

Preparing for ACPO:

Exploratory interview research on
developing skills for chief police officer
roles

national **AGENCY** POLICING

Research, Analysis & Information (RAI)

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Executive Summary

E1. Report purpose and overview

This report presents findings from exploratory research that was conducted during 2010/11 by NPIA (National Policing Improvement Agency) Research, Analysis and Information Unit (RAI). The research was commissioned by the National College of Police Leadership (NCPL) in response to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 16 of the NPIA 2010/11 Business plan: 'demonstrate through working with candidates and Police Authorities a reported improvement in readiness and quality of ACPO candidates¹ in preparation to deliver subsequent appropriate improvements'. The intention was that this initial exploratory research could inform more rigorous future evaluation of NPIA leadership development services and longer term progress against the key performance indicator.

The research involved in-depth one-to-one interviews with 24 senior police officers and staff in England and Wales, and four representatives from key police stakeholder organisations. It explored perceptions of effective ways of developing necessary skills and knowledge for ACPO rank², barriers to realising ACPO level leadership potential and possible skills gaps. The study focussed on NPIA and NCPL delivered services, but included wider exploration of other leadership development opportunities. It should be noted that the research is based on perception based evidence and from this it is not possible to draw what works type conclusions about effective approaches to leadership development.

The study was conducted during a time of major change for the police service. Across England and Wales, police forces were making major budget reductions. How to continue to develop officers and staff cost effectively was a concern. Furthermore, the future delivery of police leadership development and training

¹ ACPO candidates are Superintending officers who have been signed off by their Chief Constable as ready to perform at Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank and eligible to apply for the Senior Police National Assessment Centre (PNAC).

² ACPO rank refers to Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank and above.

for England and Wales became the subject of a Home Secretary commissioned review. This review recommended proposals for fundamental changes for police leadership and training and the set up of a professional body for the service.³ The findings of this research alongside a series of rapid evidence assessments conducted by RAI⁴ on leadership, training and behaviour change were used to inform this review. The conclusions presented in this research report also draw on these additional sources of research evidence.

E2. Summary of main findings

Preparing for ACPO rank – methods of leadership development

Interview research with 2010 Strategic Command Course (SCC) delegates, longer serving ACPO officers and other key police stakeholders, found that:

- On the whole, interviewees believed that key skills for ACPO were mainly learned through experience on the job and through both positive and negative role models, but with support through training and other leadership development interventions.
- As well as helping to fill skills and experience gaps, leadership development programmes such as the SCC were seen as having the potential to impact significantly on individuals' in terms of developing leadership vision, providing opportunities for reflection, thinking creatively and making difficult decisions.
- BCU (Basic Command Unit) command and acting up (temporary promotion) experience were commonly cited as the best preparation for ACPO.

³ Neyroud, P., (2011), 'A Review of Police Leadership and Training', report commissioned by the Home Secretary, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/

⁴ Campbell, I. and Kodz, J. (2011) 'What Makes Great Police Leadership? What research can tell us about the effectiveness of different leadership styles, competencies and behaviours: A Rapid Evidence Review': National Policing Improvement Agency; Kodz, J. and Campbell, I. (2011) 'What works in leadership development: A Rapid Evidence Review': National Policing Improvement Agency, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/appendices

- Secondments and short-term placements were generally highly valued and many interviewees would have wanted more of these experiences, earlier in their career.

Factors which were seen to potentially hinder interviewees' personal development included:

- Working in a force with a culture that did not encourage development or individuals not being identified as having potential and being supported by managers or senior leaders.
- Lack of talent-spotting at lower levels, this was particularly important as attendance on the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) or an earlier equivalent was thought to be advantageous.
- Having insufficient time to spend on personal development.
- Force characteristics such as size which could limit the range and availability of role opportunities.

NCPL Leadership development programmes for ACPO – Strategic Command Course and earlier Senior Leadership Development (SLDP2)

The research had a specific focus on the Strategic Command Course (SCC) and the earlier Senior Leadership Development (SLDP2). Details about the SCC and how these leadership development programmes fit with pathways to senior police leadership are provided in Appendix A (page 68).

General views

- Interviewees were generally positive about the SCC and its perceived value.
- The ACPO interviewees who had attended more recently were less likely to recommend changes to it, and to police-led leadership training as a whole. This could indicate a greater level of satisfaction amongst these more recent participants of the programme as compared to those who attended longer ago.
- The length of the SCC and time away from home were two of the most commonly cited negatives, but the intensity of the experience was also valued by many.

- Feedback on SLDP2 was mixed, but many remembered at least one module as having been extremely helpful to them.

Developing leaders

- Positive feedback on SCC and SLDP2 was largely concentrated on benefits for mental preparation for ACPO, more than the acquisition of knowledge and specific skills.
- Most of the 2010 SCC interviewees said that they felt 'ready' for ACPO before starting the course, but also that it had helped develop them further.
- Development of self-confidence, self-awareness and a greater sense of personal values and vision for policing were the most frequently cited benefits of the SCC. The outcomes of this were said to be greater confidence to make difficult decisions, command critical incidents, work with strategic partners and negotiate and influence, lead a force and to be creative and radical in approach.
- To a lesser extent, a number of interviewees said that the SCC programme had helped their change management, business and team-working skills and technical and operational knowledge and skills. A few interviewees also said the course had helped their leadership skills relating to promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR), as well as their people management ability.

Learning methods

- It was commonly thought that the SCC, and earlier SLDP2 modules, developed leadership skills through giving officers time for reflection and the opportunity to network and work as a team with officers from other forces and organisations.
- Other factors that were mentioned were the quality and experience of the speakers, the variety and value of the content, secondments to different organisations and visits to other forces.
- For both SCC and SLDP2, training that imitated real experience was greatly valued. In the case of SCC, Operation Willow (a real-time, scenario based training session with live data that involved officers developing proposals for 25% budget cuts) received some of the most positive feedback on course content.

Approaches to developing specific ACPO leadership skills and competencies

The research also gathered views on development of the following skills and competencies, all of which had been identified as necessary for ACPO rank through the Police Professional Framework and preliminary research with stakeholders (see Appendix E, page 84, and F, page 92).

- Breadth of job experience
 - Technical skills
 - Respecting and promoting equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR)
 - Change management skills
 - Finance and business skills
 - Strategic partnership working skills
 - Team-working skills
 - Credible critical incident experience
- Whilst most of these skills were primarily viewed as learnt on the job and through experience, leadership development interventions were seen to have helped in all of these areas.
 - Perceived gaps in readiness and leadership development provision were most commonly raised in relation to finance and business, change management and promoting equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) related skills. Most recent SCC graduates reported that although they were not experts in finance and technical knowledge, they felt they were sufficiently skilled and operationally ready in these areas for ACPO roles.
 - Interviews suggested that equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) could be too commonly viewed in a narrow way and treated as a bolt-on in training and assessment, rather than being consistently promoted and role-modelled.

E3 Summary of Conclusions

The interview research for this report was designed to gather perception evidence. The findings, on their own, can only be indicators of how effective and thorough current leadership development services and opportunities are for ACPO roles. To enable stronger conclusions, the final section of the report compares the results with evidence from wider international research literature. It draws on findings from three recent NPJA rapid evidence assessment reports

on police leadership, what works in leadership development and what works in training and in changing professionals' behaviour (see Appendix F, page 92.) It also uses other perception based research published in 2010 (the Hay Group study on 'Stepping Up: Making the Move to ACPO'⁵ and the Roffey Park evaluation of the National Senior Careers Advisory Service, NSCAS)⁶.

Evidence supports the following leadership development approaches: learning by doing (on the job and training integrated into practice), learning from role models, and use of coaching. There is also strong evidence that leadership development programmes can be effective, can change professionals' behaviour and can lead to positive organisational outcomes. They may be most effective when mixed learning methods are used (including simulation based training) and when they give time for and encourage reflection. Combining development with assessment is commonly viewed as detrimental by participants. Evidence also indicates the value of working for an organisation that is supportive, provides early and ongoing careers advice and has leadership development embedded within its culture.

Next steps for evaluation and research

Two specific areas were identified in the research where there was less consensus and a potential need to gather greater detail:

- Equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) (both in terms of developing relevant skills in this area as a leader and in relation to equality of access to leadership development opportunities);
- Finance and business related skills.

The final section of the report presents three options for further use of the findings and proposals for longer-term evaluation of NCPL/ NPIA leadership development programmes.

⁵ Hay Group, 2010 'Stepping Up: making the move to ACPO,' A report commissioned by ACPO and NPIA.

⁶ Gifford, J. and Springett, N. (2010) 'Review of the National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS)' – Prepared for the NPIA, Roffey Park Institute.

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Introduction

I.1 Background

This report presents findings from exploratory research that was conducted by NPIA (National Policing Improvement Agency) Research, Analysis and Information Unit (RAI) during 2010/11. The research was commissioned and supported by the National College of Police Leadership (NCPL). It was initiated in response to Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 16 of the NPIA 2010/11 Business plan: 'demonstrate through working with Candidates and Police Authorities a reported improvement in readiness and quality of ACPO candidates⁷ in preparation to deliver subsequent appropriate improvements'. The longer term intention was that this initial exploratory research could inform more rigorous future evaluation of NPIA leadership development services and progress against the key performance indicator. It was agreed this initial evidence gathering work would focus on two key national senior police leadership programmes:

- The Strategic Command Course
- The Senior Leaders Development Programme 2 (SLDP2) the precursor to the Independent Command Programme (ICP), now renamed the 'Leading Powerful Partnerships Programme' (LPP).

Details of the Strategic Command Course and the leadership pathway within the police service in England and Wales are provided in Appendix A of this report (see page 68.)

At the start of this project, the research team presented options for different evaluation designs including studies that would attempt to measure changes in delegates' behaviour after attending an NCPL leadership development course. However, these research options all required a substantial lead-in time and were not practical with the resources available at the time. Instead, it was agreed

⁷ ACPO candidates are Superintending officers who have been signed off by their Chief Constable as ready to perform at Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank and eligible to apply for the Senior Police National Assessment Centre (PNAC).

between RAI, the NCPL and the KPI owner that the research would not attempt to meet all of the data reporting requirements and would focus on being an exploratory study, designed to gather some baseline findings and inform longer-term, more robust evaluation.

