had commenced, or how the PCDA was structured, it was not always possible to cover tutoring during the interviews. Of the 13 PCDA student officers interviewed, eight had experienced tutoring. The remaining five were due to start their tutoring a few weeks after the interview, although four (from a single force) had spent time with response teams as part of an immersion week early on in the course, and their views on this initial exposure to frontline policing are also covered in this section.

#### 4.5.1. Students' experience of PCDA tutorship, coached patrol and supported learning

##### Overall view of tutoring

Overall, interviewees valued and enjoyed the tutoring phase. They commented that tutoring provided welcome hands-on experience after a long stretch in the classroom (up to 25 weeks) and was often viewed as where 'real police work' and learning started, reflecting views on academic and practical learning, and motivations that are largely driven by the excitement for the job.

'And then we'll do it and then after we'll have a debrief and I love the idea of learning and I feel like the amount I've learnt in them six weeks is massively more than I have in the last six months of the course, just because it's practically on the front line you're going to learn more.'

(PCDA interview 3A)

Tutoring and immersion gave interviewees an introduction to the wider team and workings of the organisation, an environment that they found to be, on the whole, supportive and welcoming. Interviewees stated that through this first experience of police work, they gained an insight into the realities of the job, which for the majority contrasted with their initial expectations of an action-orientated job. More specifically, interviewees consistently mentioned that the level of paperwork, including management of jobs through force IT systems, and the volume of mental health incidents was more than expected.

Despite some initial unease about how prepared they felt, after completing or undertaking a sizeable proportion of the tutoring phase, almost all interviewees reported feeling confident in the role and felt ready for IPS.

'I feel prepared because I've got the basics there, but I know I'm a long way from being perfect and that's all I can be thankful for that I've been given the tools to go out and be efficient with the job.'

(PCDA interview 4C)

## Preparedness

Interviewees were split between those who felt ready to go out with their tutor and those who did not. Interviewees who described themselves as ready said that the classroom learning, both academic and practical, had sufficiently prepared them for entering the field. All of those who had completed an immersion week commented that they felt prepared for their forthcoming tutoring phase and that the shock of going out for the first time would be dampened, though it is possible that views may change once tutoring has started in earnest.

'I definitely felt ready, I felt prepared. I felt like we'd been taught everything that we could have been taught. Yes, to be honest I definitely felt prepared and ready.'

(PCDA interview 1A)

Where interviewees felt unprepared for tutoring, this generally reflected a concern about moving to 'real' police work, particularly managing conflict. The management of conflict was viewed by interviewees as something that was naturally daunting and difficult to prepare for. Interviewees saw role play as a useful training method, but this could not truly replicate the dynamic of dealing with members of the public.

In the main, PCDA interviewees across the age range expressed apprehension ahead of tutoring. The ability to draw on previous work experience and communication skills in dealing with the public had helped some. Conversely, a few very young interviewees mentioned their age as a factor in how prepared they felt before going out for the first time.

'I don't think you could be prepared really. Because I'm only 19, I've never had someone screaming in my face, I've never dealt with conflict situations or anything like that. I've never done any job like this at all, so prepared, I wouldn't say I was prepared. I was extremely nervous before going out.'

(PCDA interview 3A)

On the whole, interviewees reported that they valued hearing the real-world policing experiences of force trainers. However, one interviewee suggested that training school stories could provide an exaggerated or overly daunting impression of policing that could misrepresent the role by focusing on the most challenging aspects.

'I got a bit worried about what they're telling you in training, and I thought, "This is nothing like what I wanted to do. I wanted to help people. I don't want to fight people. I don't want to constantly deal with people with drugs and the nasty people," and you get that skewed image of the world, but it's not been like that at all. I thought it was going to be constantly rushed, constantly not finishing hours, like finishing hours after your time. But no, it's been so much better than that.'

(PCDA interview 3B)

### Learning and influence

Typically, interviewees described communication skills, dealing with the public and how to control situations as the key learning from tutoring. Other practical skills they learned focused on how to respond to certain incidents and record jobs on force systems. Interviewees rarely reported using their classroom teaching, particularly the academic learning and valued the hands-on learning undertaken during tutorship.

'But I'm quite a visual learner so sitting in the classroom, I can't really relate to what they're trying to say, but when I'm out doing it, I learn more by doing that. But I think it was more of a confidence thing as well, I'm not the most confident of people.'

(PCDA interview 2C)

For all interviewees, tutoring began with a period of observation with a transition to them becoming progressively more involved, and eventually leading the incidents attended. Reflection was reported as a key aspect of how interviewees learned. Tutor and student would reflect on how incidents were dealt with as soon as possible, often holding an immediate debrief in the car, reviewing what could be done differently or what went well. Interviewees described how they were constantly learning and were aware of the skills that they wanted to develop further in the forthcoming weeks, such as conflict management or types of job they had not yet been exposed to on shift.

Interviewees described tutors as supportive, reassuring, close and friendly, and reported that professional relationships were developed. Interviewees valued the tutors' patience, honest feedback and sense of humour. Tutors were well regarded and influential in establishing core values and approaches to policing. Interviewees felt that a good tutor could demonstrate effective behaviours and help counter some inappropriate approaches that may be demonstrated by others in the team.

'Everyone deserves to be treated the right way. Whereas I think on the shift I was on with my previous tutor, officers could be totally opposite of that and be up in someone's face being aggressive when there was no need for it. I think realising that actually you can be nice to someone who's just done something wrong and still maintain the same people skills and just be more direct if you need to be.'

(PCDA interview 2A)

While tutoring could leave a lasting impression, some interviewees also explained how they wanted to develop their own style or approach, informed by tutoring rather than directly replicating the actions of the tutor. However, there were isolated cases of tutors seeking to reset learning delivered by force trainers. When asked how their classroom learning related to tutoring, one commented:

'If I'm being honest, not very much. Obviously, some of it comes into play, but a lot of it is not linked at all. I'll say, "Well, we got taught this," and they'll be like, "Well, that's rubbish."

(PCDA interview 3A)

### Immersion phase

All four interviewees who had the opportunity to complete an immersion week on their programme were positive about the experience. They stated that the experience provided initial insight and exposure to some of the core workings of a police force, such as the fast-paced responsive nature of the work, force IT systems and how the police station functions.

'I think it was just have a quick view as to what a 24/7 [response] police officer's role actually is, because as much as you might think what it is and you might have asked a police officer what it is, you're actually in the car with the sirens on, your heart's racing, you're a bit nervous, you're probably a little bit scared and it's good. It's good to get out there, it's good to get a feel for it.'

(PCDA interview 1C)

As with tutoring, time out on shift also brought into focus the realities of policing, challenging expectations of the role, and enabled interviewees to feel like a police officer. Not only did interviewees feel ready for the tutoring phase as a result, but also that the immersion week helped to contextualise the classroom learning they went on to receive.

A small number of interviewees from forces that did not provide an immersion week also raised the suggestion of gaining time on shift early, and thought this could be beneficial in

bridging the experience deficit described by some of those who felt anxious ahead of tutoring.

'I think there needs to be something in place where you can maybe have a few shifts with your team a couple of months before you go out or in the middle of your training, just go out and literally just observe, like no pressure to do anything, just observe so you know how it rolls, because it's completely different to what I thought.'

(PCDA interview 3B)

#### 4.5.2. Tutors' experience of the PCDA tutorship, coached patrol and supported learning

To understand the PCDA tutorship from the perspective of tutors, interviews were conducted with five tutors in the two evaluation forces where the tutoring phase had commenced. Tutors were consistent with the PCDA interviewees in the way they described the overall approach to tutoring, whereby tutors would initially take a lead role, allowing PCDA student officers to observe, before progressively encouraging the students to take more responsibility. Towards the end of the tutoring phase, all tutors explained that students would take a lead at incidents to demonstrate readiness for IPS.

The perception among tutors in both forces was that the PCDA student officers tended to be younger, with less work or life experience to draw on than previous new recruits. Tutors suggested that, for some student officers, this influenced how they communicated with the public. Examples of communication skills identified by tutors as areas for development within the tutoring phase included displaying empathy, finding the right words for difficult situations and confidence in being an authority figure. By attending an increasing number of incidents over the course of the tutoring phase, student officers would be exposed to a variety of experiences and encouraged by tutors to improve. These challenges mirror are consistent with those identified by PCDA interviewees above, though some tutors acknowledged that personality traits – and not just age – also influence behaviour.

'I would say probably from what I've seen, the demographic's slightly different. As in, they tend to be a lot younger so they don't necessarily have the full-life experience that other people would have. And that probably then gives them the extra challenges if they're shy or not sure how to speak to people, because obviously they're younger.'

(Tutor interview 1A)

Tutors' views on the level of knowledge or the degree to which the 'classroom' learning prepared students for tutoring were more mixed. Some tutors commented that PCDA student officers could have received more training in preparation for practical policing tasks, such as the management of paperwork or incidents on force IT systems and the completion of domestic abuse, stalking and honour-based violence (DASH) risk assessment forms.

'So, it would have been nice if force trainers, or uni, just gave him a checklist of the priorities of paperwork and what he needed when he came out, you know? Like standard paperwork you need just in case you go to any type of incident.'

(Tutor interview 2B)

However, this view was not held by all tutors, where despite the overall perception that PCDA student officers were young and inexperienced, some considered the programme an improvement on the IPLDP and saw value in the additional and in-depth knowledge provided by the university.

'Well the first thing that springs to mind is age because I'm pretty sure the majority of people on the PCDA are much younger, less life experience. In relation to training, I would say they're just as, or even more, prepared than the IPLDP students.'

(Tutor interview 2B)

Tutor interviewees also commented on the structure and assessment systems introduced for the PCDA. Where tutoring had been split into two six-week blocks, tutors' views aligned with those of the student officers. Tutors commented that the break in tutoring created a loss in momentum at the point at which PCDA student officers were becoming more confident in the field. On return to tutoring for the second block, tutors explained that it was necessary to refresh prior learning and reacclimatise to work on shift.

The approach to assessing student officers had changed with the introduction of the PCDA, with new online systems adopted and responsibility for the student to draft their own evidence. As with the views on split tutoring, the experience of tutors reflects that of the PCDA interviewees. Tutor interviewees commented that the training on how to operate the new software could have been improved, as they initially struggled with the technology, which meant spending more time developing these skills, sometimes at the expense of attending incidents. Once tutors had become proficient, they reflected on benefits arising from the new system. Interviewees suggested that the online system made reviewing evidence easier, neater and more efficient. Tutor interviewees also commented that students

writing their own evidence was an improvement on the previous approach, as this freed up tutors and helped consolidate learning for the PCDA student officers.

'I think it just instils the learning in them a little bit more, rather than just going to a job and moving on. When they've actually got to write it down and think about what they did and why they did it I think it just cements that learning a bit better.'

(Tutor interview 3A)

## 4.6. PCDA student officer wellbeing

### Introduction

The evaluation aimed to understand wellbeing considerations through both the survey and interviews with PCDA student officers. The survey asked respondents a series of questions on mental wellbeing and work-life balance with five-point Likert scale response options. The survey was issued as close as possible to joining the force, though responses were often chased several weeks after the survey had initially been sent. As a result, these baseline survey findings should be considered as data covering the early months of a student officer's career. Wellbeing data will continue to be gathered using both the survey and interviews throughout the four years of the evaluation, to track possible changes over time.

#### 4.6.1. Survey data

To measure mental wellbeing, questions were asked that allowed for comparison with data collected through the PFEW Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey (2018),<sup>28</sup> which is broadly representative of those in federated ranks in England and Wales.

Data collected in the evaluation survey suggests that the wellbeing of officers as they join the service is much healthier than those covered by the PFEW survey (ie, those with longer years of service), as shown in Figure 1 below.