The scope of the research was also determined by the policy context at the time that it was being undertaken. A major review of police leadership and development in England and Wales was commissioned by the Home Secretary in September 2010, exactly coinciding with the launch of the research project. This review undertaken by Chief Constable Peter Neyroud (former Chief Executive of the NPIA) reported in January 2011⁸. To help inform the review, the research project also aimed to gather wider evidence on leadership development opportunities beyond centrally delivered programmes and services. It also sought to explore experiences considered most valuable for becoming ready for ACPO rank, looking back over whole police careers. Furthermore, as well as contributing the Neyroud review, the research findings were shared with the review team working on the parallel 'Review of Police Pay and Conditions', headed by Tom Winsor⁹.

I.2 Research aims

The agreed aims of the research can be listed as gathering perception based evidence from senior police leaders and informed stakeholders on:

- a) Effective methods for developing competencies in order to be ready for ACPO rank, ie rank of Assistant Chief Constable/Commander or above and any barriers to accessing development opportunities

- b) The contribution of the SCC and SLDP2 in developing effective senior leaders

⁸ Neyroud, P., (2011), 'A Review of Police Leadership and Training', report commissioned by the Home Secretary, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/

⁹ Winsor T, (2011) Independent Review of Police Officers' & Staff Remuneration & Conditions Available at <http://review.police.uk/publications/>

c) The development of specific skills and competencies that have been identified as necessary for ACPO rank and any potential skills gaps in these areas amongst senior police leaders.

I.3 Research methods

Scoping

At the project design stage, NCPL had already undertaken some initial scoping work to gather views from 20 police stakeholders on what it means to be 'ready now' for Assistant Chief Constable rank (See Appendix E, page 84). This is the stage when Superintending officers can be signed off by their Chief Constable as ready to perform at Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank and eligible to apply for the Senior Police National Assessment Centre (PNAC). The interviews explored what criteria aspiring ACPO candidates should meet to achieve chief officer sign-off and approval to attend senior PNAC. From this, the following themes emerged as areas where appropriate skills and experience were considered essential (these areas also link with five personal qualities listed in the Police Professional Framework for ACPO):

- 'Safe Pair of Hands' – credible critical incident experience
- Technical skills
- Promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights
- Change management skills
- Finance and business skills
- Strategic partnership working skills
- Team-working skills
- Breadth of job and organisational experience

Interviews for the current research

The NCPL preliminary work, combined with the Police Professional Framework, was used to inform the current interview research. An interview guide and sampling strategy was designed to explore career development and formative experiences in developing leadership skills for ACPO, experiences of the SCC and SDLP2 and readiness of aspiring ACPO officers in the specific key skill and competency areas that were identified in the scoping exercise.

Twenty-eight semi-structured interviews were conducted by RAI team members with ACPO officers, graduates of the January 2010 Strategic Command Course and other key police stakeholders. The samples were drawn to ensure a good geographic spread and distribution of female officers. Two police staff were included in the SCC 2010 sample. Stakeholders were selected based on advice from NCPL colleagues. The distribution of the interviews was as follows:

- 9 ACPO officers – Interviewed face-to-face at the October 2010 ACPO Conference and in telephone interviews (referred to as 'ACPO' when quoted in the report)
- 15 SCC graduates – Interviewed face-to-face in September 2010 and in follow-up telephone interviews (referred to as 'SCC 2010' when quoted in the report)
- 4 stakeholders – Representatives from the Home Office, Association of Police Authorities, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) (referred to as 'Stakeholders' when quoted in the report) telephone or face-to-face interviews.

A second phase of the research was planned to take the form of a large scale questionnaire survey to gather quantitative data to support or test themes that had been identified through the interview based research. However, this follow-up work was postponed, due to the policy context at the time, in particular proposals for fundamental changes for police leadership and training and the set up of a professional body for the service. Further details of the research methods used and the research materials are provided in Appendix C (page 75) and Appendix D (page 78).

Limitations

The most significant limitation of the research design is that it only explores perceptions and for this reason, it only allows statements about what are perceived to be effective, less effective and ineffective features of current leadership development programmes and opportunities, rather than 'what works' type conclusions. Furthermore the report primarily draws on the perspectives of the senior officers themselves and not more objective viewpoints such as 360

degree assessments from the subjects' colleagues (although a small group of stakeholders was included in the sample). In addition, the research involved interviewing officers that had attended the 2010 Strategic Command Course. Some of these participants had already been promoted to ACC rank when they were interviewed for this research, but the majority were still in the process of applying for positions. These circumstances may have influenced the research interviews and made these participants more likely, for example, to give positive responses and be less willing to discuss personal skills gaps and development needs. It should also be noted that the sample of nine ACPO officers will have attended different leadership development programmes at different times and their responses may reflect this variety of experience.

The research was designed to identify themes, rather than attempt to quantify the strength of opinion within a research population. The sampling strategy (relying on voluntary participation and partly convenience sampling) and the interview approach mean that any findings are not generalisable. For this reason, figures and proportions for the number of interviewees making particular points is not given. Also due to the sample size no comparisons can be made between the three different groups of research participants.

A further limitation is that the scoping work conducted prior to the interviews indicated that there remains variation in what is understood to be 'ready' for ACPO rank, in terms of skill and competency requirements. This research did not attempt to unpack this readiness issue in further detail and therefore what it means to be ready is still not clearly defined. However, the research was designed to inform longer-term, more robust evaluation work. This study can contribute to a growing evidence base of in-depth case study research which, taken together, can provide learning points on what appears to be effective in leadership development for the police.

Finally the interview guides asked targeted questions about the value of two National College of Police Leadership programmes, namely the SCC and the SLDP2, but there were no specific questions about other leadership programmes. Therefore direct comparisons cannot be made in relation to the relative contribution of these two programmes and other courses.

I.4 Report structure

The report findings are then presented in three main sections:

- **Section 1. 'Getting Ready for ACPO – Methods of leadership development'** – this section presents interviewees' perceptions on what they consider to have been some of their most helpful leadership development experiences for ACPO rank, as well as commonly perceived barriers to development.
- **Section 2. 'NCPL Leadership Development for ACPO – Strategic Command Course and SLDP2'** - focuses on the perceived value of the Strategic Command Course and to a lesser extent, earlier Senior Leadership Development (SLDP2) programme
- **Section 3. 'Development of specific ACPO leadership skills'** - explores how interviewees believe specific leadership skills for ACPO rank can be and have been developed and perceptions around what are the most effective approaches and potential skills gaps.

The final concluding section examines how the interview research findings compare with the wider international research evidence base for what works in leadership development and training. From this, conclusions are drawn about which of the interview findings are most reliably supported with evidence and hence offer the strongest indicators of the best approaches to developing leadership skills for ACPO and where barriers may currently exist.

Appendices at the end of the report include a glossary of terms used in the report.

Section 1. Getting ready for ACPO – methods of leadership development

All interviews with the SCC 2010 delegates and longer serving ACPO officers started with an open-ended question, asking them to look back over their careers to date and discuss what had been some of the most formative experiences that had allowed them to develop leadership capability for Chief Police Officer (ACPO) rank. This section of the report primarily draws together responses to this question, but also brings in relevant views expressed during other parts of the interview. The purpose is to give an indication of how important and helpful different opportunities may be for preparing officers and staff for ACPO, from specific leadership development interventions (both police delivered and externally provided) to acquisition of skills through every day work experience and particular roles. Research findings on perceptions about what may have hindered leadership development or slowed the progress in reaching potential are set out at the end of subsections where such barriers were identified by respondents.

This section focuses on perceptions of what most helps officers to become generally 'ready' for ACPO, whilst more detailed feedback on how best to develop specific ACPO related skills is presented in Section 3. The perceived value of leadership development programmes is discussed in this section (Section 1), but more detailed exploration of interviewees' perceptions of NCPL courses (SCC and SLDP2) is the focus of Section 2.

1.1 Roles and experience

For all interview participants, on-the-job experience was understandably considered a crucial part of developing skills for ACPO rank and for many, it was the most important method for getting ready for executive leadership. Those that had experienced Basic Command Unit (BCU) command or acting up to Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) often considered these roles as their most helpful experience for preparing for ACPO. A wide range of other roles, from all

stages of a police career, were also raised as useful for ACPO positions – including work in specialist areas (e.g. in crime investigation); front desk; response; community teams; and staff officer to Chiefs – as well as exposure to HMIC and other government organisations. There was a common view that having varied experience was most important. Views were mixed over the value of large force versus small force experience – for example, a large force could be thought to offer a greater range of roles but less opportunity to work with partner organisations. There was a suggestion by one ACPO interviewee that too much experience may be expected at Senior PNAC now, with the consequence that officers tend to be older at SCC. The following quotes from interviewees provide an illustration of interviewees' perceptions about developing skills for ACPO rank through BCU Command, acting up and other experience at a senior level. As explained in the Introduction above, the details in parenthesis at the end of each quote refer to the section of the interviewee sample that the respondent represented.

BCU Command:

- " I think the most fundamental role that has influenced or helped is having been a BCU Commander" (SCC 2010)
- " ... every bit of the business belonged to me as a BCU Commander, which really honed my skills, not just in theory, but in practice" (SCC 2010)

Acting ACC:

- "I had had the benefit of being temporary for a year, I felt very prepared for the job." (ACPO)
- Asked what readied them for ACPO: "I think acting temporary was half and the SCC was the other half." (SCC 2010)
- " ... I was doing a lot of covering for the ACC ... stepping up from my previous role to the ACC role was quite seamless, because I was chairing a lot of the meetings." (SCC 2010)

Other experience:

- "I think having a broad operational portfolio and having been involved in a number of different areas of policing is very important and I've been fortunate enough to have done uniform and CID" (SCC 2010)

1.2 Secondments

All but one of the interviewees who had worked or had time shadowing in another organisation or force, whether a short placement (for example as part of the SCC) or for a longer period, believed experiences like this could help develop skills and knowledge relevant for ACPO roles.