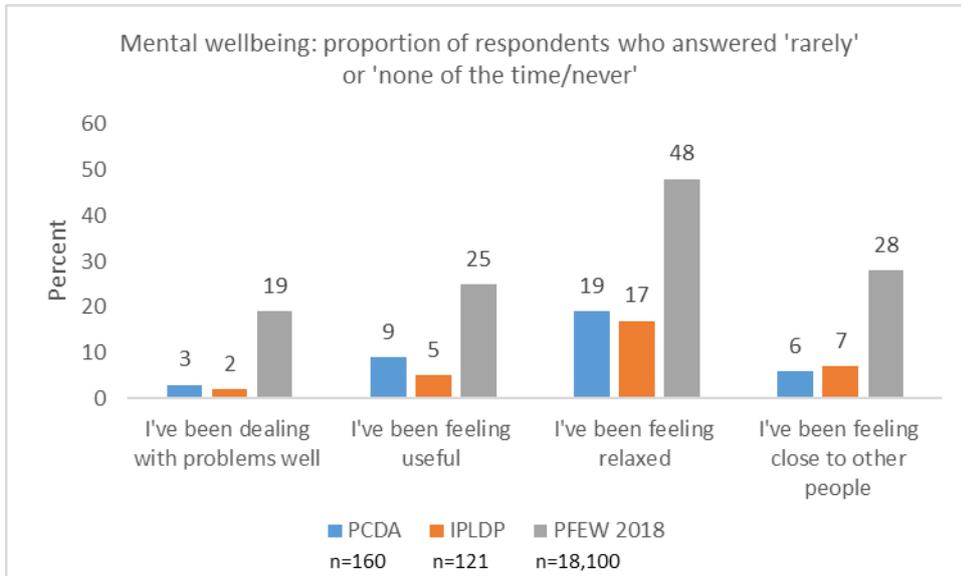
Overall, there was very little difference in the reported wellbeing of PCDA and IPLDP student officers. A broadly similar percentage of those on each entry route responded that they 'rarely' or 'never' dealt with problems well (3% and 2%), felt relaxed (19% and 17%) and felt

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<sup>28</sup> Elliott-Davies M. (2018). 'PFEW Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey 2018: Headline Statistics December 2018' [internet]. Police Federation. Available from <https://www.polfed.org/media/14060/demandcapacityandwelfaresurveyheadlinestatistics2018-06-02-19-v1.pdf>

close to other people (6% and 7%). 9% of PCDA respondents reported that they rarely or never felt useful, compared with 5% of those on the IPLDP.

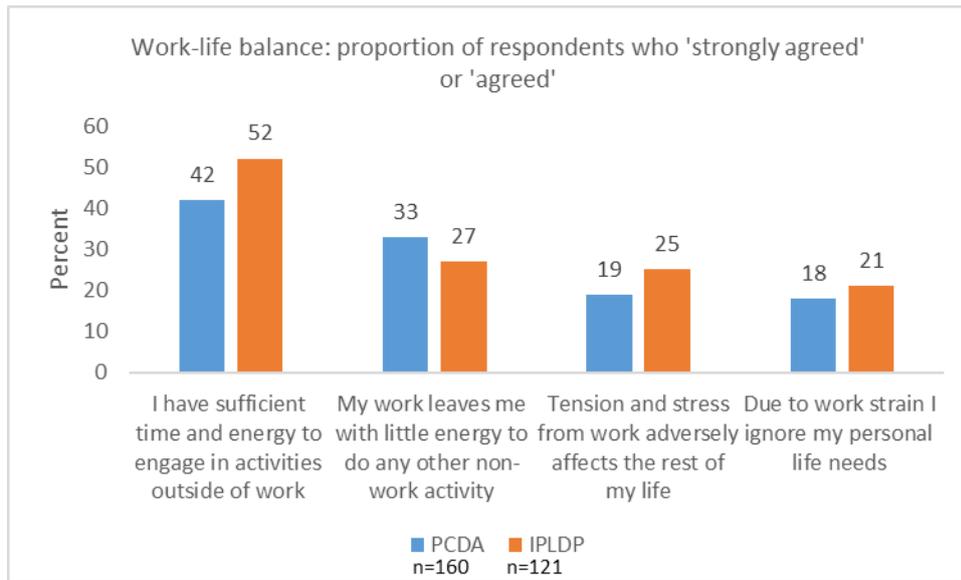
Figure 1. Mental wellbeing of PCDA, IPLDP and PFEW (2018) respondents



The survey findings on work-life balance suggest that, compared with those on the PCDA (42%, n=67), IPLDP respondents (52%, n=63) had more time and energy to engage in activities outside of work. However, work stress adversely affecting home life was more often reported by IPLDP respondents (25%, n=30), than those on the PCDA (19%), another possible consequence of the age profile of the two cohorts.

PCDA student officers raised a range of wellbeing and work-life balance issues related to the PCDA and their early career experiences during the evaluation interviews. These interviews were undertaken further into the PCDA and provide additional detail, context and explanation to the survey data provided by PCDA respondents.

Figure 2. Work-life balance of PCDA and IPLDP respondents



#### 4.6.2. Managing workload

##### Combining work and study

The main workload issue, raised by nine of the 13 PCDA interviewees, was the challenge of combining study with commitments outside of work. The survey reported that 18% of those on the PCDA had caring responsibilities. Interviewees often described studying in their own time at home, in the evenings and on rest days, with this being more problematic for those with family caring responsibilities. Experiences of balancing work and family varied. Although most found the workload 'hard but manageable', a few found that their home life had become stressful and disordered, and that they were worried about the future.

'It's just chaos at the minute. It's just trying to grab what I can. But I can see, if it doesn't settle down, I will crash and burn eventually, and that's not what I want. I don't want to get to that point.'

(PCDA interview 4A)

Three of the 13 interviewees also looked ahead to years two and three of the PCDA, and expressed concern over managing study, a dissertation and family life alongside work commitments, such as cases to manage.

While there was some acceptance that the exact requirements for the remainder of the PCDA were to be confirmed, the worry from interviewees was that stress related to university could begin to affect their performance as a police officer. Knowing what to prioritise, study or police work, and not wishing to let colleagues down on shift were also

raised. These interviewees highlighted a dilemma over interviewees' 'student' and 'cop' identities that they were uncertain of how to resolve.

'Just if you're stressed about assignments and things like that then you might not be doing your job as well as you should be because you'll be worrying that you've got too much on.'

(PCDA interview 3C).