Other forces:

- "It was invaluable, because I come from...a very small...force. I went to [a large urban force]...to see what life was like there, around community engagement." (SCC 2010)

Public sector organisations:

- "It gave me that much broader strategic awareness" "I was giving something back, but more importantly I was learning... in respect of the very big, broad issues that are impacting on policing, and I thought it was a brilliant opportunity." (ACPO)

Private sector organisations

- "That was a big learning experience for me, working with another company, looking at how they worked, and how they thought about delivering services, and then the way they approached things." (ACPO)

It was common for interviewees to say they would have had liked to have had more secondment opportunities. There was also a perception that experiences, like the short SCC placements would be useful earlier on in careers.

- "Given my time again I think I would try to spend more time in other sectors, both the private sector and other bits of the public sector, and I think that's something we should encourage" (SCC 2010)

Obstacles to taking up secondment opportunities

A number of interviewees expressed concern that the demands of their work left them with little time to undertake development training or other opportunities like secondments.

- "The thing that does hinder you is that you've normally got a day job to do and, particularly, if you are somebody who's ambitious, somebody who takes pride in your work and your organisation, you tend to be headlong into what you're doing. And it's sometimes very difficult to step outside of that and say, 'For my own personal development needs I want to go and work in X or Y company'." (SCC 2010)

1.3 In-force support

It is noteworthy that when interviewees discussed how their force had supported their leadership development, positive responses were mainly in relation to how individual managers and senior leadership had helped them. Several, particularly ACPO officers, spoke of being encouraged and informally mentored early on in their career. In such cases this was usually said to have been highly influential or even fundamental to their career development – both in terms of giving the candidate confidence and advice, as well as creating opportunities for them to develop skills.

- "The thing I think is the most important, essential ingredient, is senior level support for you." (SCC 2010)
- "I've benefited from having a colleague in the job who informally mentored me and supported me and gave me really good advice." (SCC 2010)
- "It actually needs somebody to give you a bit of a prod and a nudge in the right direction" (ACPO)
- "He [my first boss] gave me opportunities...he'd seen something in me and he created opportunities for me...he gave me credit for the work that I was doing, which was then recognised at Chief Officer level, and made me feel really good. The consequence was, I worked my socks off for him."(ACPO)
- "He was definitely pushing me into certain directions that he recognised would give me some exposure, which I've no doubt did me a lot of good. So I think having somebody that's doing that early doors in your career is really important." (ACPO)

It was common for interviewees to say that they had learnt from other leaders' example. Both positive as well as negative role models could be helpful and influential. Largely for this reason, opportunities to meet leaders and to network were generally considered valuable.

- "You look at people who you admire and people you don't admire, and that generates then a desire to be good" (SCC)
- "Networking across ranks and things like that is important. And as women officers, sometimes it can be pretty lonely, so we have our own little team, which we network together" (SCC 2010)

Perceptions about lack of support

Lack of force encouragement and support could be viewed as a barrier. There was little sense that forces as a whole had strong leadership development cultures – rather, support could be reserved for officers that were seen to have potential. A number of interviewees felt that they had not received careers advice and encouragement to progress until late in their police career or not at all. Several interviewees also commented that access to helpful networks could be limited for under-represented groups in the police service and as a result, could reduce access to development opportunities.

- "Nobody ever sat down and said, 'Well here's a career plan for you. Here are some of the things you could do...Here's the course you could go on...You could think about doing this. You could think about doing that'... I've got there and got what I've needed as I've gone along, but it hasn't been in a particularly structured way." (SCC)
- "I failed PNAC the first time and afterwards, I found out that other candidates had been getting together and had been given informal coaching to prepare." (SCC 2010)
- "I'm in a Force that doesn't give a damn, to be perfectly frank, about my personal development... from my perspective, mentoring within Force just doesn't happen" (SCC)
- "I think generally people from diverse groups struggle to get strong mentoring relationships... you have the sort of old boys club...if you happen to

come from a minority group where you're not in one of those gangs it's a much harder thing to do" (ACPO)

An alternative view, expressed by some of the interviewees, was that individuals should take responsibility for managing their own career and be confident to seek development opportunities to help them progress up the ranks and grades.

- "Development for me is not about promotion; it's about having a skills set and setting your own achievements and trying to aspire to that... I've had a fantastic opportunity to develop, really. I couldn't ask for more" (SCC 2010)

In-force training

Training delivered within forces was rarely brought up by interviewees as something that had helped them develop skills for ACPO. Only several examples of helpful courses were given – one in relation to equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) training and another on resource management that was delivered first to chief superintendents and then cascaded throughout the organisation.

1.4 Formal coaching and mentoring

On the whole, interviewees spoke very positively of NPIA National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS) coaches and commonly felt that they had contributed to their leadership development, beyond preparing for assessment centres and interviews. NSCAS has previously been evaluated¹⁰ and was not a focus of this research, but some comments made by respondents about the service about the service included:

- "My NSCAS coach has been brilliant because they've sat down and for the first time in my career...said, what are you good at? What do you need development at?" (SCC 2010)

¹⁰ Gifford, J. and Springett, N., (2010), Review of the National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS), Prepared for the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), Roffey Park Institute.

- "I know there's been some mixed reviews of NSCAS advisors, but mine; I would say she's why I'm sat here, without a doubt."..."her strategic view of how you're going to develop this individual, not to pass PNAC, but to be a better leader, was hugely influential." (SCC 2010)

Two officers were less positive about their NSCAS coaching experience, but did not dismiss its potential value.

- "I know some people that find [NSCAS] really useful. I don't. I think that I'm...not very organised so I'm not good at that stuff. But it's something when I've got my head more around the day job I'll look to re-engage in it." (SCC 2010)
- "I didn't find that NSCAS helped me much...What was of value to me, I think, was having somebody to ensure that I did some preparation for the SCC...it was quite helpful to have somebody to bounce my ideas off."(SCC 2010)

Three officers talked about how private coaches had helped them prepare for PNAC, for example providing practice papers and sharing techniques to deal with the intensity and stress of the experience. There was less mention of private coaches helping to develop wider leadership skills.

- "I have had external coaching in support of my PNAC journey, which I found extremely useful and, hand on heart, would never have passed PNAC without that coaching" (SCC 2010)
- "I arranged through my ACPO team, to have...coaching, prior to the SCC, and that was absolutely excellent...what my coach was able to do was to bring my thinking up to a strategic level, to enable me to then get through the written papers at PNAC, so that was really helpful, but there was nothing that NSCAS did to help me with that." (SCC 2010)

1.5 External training and development programmes (not police-led)

External non police-led training that was cited as helpful by interviewees included financial management and project management courses. Around a third of interviewees had attended external leadership development programmes, run by private companies, universities or other organisations. These were commonly valued as highly or sometimes more highly than the Strategic Command Course, but in the vast majority of cases the two were considered complementary. One interviewee had found army officer training a really helpful foundation. External leadership development programmes were often valued for their academic rigour and theoretical approach, quality and experience of speakers, and the opportunity to learn with people from non-police organisations.

External leadership development programmes:

- "An outstanding course for me, because it was un-policey and brought different perspectives...Top, top inputs from some really pretty big ...management gurus... it felt so different to traditional police training" (SCC 2010)
- "The other big course I did... run by the Civil Service... [gave me] exposure to very high quality people, leaders in different fields, which gave an opportunity to... examine different styles of leadership and think, that would work for me in my environment, or it wouldn't." (ACPO)
- Re military training, prior to police career "there was quite a lot of practical man management – communication, understanding what you need to do to get people to do things...a lot of communication, a lot of persuasion, a lot of explaining, making sure the message is clear, making sure you...lead by example, a lot of very practical lessons on that, and because we were rotated through the roles on a very regular basis you had what you did well and what you did badly"
- "Probably the most...informative and influential course for me was... a programme I did [at University]... it was much more about the psychology of leadership and actually inward-looking and building on what you had inside

you.... It built in resilience. It gave me more confidence, techniques to deal with certain situations that I'd never been exposed to before." (SCC 2010)

Several interviewees had completed a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) but feedback on their value for leadership development for ACPO was mixed. For interviewees that had MBAs, none cited the programmes as one of their most influential experiences in developing skills for ACPO and few mentioned them unless prompted.

- "There were things I found and still find very useful...until the point I did an MBA...I heard an awful lot about strategic plans, but no one ever explained to me what a strategy was or how that differs from objectives. There's almost an assumption that people know what these things are." (SCC 2010)
- "Having the MBA has assisted me because it opens doors because people make assumptions and I think we need to step away, not totally away, but back from academia, because actually being able to do the job matters quite a lot" (ACPO)

1.6 High Potential Development Scheme and equivalents

Fast-track development schemes were mostly seen as valuable for officers who had attended them. Benefits included confidence building, giving direction, opening up networks and giving exposure to role models. One officer said that the programme had been useful for teaching him not to allow his training and development in the police service to undermine his individuality. He said that, as future leaders of the service, the programme members were encouraged to recognise they had attributes that could be useful when they reached higher ranks.

- "I think probably the first early [formative experience] was...on the accelerated promotions scheme... I'm really glad I did that." (ACPO)
- "What the [programme] did was expose me to lots of other police leaders, with different experiences, and that was invaluable. And so what I got there,

fairly early, was a network of people, that when I was thinking about change, or doing something, I could pick up the phone and say, well how do you do it? Send us your policy on this, etc." (SCC 2010)

There was a suggestion from interviewees from all of the sample groups (SCC 2010, ACPO and stakeholders) that part of the value for attendees of fast-track development schemes was being identified as having potential. This could be interpreted in both a negative and positive way.

- "Some people say it hinders people's careers. I actually think it quite helped... I think it really helps for them to know that you have been identified." (SCC 2010)
- "It's one of the negatives of the accelerated promotion course, people telling you you're special when you're not really, you're just a lucky boy or girl" (SCC 2010)
- "It ensures that the organisation does something with you." (ACPO)
- "The problem with the current scheme from my perspective is that if you get on HPDS you're doomed to success" (Stakeholder)

Concerns about police fast-track schemes

Most interviewees believed that the police service does not adequately identify and encourage talent, particularly not at the lower ranks. Fast-track schemes were also perceived to act as a potential barrier for those who do not get on them.