'And now I'm out practical policing and I mean, how do I explain to my sergeant that if there's a big job on, and I mean like a huge job and they need me on overtime, I can't be on overtime because I've got a degree to sort? I feel like I'll get a bad reception if that happens because I want to be able to support them. It's not fair me being able to walk off when they need help.'

(PCDA interview 3A)

### Studying for GCSE Maths

It is a requirement of all apprenticeships in England and Wales, not just the PCDA, that the student holds a grade C in GSCE Maths. Two interviewees mentioned this as a concern, as they were recruited on the basis that they work towards achieving this qualification, which they did not previously hold, alongside the PCDA.

Both expressed frustration and anticipated that the additional workload would have a detrimental effect on their work-life balance. At the time of their initial application to join the force, there was no expectation that a Maths GCSE would be required. This late change of entry qualification was considered to be unfair, even more so when a higher level qualification was already held and SEARCH® had been passed.

'...the only thing that's frustrating for me is I've got to get a C in GCSE maths at some point, which wasn't part of obviously getting into the police, it wasn't required, it wasn't required for the assessment centre and I find that a little bit insulting.'

(PCDA interview 1C)

Those interviewees affected commented that studying for GCSE maths would be an added burden. They expressed concerns over passing a qualification that had been difficult at school without the same level of tuition. Interviewees were also uncertain of the support they would receive from the university or force to help them complete the GCSE and struggled to imagine having sufficient time, taking into account the demands associated with work and university study.

'Now, the downside for me now is not only do I have to do this whole degree, but I have to go and get my Maths and English GCSE above C. It's absolutely fine but I do not know where on earth I'm going to find time to do that.'

(PCDA interview 4C)

### University assignments and work-based portfolio

For PCDA interviewees, university assignments to date had generally been completed without serious issue, though the work had been demanding for some. A few interviewees were critical of receiving multiple assignments in succession, which they felt was hard to manage. Interviewees who had already completed a degree, even if several years previously, reported struggling less than those who had returned to education after a long period in work.

Almost all interviewees were positive about the support they had received from the university and force. This covered both study skills support from student services, such as the library, as well as teaching staff or trainers who were willing to provide additional feedback, explanation and guidance. Such support was reported to be valuable for those who struggled with the academic assignments.

'The assignments, I struggled with a bit more. I'm not the world's most academic person ever, but I've sought advice from people, and I am trying at it. I spoke to the senior leader at the university. I spoke to him about what's available and what help is around, and things like that.'

(PCDA interview 4B)

The majority of interviewees were satisfied with the support on offer from the force and university, although a small proportion of interviewees suggested areas where the university support could improve. In one force, two interviewees suggested that the study skills and essay-writing session could have come earlier in the course. In another, an interviewee commented that the university and force were not working together effectively and were disjointed in their approach to the way exams were delivered to PCDA student officers.

'If you can imagine 10 weeks of solid legislation, and having exams and you haven't got a clue what they're going to ask, because the university are writing the exams, there just doesn't seem to be very much good communication between the university and force to be honest with you.'

(PCDA interview 1E)

The same concern was also acknowledged in stakeholder interviews, as reported in section 4.1.3 on collaboration for programme design and delivery.

For the eight interviewees on the tutoring phase, the completion of the work-based assessment portfolio was generally well managed but raised issues. A few interviewees commented that it could be hard to find the time to complete on shift and that some criteria could be hard to achieve, being dependent on the jobs that they had been exposed to (for example, fingerprinting or dealing with a sudden death).

### 4.6.3. Wellbeing

The majority of interviewees did not raise any further wellbeing concerns, outside of those relating to work-life balance covered above. However, for three of 13 PCDA interviewees, the PCDA and early stages of a policing career had provided difficult moments that had a serious impact on wellbeing. While not prominent, these are issues to recognise within the cohort.

#### Nature of the job

As noted in section 4.5, several interviewees commented that prior to experiencing the tutoring phase, they felt nervous about managing conflict and dealing with the public. Interviewees also commented that there was a limit to the preparation afforded by force training but tutors were effective guides through the initial exposure to real-world policing.

However, one interviewee recalled various incidents that they felt had a bearing on their own wellbeing. Sudden deaths that required a professional, or the use of force when dealing with conflict and unpredictable suspects, were examples of the jobs that could affect an officer's mental health. The fast-paced nature of response policing meant moving from one tough job to another without time to fully recover.

'It's a madhouse, an absolute madhouse. You never know what's going to happen. You never know what's going to be thrown at you. You come from RTC [road traffic collision] to sudden death to dealing with a family to dealing with a child to dealing with neighbours. You're constantly changing, and you have to adapt to the constant changes. People shouting at you, people abusing you, calling you all sorts of names. Then you end up on the floor with someone. Yeah. It's not a job for everyone, that's for sure.'

(PCDA interview 2B)

The support of the tutor and sergeant were essential for the interviewee in coping with such incidents. Yet while there was support on duty, and a desire to push on with a career they were passionate about, reflecting back on these incidents and during the interview was emotive. Coupled with a poor work-life balance and financial worry, as was the case here, some PCDA's experience pressure from a range of directions.

### Reception in force

Another interviewee described difficulties on joining their response team during the tutorship. The interviewee reported receiving a negative welcome on shift and they were challenged by a colleague on undertaking a degree. They felt this reflected a lack of understanding by colleagues and created additional challenges to shift working.

'There's this thing, a few of the people on the section were saying, "Oh, you're coming in here, taking our jobs, getting promoted straight to inspector," and this, that, and the other, and I was like, "That's just totally not what this course is." So, I think it's just lack of education. I just don't think they like the thought of them not having a degree, and we are going to have that degree, we're just going to come in and do it. So, there were tensions... I didn't want to be there at a certain point of it. I just didn't want to be there.'

(PCDA interview 4A)

The interviewee welcomed support from their tutor and professional development officer in managing the situation. While being made to feel overtly unwelcome was rare, conversations with colleagues on shift based on misunderstandings about the PCDA were raised by other interviewees. More broadly, these experiences add further weight to the views of those force stakeholders who commented that communication, knowledge and awareness of the PCDA could be improved in their force and nationally.