- "I didn't get through [to fast-track scheme] because I know that I didn't perform in those exercises... for me that was a barrier but actually in a sense that put my career back because although I got promoted in due course...it would have been quicker if I had achieved that" (SCC)
- "I think what we should be doing is we should be spreading our net wider to spot talent. I wouldn't start necessarily with constables. I would probably start within inspector level. I'd keep all the development stuff that's in place for sergeants now but I actually think people start to shine as inspectors because they have get up and go and they want to deliver." (Stakeholder)

Section 2. NCPL Leadership Development for ACPO

– Strategic Command Course and SLDP2

This section presents feedback specifically focussed on the Strategic Command Course (SCC), but with mention and a final section on precursor senior leadership development training delivered at the National College of Police Leadership at Bramshill (SLDP2). It draws on responses to the open ended question posed at the beginning of the interview about formative experiences to develop leadership capability as well as a series of questions directly focused on these two programmes.

The SCC is a national police leadership programme which aims to prepare officers and staff for promotion to the most senior ranks and positions in the police service. The programme is a prerequisite prior to promotion to ACPO rank. It is currently a nine week course and focuses on stretching participants' skills and knowledge in the areas of business, executive and professional policing skills. It is primarily delivered through strategic exercises, and includes work placements and visits. The Senior Leaders Development Programme (SLDP2) was a non-compulsory national programme for superintendents and chief superintendents and has now been replaced by other leadership development programmes such as the Leading Powerful Partnerships programme. Further details of the SCC are provided in Appendix A (page 68).

2.1 General feedback

On the whole, people tended to give a very positive view of their experience of the Strategic Command Course.

- "...Best police course that I've been on without a shadow because... what it does is draws all of that experience and all of that previous training... everything together really..." (SCC 2010)

- "I thought it was one of the best I've ever done to be candid. I thought it was superb."..."It did challenge us constantly..." (SCC 2010)
- "You're with talented people...very motivated, very talented people by and large...it's an incredible experience" (SCC 2010)

Often interviewees saw the benefit or necessity of potentially negative aspects.

- "It was hard work, the course, and it should be hard work" (SCC 2010)
- "I still don't think it's particularly family friendly the course...might put you off if you are a primary carer or you just don't want to be away from your family. On the other hand that's what ACPO is like anyway" (SCC 2010)
- "It gives you an opportunity to stretch your brain that probably hasn't been stretched for a few years around the academic, intellectual side" (ACPO)

Several interviewees stressed the importance of attending with the right attitude.

- "...We're all there to learn as much as we can, and there is no greater investment ever in your policing career...and there's a personal responsibility for me that comes with that" (SCC 2010)
- "...The better way to look at PNAC and SCC is to say this is actually a vehicle for me to become a more effective leader, and there are certain hoops I might have jumped through but you use those hoops...to actually make you better at what you're doing as opposed to just viewing it as a test." (SCC 2010)

Those who had less positive experiences stressed the intensity of the course and the time away from home, as well as a sense that the course was too assessment-focused and competitive. On the whole, the 2010 SCC cohort was more effusive and positive about SCC than the longer serving ACPO interviewees. This may have been due to the time lapse for ACPO officers or a reflection of changes to SCC content and format since their attendance. An alternative explanation could be that officers who have recently attended SCC may be in a more positive mindset, either being in the process of applying for ACPO positions or having only recently been promoted to ACPO rank.

2.2 Developing leaders

The majority of interviewees believed the course had developed their leadership ability and made them more ready for ACPO rank. A few talked generally about developing and put great stress on the value of SCC for making them ready, whereas the majority picked out specific areas that improved as a result of the course. (See Section 3 for detailed feedback against specific skill areas.)

- [In answer to the question, What have been some of your most formative experiences as a leader?]: "the most formative experience would have been SCC this year just in terms of the length of time, intensity of the course, the type of learning that took place, the level of inputs and everything that went with it. It was just like a very, well, reasonably intense ten, 11 weeks of pure leadership and management etc. in one" (SCC 2010)

There was variation between those that felt they were already well developed, experienced, and ready for ACPO before the course and those that felt they underwent a significant development:

- "For me, it was about focussing already fairly mature thinking." (SCC 2010)
- "At the end the SCC, they're as rounded and solid as they possibly can be, and some people will be rounded and solid when they go in, which is great because they probably get even more from it, but I wasn't solid" (SCC 2010)
- "I felt confident that I was a good candidate, but knew that I could get value from attending the course, that followed. I didn't take it as read that I was, in any sense, the finished article." (SCC 2010)
- "I would never have passed the Ready Now, but in those days it wasn't Ready Now; you could go if you had some potential." (ACPO)

Those who did not believe the course had developed their leadership ability were, on the whole, ACPO officers that attended SCC a long time before. Also, a number of interviewees said the assessment element had effectively meant the course was not about development. Views were expressed that:

- a) The police service does not excel at leadership training, and it is better to attend externally delivered courses;
- "I don't think it [the police service] really excels, not in my experience, at general leadership training." (ACPO)

- b) Leadership development needs to be individually tailored;
- "I think things have changed but when I did it... It was very much one size fits all. I'm not sure that was entirely necessary." (ACPO)
 - "I would like to see it much more focused around the development requirements of the individuals." (ACPO)

- c) The SCC can only ever be theoretical and is no substitute for real experience;
- "The SCC, whatever they do with it, it can only ever be theoretical" (ACPO)

d) There may be a conflict between assessment and development. Two interviewees (one SCC 2010 graduate and one longer serving ACPO officer) suggested that the course should be more overtly linked to assessment and selection for ACPO, but they were in the minority. More commonly, interviewees thought that grading during the course and the search for jobs afterwards inhibited or even prevented self-development.

- "One of the biggest mistakes of the SCC is that at the end of the SCC they advertise jobs. So the SCC becomes a job creation course for many people as opposed to a development course." (SCC 2010)
- [The assessment element] "can be an inhibitor. And it can lead to people playing games.... you get those people that always ask questions... it's for show really." (SCC 2010)
- "Because of the testosterone charge, it wasn't an area where you were ever going to own up to any real weaknesses or development needs. You had to expose a few because it was expected, but frankly you'd expose stuff that wasn't really development need because then you could show that you'd dealt with it... It was a competitive environment" (ACPO)

- "The relationship between a syndicate director and a syndicate is very much symbiotic. The syndicate director wants to get a good write-up from the course director... The whole system is about polishing CVs" (Stakeholder)

2.3 Content, speakers and format – specific feedback

2.3.1 Time to reflect and build vision

One of the most commonly valued aspects of the course related to the opportunity to take time to reflect and think – both individually and through group discussions.

- "There's no doubt that SCC is a massive opportunity to reflect and think about where your areas for development are" (SCC 2010)
- "I don't know that it gave me new ideas specifically but what it did give me was time to think about stuff which is really important, time to test my thinking and have my thinking tested." (SCC 2010)
- "I suppose I learnt more about myself on the SCC...the fact you've got to do these learning logs was probably the most valuable thing as opposed to the lessons we sat and listened to ...You're away from work, away from home, so you really are investing time in yourself to actually learn probably more about you and your style and yourself" (SCC 2010)
- "makes you think about your own value set and what fundamentally makes you tick as a leader" (SCC 2010)

A smaller number of interviewees said they would have liked more time to think and reflect.

- "What it lacked was just it didn't get enough time for people, I thought, on 12-week course, to spend time reflecting with each other around some of the more impactful inputs" (SCC 2010)
- " ...We'd never seem to get that free time"..."you'd never have the chance to catch your breath really"..."the way I learn, I like to reflect on things, and think things through, would talk through with colleagues, and that sort of thing, so it didn't really work for me, that style of learning" (ACPO)

2.3.2 Networking and working with others

Interviewees commonly described learning leadership skills from other leaders (both from their good and poor examples). The opportunities for group discussion and debate were also commonly cited as one of the benefits of leadership development courses, including the SCC.

- “I probably got more value in the relationships I developed with people on the course, understanding how they go through the world, things they do or don’t do, how they do or don’t do stuff rather than the actual course itself.” (SCC 2010)

On the other hand, many interviewees expressed a view that learning about leadership outside the police service was helpful and a few said or indicated it could be more helpful than a police-led course like the SCC.

- “I do think that all cops together on the leadership bit is a hindrance, particularly as most of the SCC is not about doing police stuff.” (SCC 2010)
- “I learnt more about leadership on the XXXX course* than SCC...sat with people from all walks of life...talking to a vicar about leadership was fabulous...Stop just asking coppers about how to lead”. (SCC 2010)

* particular course name obscured, so as not to favour any one external course provider in this report.

2.3.3 Speakers

The quality and experience of speakers was regularly cited as one of the greatest positives of the course and officers valued having the opportunity to learn from senior leaders.

- “I think that some of the external speakers coming in were outstanding” (SCC 2010)
- “ ...you learn more if you think behind what they’re actually telling you and about the individual and not what they’re telling you, but how they did or influenced or enabled their staff in the story they’re telling.” (SCC 2010)

- "I think the SCC was good in terms of getting a variety of leaders' perspectives on policing, diversity on whatever subject we'd got"... "There were some really good speakers" (SCC 2010)

Some interviewees thought that the quality and experience of some of the speakers could have been higher.

- "It would have been good to see perhaps a broader cross section of chief officers involving themselves...and perhaps... some of those who were earlier in their chief officer careers" (SCC 2010)
- "I think that what they could do is bring in some people who really challenge us, not just people who are connected to the policing world" (SCC 2010)

2.3.4 Content

Most people valued nearly all modules within the course. There were a few that thought the content itself was less helpful than simply the time away from work and spent with peers and more senior leaders.

- "What I liked about the SCC was it was a really good mix of academic, practical, operational." (SCC 2010)
- "I can't think of many sessions that I've thought I didn't really get much out of that... Normally you come on a course for two or three months and then you think I'll cut out a month. I didn't feel that with SCC; it was really good." (SCC 2010)

2.3.5 Placements and visits to other organisations

All but one interviewee (an ACPO officer) thought that it was a good idea that short placements with other organisations are included within the Strategic Command Course programme. All of the SCC 2010 delegate interviewees supported the concept. One, however, felt they had been unfortunate with the project they had been given, as it had drawn too much on his existing skills and experience to be a development opportunity. Another suggested that all of the SCC placements should be specifically related to leadership and/ or finance.

- "What was particularly good was the exercise when you have to go to another organisation"... "... I learnt an awful lot... I got a sense of how good our managers were in the organisation compared to some other managers and I learned an awful lot about outsourcing and about privatisation" (SCC 2010)
- "very useful placement, but I'm sure I would've benefited from something like that at a much, much earlier stage of my service." (SCC 2010)

A trip to London included in the 2010 SCC had mixed reviews, with all officers recognising the potential value of the week, but a number suggesting their time could have been used more effectively when they were there. A placement in a Scottish police force was picked out as a particularly helpful element of the SCC programme by several interviewees, particularly in relation to experiencing a different operating context specifically in relation to working with the Scottish Executive and different organisational culture, although respondents were not specific about how the culture differed.

- "The two weeks in Scotland, because of the difference in the culture there, compared to here, it was really, really good to see how the junior officers interact with senior officers there. Just their attitude to policing was very refreshing, and it was something that you'd come away wanting to try and instil in your own organisation, so that was very good." (SCC 2010)

2.3.6 Length

Views on the optimum length of the course varied. One ACPO interviewee had attended a six month course and had found the length appropriate to their development needs. Another ACPO officer had attended a six week SCC and had even thought that was too long. Few of the SCC 2010 interviewees criticised the length of the current course (3 months) but there was concern about how much time was spent away from home. Some suggested the course should be modular, although most interviewees recognised the value of the 'immersion' experience.

- "If I had a criticism of the SCC it would be probably that it was aimed at everybody being a Chief Constable, rather than, necessarily, everybody being an ACC for the next few years"... "you could have a shorter SCC, and then perhaps in two or three years time have another month, or whatever...to prepare you for some of the more senior levels of ACPO." (SCC 2010)
- "Why couldn't it have been four weeks of something, go back to the workplace, reflect, get it into your head, play around with it, come back, get another four weeks, go back... then start applying for jobs? It just seemed everything... crashed into three months and it was a horror house." (SCC 2010)
- "There are behaviours exhibited in that kind of group of people slung together, which need to be mitigated, and it got dreadful towards the end of the course... It wasn't just the being away, it was being knackered when you got home... there was no break." (ACPO)
- "I think there's absolutely no need for it to be three months, in the modern era, I think that's old school thinking" (ACPO)

2.4. Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP2)/ Independent Command Programme

On the whole, feedback on Bramshill leadership development courses prior to SCC was positive. Research participants were asked fewer questions about SLDP2 during the interviews than SCC, since SLDP2 had been recently replaced with the Leading Powerful Partnerships programme and other courses. There is also the difficulty that there was variation between which SLDP2 modules interviewees had attended (if any) and the courses were shorter and attended a longer time ago than SCC, which could have affected peoples memories and perceptions of learning value. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that interviewees were less effusive about the positive impact of the SLDP2 modules they had attended than SCC. Feedback was generally that the courses had 'filled gaps' and were 'right at the time' and only in a couple of cases did interviewees talk about them having a fundamental impact on their leadership ability. There were only a few interviewees that said they had found SLDP2 unhelpful.

- "To be honest, it's so long ago now...My sense is that the courses were right and they were over a right period of time." (SCC 2010)
- "I am a very different person, in terms of my leadership style, than I was as a Sergeant or an Inspector. That has been heavily influenced by some of the things that I've learnt along the way on those modules" (SCC 2010)
- "What it was good for... is actually giving you a context outside of the police service and within the police service... and, as I say, they did try very hard to meet... skills gaps, because a lot of us were not detectives and recognised we may have to take on big inquiries and those sorts of things, they did try hard to fill those gaps. It was right at the time." (ACPO)
- "I had pretty poor regard for the quality of the training delivered here [Bramshill], which is horribly unfair I'm sure. But it just didn't do it for me" (SCC 2010)

The following modules were singled out as being particularly strong, but in each case, this was only said by one or two officers: EDHR (Equality, Diversity and Human Rights), Finance, Stepping-Up to the Executive Level, Research course, and Futures module. The lack of consensus about the best elements of SLDP2 could partly reflect that all modules were not mandatory, but it also indicates that the courses had quite different impacts on individuals, depending on their previous experience and development needs. In some cases, there were completely opposing views on the value of a module; for example, the EDHR (Equality, Diversity and Human Rights) module was considered 'dreadful' and ineffective by three interviewees, but as having had a transformational impact on another.

Several interviewees had knowledge and experience of the new Independent Command Programme (now 'Leading Powerful Partnerships') and said that including partners in the training and making preparation and development plans mandatory was a positive development.

- "There was some good stuff on it [Stepping up to the executive level] but it did feel like at the time it was just one of those things that people went to tick a box to go into PNAC... the ICP programme... doesn't feel like that. That is a real, really intensive learning experience for people in a partnership

environment...although I haven't done it, I think [it] would have been massively helpful" (SCC 2010)

- "The feedback I felt at the time, as I'm getting from some of my people coming back now, is that's much better. There's multi agency people in there, it's almost a real world approach" (ACPO)

Section 3. Development of specific ACPO leadership skills

As described in the methods section in the Introduction above, all interviews with SCC 2010 delegates and longer serving ACPO officers included questions on how the participants believed they had developed specific skills and competencies for ACPO and the extent to which they felt ready for ACPO in these areas. Stakeholder interviewees were also asked questions around what they believed would be most useful experiences to develop these specific skills. The skills included in these questions were identified through preliminary interview research with stakeholders and through the new Police Professional Framework. The specific skill areas identified and discussed in the interviews for this research were:

- 'Safe Pair of Hands' – credible critical incident experience
- Technical skills
- Respecting and promoting respect for equality, diversity and human rights
- Change management skills
- Finance and business skills
- Strategic partnership working skills
- Team-working skills
- Breadth of job and organisational experience

However, as noted in the Introduction of this report, there remains some variation in opinion in terms of what is understood by 'ready' for ACPO rank and the specific skills required. Therefore there may be other important skill areas that have been omitted from the interview discussions. Further details of the preliminary scoping research are provided in Appendix E (page 84).

The following section presents responses to these questions and draws on relevant feedback from throughout the full interview sessions, with the purpose of indicating what development opportunities may be most helpful for allowing officers and staff to develop specific ACPO skills. The evidence is presented under key skill and competency areas, each starting with a brief discussion

around what interviewees perceived and understood these skills to mean, followed by feedback on how interviewees said they were developed. Respondents' views about the perceived impact of the Strategic Demand Course (SCC) in developing each of the skill areas are set out separately. Perceptions about potential skills gaps are discussed in relation to some specific skill areas that where some respondents felt less ready for ACPO rank.

3.1 Self- confidence, vision and values

Self-confidence, personal values and strong vision were all considered vital components of effective ACPO level leadership and for many, the most important element. Many interviewees spoke of being naturally confident, but for others this had developed over time and through experience. Some interviewees suggested that it was only in recent years, when approaching ACPO rank, that they had become more confident to admit weaknesses; appreciate their own leadership styles and abilities and ask for help when needed.

- "It is being comfortable to know that you don't know everything and other people can give you the help and guidance you need" (SCC 2010)
- "It's probably in the last five years I've felt comfortable just to say, I don't know, you tell me, I just haven't got a clue..." (SCC 2010)
- "I think that is quite a key thing actually, recognising it's okay to be yourself and see your skills fit in alongside other things." (SCC 2010)

Development of the competency

Personal values and vision for policing were commonly seen as evolving in the individual rather than being fixed. These attributes, along with self confidence, were often described as linked to self-awareness. Experiences that helped interviewees understand themselves better (their own personality and views) were often cited as the most important form of preparation for ACPO. Further, having the opportunity to gain experience and think beyond personal force experience and also outside the policing sector was viewed as fundamental to having a coherent vision for police leadership.

- "I think you've got to be self aware, I think you've got to be brutally self aware as a senior officer... knowing that...does bring a sense of confidence."
(SCC 2010)

As well as developing through experience and natural maturation, the interviews suggest that leadership development programmes and other interventions can have a significant impact on developing self-confidence and leadership vision and values. When interviewees spoke of the benefits of leadership development programmes, it was often with reference to how they had encouraged them to reflect and, subsequently, alter their thinking – both about themselves, their leadership style and their approach to their roles. Other examples of similar development experiences included one officer's attendance on a Police Trainers' course whilst a sergeant and another's completion of their first degree whilst in the police service. A clear link was made by many interviewees between being reflective, learning to always be reflective and making great leaps in terms of readiness for leadership.

- Police Trainers' course:
"It was the Police Trainers' Course...it was a 14 weeks in which you became qualified to teach student officers...the thing which I really got from that was the reflective side of leadership and in fact the reflective side of policing actually. And that made me far more reflective on what I did and how my behaviours and attitudes and everything else impacted on other people...it wasn't a leadership course, but it ...was a kind of turning point for me..."
(SCC 2010)
- First degree:
"...Up until that point in my career... I had a fairly limited view of the world but that really did broaden it out...sort of catapulted me on to promotion...I've never set out to be a career police officer but that broadened my mind."

Courses and other opportunities, such as secondments, that broadened understanding of social and political issues were also raised by a number of interviewees as instrumental in shaping their values and helping develop vision.

Perceived impact of SCC

Improvement in self-confidence was one of the most commonly cited outcomes of SCC, and was also raised as an outcome of SLDP2 by one officer. SCC was said to improve confidence in terms of taking command, thinking radically, making decisions and building self belief. The reasons for this ranged from the chance to network, broadening of knowledge and greater self-awareness to simply having greater credibility from having attended SCC. In one unique case, a female officer said encouragement and support from staff on the course had helped her to develop confidence.