'Speaking to people on shift, they feel devalued. For someone to say that this PCDA is going to professionalise policing, it's like saying that it wasn't professionalised before. So, you get these police officers thinking, "What's the point?" They think "I was professional before," and then we get a negative impact because they feel like we're coming straight in and going for an easy promotion.'

(PCDA interview 3A)

## 5. Initial implementation lessons and learning

One of the key objectives of this evaluation was to draw lessons to inform implementation for subsequent PCDA cohorts and forces. This section sets out emerging lessons from the seven evaluation forces. The 'Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date'<sup>29</sup> report provides further consideration of the findings presented in this report and next steps for PEQF delivery.

Theme	Key audience	Initial learning from the evaluation
<b>Lessons for establishing the PCDA in forces</b>	Forces	<b>Strategic decision making and strong governance are essential for progressing towards implementation and providing a stimulus for delivery.</b> Chief constable and senior leadership buy-in, as well as the creation of project governance arrangements involving Human Resources, L&D, workforce planning and finance, were necessary to establish and drive PCDA implementation in all evaluation forces.
	College and forces	<b>Ongoing communication with the whole workforce at a national and force level is required to improve understanding of new entry routes.</b> Minimising any potential misconceptions, particularly around 'needing a degree' to be a police officer, will help support the development of a positive and welcoming environment for student officers. Forces also need to carefully communicate entry route pathways and requirements with applicants and those new in force. This will help to minimise any frustration or disquiet among new recruits, on either the new or pre-existing routes, when the IPLDP is being maintained alongside the new entry routes.

<sup>29</sup> College of Policing. (2020). 'Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date' [internet]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Documents/PEQF-Learning-to-date.pdf>

	College and forces	<b>Effective workforce planning is needed to balance and manage the requirements and timetable of the PCDA alongside operational policing needs.</b> The management of student officer abstraction can be complex, particularly when the volume of student officers is high, but can be aided by early engagement with frontline operational teams, careful planning, problem-solving capability and a flexible approach to start dates from HEIs.
	Forces and HEIs	<b>Collaborative working is a key principle for effective implementation.</b> In the initial stages of implementation, pre-tender engagement throughout the development phase, face-to-face contact and engagement between forces and HEIs (at all levels), and the building of personal relationships can be effective strategies.
<b>Lessons for police officer recruitment</b>	Forces	<b>Due to the way that forces recruited to the PCDA, and the reliance on cohort demographic data from the evaluation survey, the impact of the PCDA on workforce diversity is not yet known. In one force where the PCDA was introduced with a strategy to attract applicants from BAME backgrounds, a promising increase in BAME applicants has been achieved.</b> Community events, direct engagement with school leavers, targeted adverts and social media activity, plus a flexible approach to assessing candidates, may contribute to promising BAME recruitment outcomes.
	Forces	<b>Student officers on the PCDA are highly motivated, and are keen to join policing and serve their community. It is not yet possible to determine the extent to which a degree-level qualification is attracting people to policing who had not previously considered it as a career.</b> While the opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification was ranked low in the survey list of motivating factors, interviews with PCDA student officers were more positive. Recruitment strategies may therefore wish to further emphasise the value, both personal and professional, of undertaking a degree-level qualification.

		The opportunities for career progression within policing, which were a key motivating factor but not always known about prior to application, could also be emphasised.
<b>Lessons for design and delivery of the PCDA</b>	Forces and HEIs	<p><b>Forces and HEIs need to further emphasise the rationale for some academic content within the curriculum – in particular, sociology and criminology theory – as well as the collaborative nature of programme delivery.</b></p> <p>Collaborative working between forces and HEIs was viewed by stakeholders as essential for developing a cohesive course with a natural flow between components and a steady increase in complexity, but students often struggled to see the relevance of some HEI-led delivery. The presence of force trainers at HEI lectures can be a useful way of placing academic learning in an operational context.</p>
	Forces and HEIs	<p><b>Regional force collaborations help to establish economies of scale (through a greater volume of students) but can leave a force without an HEI provider within their boundary. Alternative learning delivery arrangements need to be well organised and meet the requirements of all forces.</b> Travel time and provision needs to be considered and the delivery of online learning alternatives needs to ensure that force and HEI technology is compatible. In regional collaborations where force-led learning is delivered in a single force, the identity and processes of each force should be acknowledged and incorporated within the course content.</p>
	Forces and HEIs	<p><b>Student officers greatly valued the time spent with their tutor, who helped support the transition from classroom to operational learning, but structuring this supported learning phase as a single, longer (10 to 12 weeks) block of tutoring was preferable.</b> Splitting the tutoring phase into two shorter blocks can have the unintended consequence of checking momentum just as recruits were building confidence and establishing themselves in the role. Tutor recruitment could also be challenging and the provision of training may help</p>

		<p>increase the status of tutoring. However, any training should ensure that tutors receive the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the role under the PCDA.</p>
	<p>Forces and HEIs</p>	<p><b>As PCDA student officers move into the second and third years of the programme, they should be reassured of the protected learning time provision.</b> Combining work and study commitments, when faced with increased operational responsibility, could be a concern for some students. This needs to be managed effectively by forces and HEIs to support student officer wellbeing.</p>

## 6. Evaluation next steps

This interim report has drawn on survey data collected at the beginning of the programme, and PCDA interviews undertaken part way through the first year, from only four of the seven evaluation forces. As a longitudinal study, the evaluation will continue to track the experiences of those on the programme over the next three years. The second evaluation survey will give consideration to how a broader range of respondents experience the programme and will determine how prevalent the views expressed by interviewees are across the wider PCDA cohort. The second survey will also begin to determine whether there are any differences in attitudes and behaviours between those on the PCDA and IPLDP, and will continue to monitor wellbeing.

Interviews will also be completed with those PCDA students and tutors still in the first year of the programme and not included within this report. This will provide additional perceptions of the programme from forces delivering the PCDA in different ways to those already interviewed. Reflecting the staggered nature of implementation start dates, interviews will also commence with PCDA student officers who are now in their second year.