SLDP2

- “[SLDP2 Futures module] gave me the confidence to think the unthinkable, and do something about it... it gave me the belief in myself ” (SCC 2010)

SCC

- “What the course does is gives you the ability to interact with all of those senior people on a level playing field ... I’m more confident operating at that strategic level as a direct result of that, particularly with Chief Constables.” (SCC 2010)
- "I think the strengths is partly in support that you get from the senior staff. I felt at all times that I was being guided and prompted" (SCC 2010)
- “I certainly got some feedback when I first got back to force and went back into that role that I appeared more confident and self-assured.” (SCC 2010)
- "I finally realised that... all it really took was for me to get a grip of myself, and get over myself, and just get on with it, and live the things that I believe, and use that influence effectively to bring people along with me." (SCC 2010)
- “The course has helped my confidence, not the course content – it has given me credibility. If I say, people will jump now as I got through, it’s given me clout... it’s the way it is perceived.” (SCC 2010)

A visioning exercise on the programme, where delegates were asked to explain their vision and approach to policing, attracted mixed views, ranging from those who found it very positive, to those who said it did not help them at all. A common view, though, was that attendance on the course had, more generally,

contributed to participants' sense of their own values and/or sense of purpose for policing.

- "I know how to build a vision, sell a vision and bring people into that vision and cultural stuff"... "It was absolutely just concentrating, focussing down a lot of thinking about my beliefs, about my vision, about what I think the service should achieve" (SCC 2010)
- "I thought the exposure to people, both good and bad, widened my thinking and allowed me to understand my vision and values around where I wanted to be, which was great" (SCC 2010)
- "I think the SCC... makes you think about your own value set and what fundamentally makes you tick as a leader and therefore what impact you would have on the people who are going to follow you or your leading but also about [your] decision making ...and what underpins that" (SCC 2010)
- "They used to have a visioning exercise where you used to have to go off and towards the end of the course decide what you thought policing was and you presented it. So that's a useful process in my mind... It helps you if done properly... if A, you take it seriously, and B, it's facilitated well" (ACPO)

3.2 Partnership working skills – negotiating and influencing

Strategic partnership skills were described by interviewees as including negotiating and influencing skills and the ability to understand others' interests and build long-term relationships.

Development of the competency

On the whole, people thought skills in this area were developed through on the job experience and some interviewees felt they had more opportunity than others. Leadership development that created opportunities for reflection and to work or learn with partners was considered useful by several interviewees.

- "So I think exposure, and a lot of contact, truly builds the relationship that you require at times when things go wrong. I'm not saying you couldn't be

supplemented by some training input... formal training, which also takes you out of the workplace for a week and allows you to reflect." (SCC 2010)

Perceived impact of SCC

Interviews suggested that the SCC had varying impact on participants in terms of developing their partnership working skills. There were examples of participants who felt they had made significant progress during the three months of the course and highlighted this as their greatest area of development as a result of SCC. Working as a syndicate with delegates from other forces and in some cases, other organisations was seen by some to have been helpful for developing negotiation and influencing skills.

SCC

- "I think the biggest area that it's sharpened my focus on is collaboration and negotiation influence, and it certainly gave me a good opportunity to explore how it worked collegiately in the context of a chief officer team and across partnerships where you're... trying to exercise elements of leadership without direct authority, that was something we explored quite a bit, both formally within the course and certainly I was able to reflect on the interactions within syndicate, and I see myself as having moved forward quite a bit in that respect" (SCC 2010)
- "On the SCC we were encouraged, for example, to network...to start conversations, to think strategically and creatively of what you were saying and to challenge people and to come forward in open forums and say what we think." (SCC 2010)
- "Personally I have changed the way I am managing relationships, as a result, so I'm placing a strong emphasis on understanding the interests and perspectives of other bodies, and individuals, to try and achieve the best outcomes for all of us " (SCC 2010)

Others mentioned the value of specific exercises that had involved working with other agencies.

- "There is... an international drug smuggling exercise, where you work very closely with other partners... and I think that's quite strong in terms of its

value around partnership-working, and being able to negotiate and influence with other partners." (SCC 2010)

- "The exercises we did up in Scotland, which was about negotiating a single outcome agreement with different partner agencies, was massively helpful..." (SCC 2010)

An alternative view was that the SCC, being police specific, had limited potential for developing partnership working skills. External leadership programmes that involved learning with people beyond the police sector were seen as potentially being more helpful. It was a common view that partnership working skills were only acquired through experience. As described above, some interviewees thought that the SCC successfully created such experiences, but for a small number of interviewees only real, on the job experience was effective.

- "I can't think of any formal training that honed my skills on partnership working, other than just the maturing of me over time" (SCC 2010)
- "I'm trying to work out if there's any course that has prepared me in any way, shape or form for that, but actually it was more about getting chucked in at the deep end." (SCC 2010)
- "I'm not sure you can teach it but you've got to make people experience it and, again, the SCC has tried to do that." (ACPO)

3.3 Team-working and people management

Team-working and people management skills, perhaps even more than partnership working skills, were often considered by interviewees to be something innate or skills that could only be developed through time and real experience.

- "I am instinctively a team player, so 100%, do I feel ready in that regard." (SCC 2010)
- "The practicalities of how you become an effective team player or a better team leader... I'm not so sure I'd be able to write that down from the training that I've had throughout my career; it's been more of who I am, how I

operate, and whether it works or whether it doesn't work, and relying on feedback." (SCC 2010)

However, training that involved team working, particularly under pressure, was thought by some to have a positive impact. Similarly, development opportunities that improved self-awareness were considered important, as there was a recognition that you needed to know your self and your own strengths and limitations within a team.

Perceived impact of SCC

The syndicate working approach to the SCC was considered by a number of the interviewees to have been helpful preparation for the change in team working approach that is required at ACPO. Operation Willow, which was an intense team project right at the start of the course also received positive feedback for its opportunity to encourage team-working. Officers that considered themselves naturally introverted seem to have particularly benefitted from this challenge. One officer said that they had considered the ability to form strong relationships quickly to be a significant development need for them and they went on to praise SCC for putting delegates into teams and forcing delegates to work together and giving them 'no chance to ease into it.'

- "I think the reasons for [feeling ready] is the SLDP2 modules were all about kind of solving problems in teams, as was the SCC." (SCC 2010)
- "I learned a lot about how to deal with flat command structures, where you actually are negotiating constantly with others, over whom you have no hierarchical ownership, if you like, and that's been really surprisingly helpful, coming back into this environment, in my work place" (SCC 2010)
- "One of the areas was around conflict with other chief officer members, and throughout the course you actually deal with that...there have been times where we've [my syndicate group] not always agreed, and it is literally, compromise, negotiation, and influencing." (SCC 2010)
- "...You're really thrown into teams and you have to really Form, Storm and Norm... because of the intensity and because of the fact that you're challenged often with a real piece of work that you actually find that you get the best experience from that" (SCC 2010)

A common view of interviewees was that the SCC had helped them understand themselves better (their own personality and personal values) and others better. There was also feedback that officers had been using this learning back in force to manage teams and relationships more effectively. Several interviewees discussed how the course had helped them to become more organised and structured in their approach to work, which was having a positive impact on their people management skills.

- "I really enjoyed the emotional intelligence aspect of it... it made me much more keen to use psychometrical tools in my leadership style to understand the skills and attitudes of those around me" (ACPO)
- "It gives staff confidence... seeing order and organisation and that gives people confidence, and it is about giving people what they need to achieve, not just about what I need and how I operate. Yes, definitely focusing on being much more ordered and clear." (ACPO)

Potential gaps in training provision

There was a suggestion by one interviewee, that there is currently insufficient training for aspiring and existing ACPO officers and staff around how to deal with difficult HR issues.

3.4 Promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR)

Out of all of the key skill and competency areas that were explored as part of this research, skills relating to promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) raised some of the strongest and most varied opinions. Several SCC 2010 interviewees said they had a skills gap in this area, usually thought due to having limited experience of working with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Many interviewees restricted their discussion of diversity to race and gender equality, although some expressed a wider vision that everyone should be treated with respect and fairness.

- “Where we get diversity right is dealing with people as individuals and giving good service to individuals” (SCC 2010)
- “Even at PNAC... when we ask diversity questions, we’re looking for signs of sensitivity and softness and I think it’s not quite as straightforward as that. Because it’s about understanding where it’s appropriate to take account of difference, but actually, when there are issues about standards or delivery or service, then we need to be very thoughtful.” (ACPO)

There was disagreement between interviewees about the importance of exposure to BME communities, in terms of developing equality and diversity related skills.

- “...And I think there needs to be a balance, but I don’t think you can really ever get any better learning than getting out there and finding it for yourself.” (SCC 2010)
- "Diversity isn’t only about race relations, so therefore, I think as long as they can demonstrate that they have respect to people regarding diversity in all of its forms, and there would be some examples in their history, then I think that would be fine" (Stakeholder)

Several interviewees suggested that belonging to a minority group in the police service could help with equality and diversity skills.

- “This is one area, and there aren’t many where actually being female is really helpful, because that meant that I have my own personal experiences of difficulty, but I also have other people that are prepared to approach me with their own issues and seek guidance on them, because I was female..”

Perceived impact of SCC and SLDP2

EDHR elements on both SCC and SLDP2 provoked some of the strongest and most mixed reactions from interviewee participants, ranging from officers who had found them inspirational and helpful to those that had found them the opposite.

There were examples of people saying that these courses had changed their views and understanding of EDHR and less commonly, changed their behaviour in terms of taking a more strategic, proactive approach to promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights.

SLDP

- "The Diversity and Equality one was an inspirational one... the trainers' style, the course style, really made you think, really made you challenge some of the issues... The trainers were really emotional and bought into the subject" (SCC 2010)

SCC

- "I thought that was a really powerful game [in the EDHR module] where we had to set our vision out for diversity and present it to a panel of external individuals, who were very, very challenging... I really, really got a lot out of that session because I think my view of diversity is it can be seen as very complex, but it's not...demystified a lot for me speaking to a panel and delivering a view of what I thought was right against what their needs and requirements were. And it was powerful, that was, really powerful" (SCC 2010)
- "You were challenged to talk about your view of diversity with ...an external panel of representatives from the community ...a lot of people said they didn't like that and I think they didn't like it because it was so challenging, it becomes very personally challenging, but I think that that's good...it makes you think in a different way about individuals and groups circumstances and makes you consider issues in a different way." (SCC 2010)
- "I think [SCC generally] just gave me some thinking time and some planning time to think about what I need to do in terms of setting a new equality strategy." (SCC 2010)

Some officers had already felt ready in this area, and this could explain why the course had limited impact on them, but a number of respondents specifically criticised the quality and approach to the training. One said that the 'whole atmosphere changed' on the course after the module.