The recruitment to the PCDA from an existing pool of applicants, or without adopting a targeted approach, highlights the need to further understand the implications of the PCDA for workforce diversity, as well as how influential the opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification might be. At present, only the first cohort of PCDA student officers is in scope for the evaluation, which will track these officers throughout the four-year programme.

The Home Office Police Workforce Census covering 2019/20 will include categories for each of the new entry routes. This has the potential to gather robust national diversity data in both the short and long term. Gathering data in this way, rather than through collections issued by the College, will also minimise the multiple requests placed on forces for this information.

# Annex A. PCDA Implementation

## Annex A1. PCDA National Curriculum overview<sup>30</sup>

The curriculum places fundamental emphasis on core elements and responsibilities of the constable role. Key educational and professional themes under this heading include:

- understanding the police constable role
- Code of Ethics
- maintaining professional standards
- valuing difference and inclusion

The new curriculum is also strongly focused on adoption and promotion of a professionally informed, modern, evidence-based approach to policing. Areas of learning relating to this aspect of professional functionality include:

- evidence-based policing
- problem solving in a policing context
- decision making and discretion
- communication skills

The curriculum provides detailed learning and development in relation to the police constable role in key areas of modern policing responsibility. This includes coverage of:

- crime prevention (including criminology)
- vulnerability and risk
- public protection
- criminal justice
- digital policing
- counter terrorism

Furthermore, the structure of the curriculum provides the police constable with opportunities to engage in advanced learning and development and professional practice associated with

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<sup>30</sup> Extract taken from College of Policing. (2018). 'PEQF initial entry routes into policing: Police constable, a strategic overview'. Access via the Managed Learning Environment <https://www.mle.ncalt.pnn.police.uk/Account/Login>

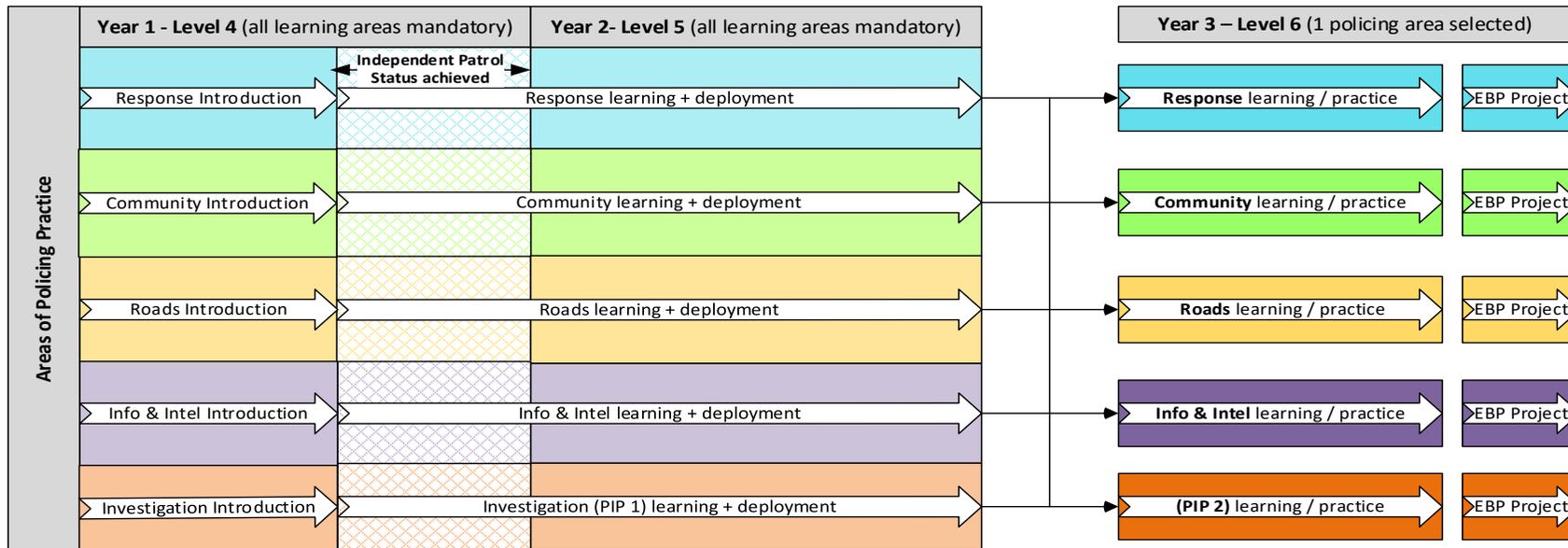
the following five core areas of professional policing practice (according to the operational requirements of the local force):

- response policing
- policing communities
- policing the roads
- information and intelligence
- conducting investigations

Alongside the above, learning and development and practical support is provided to promote and support the leadership potential – as well as the personal and professional wellbeing and resilience – of all of those undertaking this most challenging of professional roles.

The diagram below shows how the curriculum is covered over the three years of the PCDA.

Diagram 1. PCDA Curriculum<sup>31</sup>



Key Knowledge, Skills and Professional Awareness (all learning areas mandatory)	Understanding the Police Constable Role	Valuing Difference and Inclusion	Maintaining Professional Standards	Evidence-based Policing	Problem Solving	Research Methods and Skills
	Decision-making and Discretion	Communication Skills	Wellbeing and Resilience	Leadership and Team-working	Managing Conflict	Criminology and Crime Prevention
	Vulnerability and Risk	Public Protection	Victims and Witnesses	Criminal Justice	Digital Policing	Counter Terrorism
	Introduction to Coaching, Mentoring and Assessing					

<sup>31</sup> Extract taken from: College of Policing. (2019). 'Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, national programme specification' [internet]. Access via the Managed Learning Environment <https://www.mle.ncalt.pnn.police.uk/Account/LogIn>

## Annex A2. PCDA delivery model considerations

Key considerations for the programme include:

- a. Delivery to be in line with the national curriculum and to exhibit clear progression through the different academic levels.
- b. Delivery to be cognisant of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Welsh Government and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education requirements (including the expertise of staff in relation to apprenticeship training, how delivery is kept up to date and what impact the delivery model will have on the apprentice).
- c. Location and mode of delivery: apprentice and employer need will drive delivery design in terms of when, where and how the apprenticeship is delivered. It is useful to take the following into account.
  - Range and mix of delivery options, such as face-to-face, distance, blended, online and work-based learning.
  - Workforce planning and abstraction rates, which are paramount to forces when deciding on delivery options.
  - Geographical location of HEI for face-to-face learning on campus – are there different options that may be offered? Could HEIs offer different campus locations or learning that takes place at force location?
  - Mode of learning (through day or block release). At certain times of the year, it will be difficult for some forces to release staff due to peak seasons or events. As such, the model of learning should be developed to take this into account. Again, consideration of workforce planning and abstraction rates are vital when designing the mode of learning most appropriate for the collaborative partnership (see also work-based learning).
  - The apprenticeship programme should be considered as facilitating a collaborative and reflective approach to. There may be certain elements of the curriculum which may lend themselves more naturally and practically to either force or provider. As explained earlier, a cycle of reflective learning practice will enable the apprentice to optimise opportunities to embed learning on a deeper level. Collaborations could initiate delivery planning by looking at areas of the curriculum where merging and integration would work most successfully and apply this overarching principle wherever possible. In short, an integrated delivery approach is essential.
  - How individual elements of the programme should be delivered.

- d. Typically, professional timetables/scheduling (eg, start dates for an academic year, in force commencement of entry programmes) may require flexibility and adjustment so as to not to become potentially exclusionary of one another and instead be bespoke to individual programmes.
- e. Staffing: The development of the delivery model will also be dependent on the expertise and staff resources available to both the provider and the force. Secondment of police trainers for HEI teaching and the upskilling of trainers, tutor constables, coaches and mentors will all play a part in the delivery model. Further information on staffing is provided later in this document.
- f. Sufficiency of opportunity for practice provided by the force within the delivery model: once apprentices have acquired the theoretical knowledge, are sufficient opportunities embedded into the programme for them to be able to put this theory into practice?
- g. The core knowledge that must be acquired in the initial months in order to meet vital progression stages, particularly as apprentices progress, and have demonstrated their readiness to move towards accompanied/tutored patrol as part of their progression towards achieving Independent Patrol Status.

# Annex B. Methods

## Evaluation team

The evaluation is being undertaken by an in-house College team of researchers, independent from the College team responsible for implementing the PEQF with forces. College research staff are members of the Government Social Research (GSR) profession. As such, they are bound by the Civil Service Code (and its core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality), as well as the professional standards set out in the specific GSR code, which have been designed to ensure quality, rigorous social research and analysis.

## Aims

Focusing on early-adopter forces, the evaluation will address two broad areas.

- Implementation: how is the PCDA being implemented – what has worked well and where are the barriers and challenges?
- Outcomes: what outcomes have been delivered by the PCDA?

## Research questions

More specifically, the evaluation will aim to address the following research questions.

1. Do different delivery models lead to different implementation challenges and outcomes?
2. What factors have facilitated implementation in forces?
3. What are the challenges faced by forces and HEIs as they implement the PCDA?
4. What are the comparative financial costs of the PCDA and IPLDP to forces?<sup>32</sup>
5. Has the introduction of the PCDA led to a variation in the diversity of new recruits?
6. How is the delivery of the PCDA perceived and experienced by those on, and involved with, the programme?
7. Do the attitudes and behaviours of PCDAs and those on the IPLDP differ and do they change over time?

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<sup>32</sup> Work to understand programme costs has been undertaken by the College's PEQF Implementation Team and is presented in: College of Policing. (2020). 'Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Initial entry routes: Learning to date' [internet]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Documents/PEQF-Learning-to-date.pdf>

## Method

### Attitudinal survey of new recruits

A multi-year survey of new recruits will track the attitudes and behaviours of new PCDA's against a comparison group of those on the pre-existing IPLDP over four years. The first survey has captured initial information on participant demographics, motivations for joining the service, attitudes and wellbeing. The survey was distributed to recruits in the first weeks of their employment and has been completed by 318 officers: 181 on the PCDA and 137 on the IPLDP.

This interim report presents descriptive statistics on three areas: participant demographics, motivations for joining the service and wellbeing. Subsequent surveys will follow these officers annually, will seek to understand PCDA and IPLDP experiences, and will report on attitudes and behaviours relevant to the PCDA curriculum and the police constable role.

### Interviews with key stakeholders, PCDA's and tutors

A series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, PCDA's and tutors will also be undertaken across the four years of the evaluation. In total, 41 interviews have been completed to date and contribute to this report.

Interviews with key stakeholders (n=23) were conducted shortly after the PCDA start date in each force. These interviews sought to gather implementation lessons from senior force leads, university leads, training managers and trainers who were involved in designing and implementing the PCDA. These interviews aim to contextualise the PCDA experience and identify lessons for the College and forces. Interviews with different stakeholders tended to focus on different aspects of implementation in more or less detail. For example, senior L&D leads tended to focus on strategic decisions, while training designers focused on the detail of the programme.

To get a fuller understanding of the experiences of those on the PCDA, the longitudinal survey has been supplemented by interviews with a sample of PCDA's (n=13) and tutors (n=5). These interviews cover motivations for joining the police, experiences of both classroom learning and tutoring, experiences of being a police officer and wellbeing. These interviews were undertaken between June and September 2019. They concentrated on forces where apprentices had been on the programme for at least six months and preferably had started their tutoring phase.

All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and coded into themes. The aim was to draw out common views, where perceptions of different individuals were consistent with each other, as well as insightful exceptions.