SLDP

- "...There is something about SLDP courses that people's experience seems to vary, particularly with the Diversity Course...I think some of that is because the presenters scheduled to present on the course change across the courses, so you get a variation in the content, so people don't get perhaps the same kind of content as another course." (SCC 2010)

SCC

- "There was a diversity exercise that I think I may have kind of missed the point on because it was almost like an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, where you had to explain what your personal commitment was to equality and diversity, but to me it was 'Explain in 10 words why you're not a racist'...dreadful, I'm afraid." (SCC 2010)

Perceptions about skills gaps and limitations of development programmes

As noted above several of the research participants felt they personally had a skills gap in relation to EDHR.

Several interviewees thought EDHR should be demonstrated and taught throughout all training. One officer suggested that this happened on SCC, but a more common view was this was not the case and that equality, diversity and human rights had been 'bolted-on' to leadership development programmes, for example:

SCC

- "Throughout the Strategic Command course, there were certain aspects to the exercises that were put in front of us that... definitely [had] a diversity side to it...And it was exercises like that, I thought, that far outstripped the value of...me standing up and saying, yes, I'm really not as good on diversity as I should be, and I'm going to collect a lot more diversity data and make sure that I really have got the ticks in the right boxes" (SCC 2010)

Some expressed concern with the limited number of female speakers and speakers from BME groups on the SCC and that they were largely confined to

speaking about diversity issues. The current composition of ACPO (being predominantly white males) was also raised as a hindrance to SCC being able to promote equality and diversity effectively.

SCC

- "We never had a female Chief Constable talk to us. Only saw one black person, Trevor Philips from CRE and someone from Kent who came to talk specifically about diversity... Still pigeon holed. Why are only white men talking about leadership and finance?" (SCC 2010)

3.5 Operational / Technical Skills

Very often, interviewees linked credibility as an ACPO leader with having adequate operational and technical knowledge, experience and skills and particularly being able to manage critical incidents successfully.

- "We aim to be leaders and not managers, it's really important that you have operational credibility, and the culture of the organisation is such that if you are not able to understand policing and quite detailed level of tactics, then there is a real danger that you get misled by the people you are leading." (ACPO)
- "you can be the most evangelical, charismatic leader in the service but if you don't know what you're talking about you could lead them over a cliff... you have to have competency in the area you're operating in." (Stakeholder)

Most interviewees in the SCC 2010 cohort said that they had sufficient experience in the area of commanding critical incidents and major events and felt ready for ACPO in this respect.

Several interviewees raised a concern about the amount of opportunities for aspiring ACPO officers to get sufficient experience in this area, for example if they had worked in a small force.

- "I think there's always going to be some of the major incidents that small forces wouldn't necessarily get exposure to" (SCC 2010)

There was a very common view that whilst ACPO officers and staff need higher level technical knowledge and ability, they often do not have to be an expert.

- "Why I think it's important is I wouldn't want the wool pulled over my eyes. So I think there is a level of technical knowledge required, and an understanding, but I don't think you have to be an expert" (SCC 2010)

On the other hand, there was a suggestion that there should be some minimum requirements (such as Gold Commander, Firearms Commander) before attending PNAC and that officers that are successful at PNAC tend to have a broad operational base.

- "The majority of people who get through PNAC... have got a broad operational base, they've got an ability to have their own viewpoint on the issues that are in hand" (ACPO)
- "I've made some personal experience choices to go on some of the more difficult jobs, I do absolutely accept that there are some people who haven't done that, and I think where they haven't, there should be a minimum requirement of skills that you need before you even apply for PNAC." (ACPO)
- "If you leave it to the SCC it's too late because a two hour lecture or a day's input on firearms command when you've never been involved in your service, is not good enough." (HMIC)

Perceived impact of SCC and SLDP2

There was a common view amongst interviewees that officers should not attend SCC without already having adequate operational and technical skills for ACPO. Some who agreed with this still thought that the course was a good opportunity for a refresher and for less experienced officers to get feedback and practice. Critical incident command training as part of SLDP2 was singled out by one of the interviewees as the best module on the programme, as it gave opportunity to practice skills in a safe environment and to learn from others.

SLDP2

- "Looking back on those three SDLP courses that I did, the one that I did on the critical incident goals was very good, and the reason I think it was very good is because you're actually running a scenario...the HYDRA training, where you're each taking a turn to be the goal commander, you're learning from each other...I've since used those skills that I learned from that course." (SCC 2010)

SCC

- "I actually felt that spending time working through some of those very difficult operational decisions and understanding the strategic impact of them is fundamentally crucial to being a good gold commander. And...just being refreshed in the systems and processes and listening to everything I thought was really useful...I felt enormously more equipped." (SCC 2010)
- "The difficulties about doing it on the course itself like SCC that people are in different places." (SCC 2010)
- "I think that on the SCC you were challenged a bit around the PIP stuff and the RIPA stuff around Gold Command operations" (SCC 2010)
- "one of the most flattering things I think I had said to me was, as a still relatively new ACC, from a Detective Superintendent in my force, who said, boss you may not have had a crime background, but you...know what questions to ask. A lot of it is just experience and instincts but, again, you can't teach, you can just offer to expose people to the technical operational stuff that they may not have had and people need to take it up" (ACPO)

Potential skills gaps

As noted above, there was a concern amongst some respondents that aspiring ACPO officers need a broad range of on-the-job experience to develop higher level operational and technical skills and sometimes opportunities could be limited. RIPA and protest management was cited by one stakeholder as an area where more experience and training could be needed for some officers.

- "There are quite a wide range of professional skills that you need in order to operate across the piste and... understandably, not every officer will go through all of the disciplines. It's quite noticeable in the current climate, with protests, that there are quite a large number of relatively senior cops who have not encountered a protest before... I think in some areas the skills and competencies haven't been developed in step with wider world change and therefore that probably gaps do exist." (Stakeholder)

3.6 Change management

There was a degree of consensus around perceptions of change management skills for ACPO rank. Many interviewees commented that being effective at change management at ACPO level meant being open to change, skilled at negotiating and influencing and able to take a long-term strategic perspective. There was a suggestion that having specific training in change management was less important at ACPO level, than developing these over-arching skills. On-the-job experience was generally thought of as more helpful than training for preparing leaders for big change management programmes.

- "I think negotiation, persuasion, being able to influence, all of those things help with all of the others. If you've got that, then actually organisationally, change management becomes slightly easier. You don't have to necessarily do a change management programme..." (Stakeholder)
- "...The bottom line in change management skills...it's about leadership. It's about transformational leadership styles, which takes people with them." (SCC 2010)
- "I think there's a school of thought which would say almost everyone should have an MBA before they set about those kinds of things, which I don't prescribe to. I think there's a lot to actually seeing it done well and hearing from people who've done it well and then working out yourself what it is which makes them really good leaders and really good change agents. But there's a bit of me that probably thinks some kind of either upfront, frontloaded training education, or possibly...something you do for a team... implementing the change at the outset" (SCC 2010)

Two stakeholders queried the testing of change management skills at PNAC and for ACPO rank, for example:

- "If you're talking about openness to change or strategic perspective, then we do test those, but we don't test strategic change management skills as such" (Stakeholder)

Perceived impact of SCC and SLDP2

Enhancing change management skills were rarely directly mentioned as an outcome of either SCC or SLDP2 by the interviewees. On the few occasions they were brought up, it was in relation to challenging exercises that made delegates plan for significant change – in the case of SCC, this was Operation Willow and in SLDP2, the Future Planning module was given as an effective example. Another officer described how the time for reflection and developing personal values and vision had helped his change management skills and again, these are follow-on benefits that could have been experienced by many of the delegates. ACPO officers did not ever raise SCC as something that had developed their change management skills, and two explicitly stated it had not been covered on the SCC they had attended.

SLDP2 (Futures Module)

- "It just encouraged me to take stock, and now let's think, what are we going to do about five year's time? What's going to have changed? ..." (SCC 2010)

SCC

- "The SCC does dip into cultural change, particularly in that first exercise about changing performance and making cuts, and it is emphasised, at every opportunity through the course, that organisations don't change, but people do. And you've got to concentrate on people, in changing their behaviour and their culture and, unless you have a vision that they'll buy into, and that you'll involve them, that you'll never make the change. So, I think I've picked up a fair bit from that ... I believe that a training course... yes, probably some change management programming-type skills might have

been quite helpful to me at an earlier stage, again at chief inspector and superintendent level" (SCC 2010)

- "In the context of change management: "I don't know that it gave me new ideas specifically but what it did give me was time to think about stuff which is really important, time to test my thinking and have my thinking tested... And part of strategic thinking for me is actually about questioning what's there with a view to changing it. So the SCC allowed me the opportunity to synthesise a lot of stuff I had been preparing in my head and then develop it in a specific direction. I have taken my thinking in a specific direction since I've come off the SCC" (SCC 2010)

Perceived skill needs

Respondents noted that change management skills were a priority in the current climate, as demonstrated in the quote below.

- "The thing is we're in a period of strategic change management mania ...but as time progresses and history shows us, that you have different periods where certain competencies are more important than others" (Stakeholder)

3.7 Finance and Business Skills

Interviewees described ACPO finance and business skills as including business creativity and confidence, as well as more specific financial skills, resource management, general business management, understanding of efficiency issues and deployment costs, and the ability to analyse, interpret and use data in spreadsheets.

- "To actually understand the concepts of value for money, probably not just as an academic concept but actually making value for money work, actually understanding how the budgets work and what the consequences of doing certain things to certain parts of the budgets were." (ACPO)

Perceived impact of SCC and SLDP2

In the interviews, Operation Willow on the SCC was regularly raised as a positive learning experience. This element of the course involved officers using real data from a force and working in syndicates to propose methods to make 25% budget cuts. Interviewees praised the timeliness of the exercise, as they had not imagined making such severe cuts before then. It was also said to have been challenging and had made officers think more radically. In this sense, the evidence indicates that the course was successful in developing strategic business skills that would be needed at ACPO rank. One ACPO officer, however, suggested that some of the learning opportunities could be undermined by the assessment element and the fact officers present to senior leaders at the end.