# Annex C. Tables and figures

Table 1. Home Office workforce data for evaluation forces<sup>33</sup>

	N'hants	N'mbria	Notts	SWP	Staffs	WMP	Gwent
<b>Workforce</b>							
Total officers (March 2019)	1,253	3,129	1,981	3,030	1,592	6,641	1,324
BAME officers	45	56	105	76	44	717	29
BAME officers – % representation	3.6%	1.8%	5.3%	2.5%	2.8%	10.8%	2.2%
Female officers	435	983	633	967	453	2,153	454
Female officers – % representation	34.7%	31.4%	32.0%	31.9%	28.5%	32.4%	34.3%
<b>Joiners</b>							
Total joiners (2018/19)	79	120	162	205	83	368	107
BAME officer joiners (2018/19)	6	4	19	13	10	75	3
BAME officer joiners (2018/19) – % representation	7.6%	3.3%	11.7%	6.3%	12.0%	20.4%	2.8%
Female officer joiners (2018/19)	38	50	55	77	26	111	46
Female officer joiners (2018/19) – % representation	48.1%	41.7%	34.0%	37.6%	31.3%	30.2%	43.0%
<b>Population (Census 2011)</b>							
Total population	691,952	1,420,853	1,091,482	1,283,651	1,097,497	2,736,460	576,754
BAME population – Vol	59,130	77,106	121,981	85,193	65,170	817,322	22,377

<sup>33</sup> Police workforce England and Wales statistics available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

	<b>N'hants</b>	<b>N'mbria</b>	<b>Notts</b>	<b>SWP</b>	<b>Staffs</b>	<b>WMP</b>	<b>Gwent</b>
BAME population – % representation	8.5%	5.4%	11.2%	6.6%	5.9%	29.9%	3.9%

Table 2. Survey respondents by force

<b>Force</b>	<b>Number of PCDA respondents</b>	<b>Cohort size</b>	<b>Number of IPLDP respondents</b>	<b>Cohort size</b>
Nottinghamshire	35	47	22	49
Northamptonshire	19	19	44	53
Northumbria	49	51	20	24
South Wales	23	27	10	14
Gwent	5	5	10	26
Staffordshire	21	34	5	10
West Midlands	29	33	26	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Response rate</b>	<b>84%</b>		<b>68%</b>	

Table 3. Survey respondents' age

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	80 (44%)	84 (46%)	13 (7%)	n<5	0	0	n<5	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	39 (28%)	80 (58%)	12 (9%)	6 (4%)	0	0	0	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 4. Survey respondents' disability

	Disabled	Not disabled	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	n<5	174 (96%)	n<5	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	6 (4%)	129 (94%)	n<5	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 5. Survey respondents' gender identity being the same as given at birth

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Total
PCDA	179 (99%)	0	n<5	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	136 (99%)	0	n<5	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 6. Survey respondents' marital status

	Cohabiting	Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	Civil partnership	Married	Separated (still legally married/ in a civil partnership)	Single	Widowed or a surviving partner from a civil partnership	Prefer not to say	Total
PCDA	46 (25%)	n<5	n<5	31 (17%)	0	94 (52%)	0	7 (4%)	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	33 (24%)	n<5	n<5	36 (26%)	0	62 (45%)	0	<5	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 7. Survey respondents' intention to take leave (pregnancy and maternity)

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Shared parental leave	No intended leave	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	0	n<5	0	0	174 (96%)	5 (3%)	<b>181 (100%)</b>
IPLDP	n<5	5 (4%)	0	0	127 (93%)	n<5	<b>137 (100%)</b>

Table 8. Survey respondents' race

	White	White – other	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	152 (84%)	8 (4%)	6 (3%)	12 (7%)	n<5	0	n<5	<b>181 (100%)</b>
IPLDP	123 (90%)	n<5	7 (5%)	n<5	0	0	n<5	<b>137 (100%)</b>

Table 9. Survey respondents' religion

	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	No religion	Prefer not to say	Other	Total
PCDA	n<5	51 (28%)	n<5	0	10 (6%)	0	105 (58%)	14 (8%)	0	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	n<5	44 (32%)	0	0	n<5	0	82 (60%)	7 (5%)	0	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 10. Survey respondents' sex

	Male	Female	Intersex	Prefer not to say	Total
PCDA	114 (63%)	65 (36%)	0	n<5	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	83 (61%)	54 (39%)	0	0	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 11. Survey respondents' sexual orientation

	Heterosexual/straight	Gay/lesbian	Bisexual	Prefer not to say	Other	Total
PCDA	163 (90%)	6 (3%)	n<5	9 (5%)	0	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	121 (88%)	10 (7%)	n<5	n<5	0	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 12. Survey respondents' caring responsibility by entry route

	Caring responsibilities	No caring responsibilities	Total
PCDA	35 (19%)	146 (81%)	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	36 (26%)	101 (74%)	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 13. Survey respondents' highest qualification level on entering the service

	Undergraduate degree and higher	Level 4/5	A levels and other Level 3	GCSEs and other Level 2	Prefer not to say	Other	Total
PCDA	48 (27%)	26 (14%)	81 (45%)	17 (9%)	n<5	5 (3%)	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	58 (42%)	21 (15%)	37 (27%)	17 (12%)	n<5	n<5	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 14. Survey respondents' parents' highest qualification

	One or both have a degree level qualification	Qualification below degree level	No formal qualifications	Don't know	N/A	Prefer not to say	Other	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	57 (31%)	68 (38%)	20 (11%)	33 (18%)	n<5	n<5	0	<b>181 (100%)</b>
IPLDP	41 (30%)	48 (35%)	13 (9%)	27 (20%)	n<5	6 (4%)	n<5	<b>137 (100%)</b>

Table 15. Survey respondents' eligibility for free school meals

	Yes	No	N/A	Don't know	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	32 (18%)	127 (71%)	n<5	14 (8%)	n<5	<b>180 (100%)</b>
IPLDP	25 (19%)	87 (64%)	n<5	18 (13%)	n<5	<b>135 (100%)</b>

Table 18. Survey respondents' school type

	State run/ funded – selective	State run/ funded – non selective	Independent or fee-paying school – bursary	Independent or fee-paying school – no bursary	Attended school outside UK	Don't know	Prefer not to say	Other	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	25 (14%)	135 (75%)	0	n<5	6 (3%)	6 (3%)	n<5	n<5	<b>181</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	24 (18%)	101 (74%)	n<5	0	n<5	n<5	n<5	0	<b>137</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 19. Survey respondents' perceived lower socioeconomic background by entry route

	Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say	<b>Total</b>
PCDA	36 (20%)	111 (62%)	25 (14%)	8 (4%)	<b>180</b> <b>(100%)</b>
IPLDP	14 (10%)	98 (73%)	14 (10%)	9 (7%)	<b>135</b> <b>(100%)</b>