- "It was very, very timely, I don't think at this stage when we did the courses and we did that financial exercise even then, we fully understood or comprehended how severe it was going to be. I mean we were with a different government then" (SCC 2010)
- "The SCC was fantastic in helping me, because one of the things I'm working on is how we're going to make 25% cuts...so the first exercise that we did on the SCC was really helpful for that, and the reason it's really helpful is because you realise that you can't do it without a cultural change." (SCC 2010)
- "I had a development gap around finance before I came on the SCC, so that exercise [Willow] for me... So going from a really limited basic knowledge after three or four days I was able to actually present, and pretty much did a really good job actually, with very few questions from the chief finance director" (SCC 2010)
- "... But they're just so fake those things, especially when you have to present them back to chief constables who are going to be awarding you jobs in the future, so it just turns into a beauty contest. ...People like it because the people that present to the top notch, chief constable...." (ACPO)

Feedback suggests that SCC and specifically Operation Willow, was more effective at giving officers confidence in business planning and developing a strategic and creative business mindset, rather than developing specific finance

skills and knowledge. A number of interviewees said that either they or others on the course lacked basic finance skills.

- SCC helps – “Feeling confident at the executive level when the finance team to the chief officers have got other experience and they are talking financing in a lot more strategic terms’ (SCC 2010)
- “In most Forces, you’ll find that people have been used to only managing very small amounts of money ... I just think a lot of people come there [SCC] with very limited financial and business skills because we’re operational cops, generally, and we don’t tend to be given too much, in terms of management of finance” (SCC 2010)

Training that is available, such as the Institute of Directors Course precursor to SCC was optional. Those that had attended had found it useful, but a number also suggested that it was an ‘off-the shelf product’ and not all parts were directly relevant for preparation for ACPO. One delegate said that the finance briefing before SCC had been ‘really useful.’

Institute of Directors Course

- “The Institute of Directors course, it felt slightly unconnected, it was a very very intense four and a half, or five days, whatever it was, and the quality of the instruction was excellent, but I wasn’t absolutely certain that the modules on it were directly linked to the course, it was to me probably an off-the-shelf package which would of worked for a lot of different people, and there were large parts of it that I felt were not directly relevant, and I’m not saying it wasn’t useful – it was – but it didn’t directly lead into then the things that were required of us, maybe 60% of it did” (SCC 2010)

Perceptions about skills gaps and limitations of training provision

There were mixed views about skills gaps and the level of finance and business skills required. Some interviewees felt they had a skills gap in this area, but a greater number believed ACPO officers only need a certain level of understanding to be able to ask the right questions and do not need to be experts.

- "I always avoided the business stuff. That's a weakness of mine. I don't enjoy it. I don't regard myself as terribly capable in terms of business acumen." (SCC 2010)
- "we're not given the rigour and discipline around numbers" (SCC 2010)
- "My skills are as good as they need to be for an ACC." (SCC 2010)
- "I think I'm sufficiently skilled to ask and understand the right questions that I need to ask" (SCC 2010)

Several interviewees said that relevant training to build skills is needed earlier in careers, at lower ranks and grades, as well as at ACPO level.

- "[Training] has been pretty limited in the service so far and I think that that needs to come in an awful lot earlier right down to sergeant level..." (SCC 2010)
- "We don't do development for absolutely senior leaders. It's almost as though it stops once you get to here" (ACPO)
- "I don't really feel that in any formal way I've ever had any financial input, and I've been incredibly grateful to have financial managers and accountants working in my teams, financial directors, because I don't get it a lot of the time." (ACPO)

Section 4. Conclusions

As described in the introduction and methods section, the interview research for this report was designed to gather perception evidence. The findings, on their own, can only be indicators of how effective and thorough current leadership development services and opportunities are for ACPO roles. However, it is possible to draw stronger conclusions by comparing the results of this study with evidence from other relevant research.

4.1 The wider evidence base

The NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit (RAI) has been working to explore the wider evidence base for what works in police leadership and leadership development. Relevant reports include rapid evidence assessments (REAs) of international research literature on:

- **'What makes great police leadership?** What research can tell us about the effectiveness of different leadership styles, competencies and behaviours. A rapid evidence assessment'
- **'What works in leadership development?** A rapid evidence review'
- 'Evidence Reviews: **What works in Training, Behaviour Change and Implementing Guidance?**'

These reports were all included within the appendices to Peter Neyroud's 2011 'Review of Police Leadership and Training' which has been published on the Home Office Website¹¹ and are also available on the Police Online Knowledge

¹¹ Campbell, I. and Kodz, J. (2011) 'What Makes Great Police Leadership? What research can tell us about the effectiveness of different leadership styles, competencies and behaviours: A Rapid Evidence Review': National Policing Improvement Agency; Kodz, J. and Campbell, I. (2011) 'What works in leadership development': A Rapid Evidence Review: National Policing Improvement Agency. Available at

Area (POLKA.)¹² They all involved a systematic search for relevant international research studies; a critical and quality appraisal of the resulting papers; followed by synthesis of their combined results. Through taking a systematic and planned approach, they offer a more comprehensive and less biased summary of where the current weight of evidence lies for their respective research themes, than would be achieved through a standard literature review approach (see Appendix E, page 84, for more details.)

A conclusion which can be confidently drawn from these REAs is that research literature on police specific leadership and leadership development is relatively limited. No robust quasi-experimental studies were identified or even research that had convincing control and comparison group designs. This indicates the value of conducting more robust research in a police specific context and ideas for future evaluation of NCPL services are presented in section 4.5 below. The current study provides up-to-date contextual evidence on police leadership development for chief officer roles in England and Wales. When looked at in conjunction with the relevant rapid evidence assessment research and with other recent UK studies, notably the Hay Group 2010 interview and survey research on 'Stepping Up: Making the Move to ACPO'¹³, some reasonable conclusions can be drawn.

4.2 Findings: Preparing for ACPO

Development opportunities and approaches that were frequently described as important and valuable by SCC and ACPO interviewees, in terms of helping to develop skills and readiness for ACPO are listed below, along with supporting evidence from the wider evidence base.

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/appendices

¹² www.polka.pnn.police.uk

¹³ Hay Group, 2010, 'Stepping Up: Making the Move to ACPO A review of the demands and attractions of ACPO level roles and the way the police service manages talent into those roles' A report commissioned by ACPO and NPIA

4.2.1 Learning by doing

Interviewees regularly mentioned the value of having different job roles (such as BCU commander) and experience in other organisations (for example through secondments.) This is supported by the 'Training and Behaviour Change' REA, which found convincing evidence from a healthcare setting that training that is integrated into practice can be most effective at changing professionals' behaviour.¹⁴ Similarly, the Hay Group 2010 report found that secondments and early opportunities to operate 'out of context' in other forces or other sectors entirely, were seen by aspiring ACCs as highly beneficial. This report also recommended creating more acting up opportunities. Their survey respondents indicated that they were most willing to undertake secondments and new role opportunities as a way to prepare for ACPO – much more commonly for example, than further academic study.

4.2.2 Learning from role models

The majority of interviewees in the NPIA 'Preparing for ACPO' research talked about learning from other leaders, in the work place and on development programmes. The potential value of police leaders' role modelling good behaviours is supported by international research included in the 'What Makes Great Police Leadership' REA. Several of the identified studies found that leaders that are active (out in the field) and visible to subordinates could influence their behaviour.¹⁵

¹⁴ Coomarasamy A and Khan K S (2004). 'What is the evidence that postgraduate teaching in evidence based medicine changes anything? A systematic review', British Medical Journal, Vol. 329, Number 7473.

¹⁵ Huberts, L., Kaptein, M., Lasthuizen, K., (2007), 'A study of the impact of three leadership styles on integrity violations committed by police officers' Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, Vol. 30(4), 587 – 607; Engel, R., (2003), 'How Police Supervisory Styles Influence Patrol Officer Behaviour', Research for Practice, US Department of Justice, available at www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/194078.pdf

4.2.3 Coaching

There is promising evidence referenced in the 'Leadership development' REA, that coaching, when delivered by appropriately skilled practitioners, may assist participants to achieve goals¹⁶ and develop self awareness.¹⁷ This, along with qualitative evidence from the Hay Group 'Stepping up' report, supports the current interview research finding that coaching can be beneficial. It also helps to corroborate research and conclusions presented in a recent evaluation of NSCAS services.¹⁸

4.2.4 In-force learning and development culture

The value of in-force mentoring and encouragement from managers and senior leaders, including early on in careers, was identified as a finding in the interview research. The fact that all officers who had attended fast-track development schemes had valued them, whereas a number of officers that had not had this opportunity felt it had held them back, points to the importance of structured careers advice and development from an early stage. A supportive learning and development culture and visible commitment from senior figures was found to be important in the REA on leadership development, and further, for leadership development programmes to be most effective, they should be embedded within organisational culture.¹⁹ The 'Stepping up' Hay Group report presents survey and interview evidence that also supports these conclusions and summarises that, at present:

¹⁶ Ladyshevsky R., (2007). 'A strategic approach for integrating theory to practice in leadership development', 28, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 426, 426-443.

¹⁷ Miller D., (2007), 'Linking learning methods to outcomes in public health leadership development,' 20, *Leadership in Health Services*, 97, 97-123.

¹⁸ Gifford, J. and Springett, N., (2010), *Review of the National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS)*, Prepared for the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), Roffey Park Institute.

¹⁹ Leskiw, S. and Singh, P., (2007), 'Leadership Development: learning from best practices', *Leadership and Organisational Development Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 5.

“There is a lack of clear accountability and direction for the talent management process in the service as a whole – both at the national level and in the division of responsibilities between national and local jurisdictions. The result is inconsistency, a lack of integration across the full career path and challenges in making changes and reforms.” (Hay Group 2010, p 39.)

4.2.5 Importance personal drive and ambition

Like a number of the interviewees in the NPIA ‘Preparing for ACPO’ research, in the Hay Group 2010 research, personal ambition and direction was considered by participating ACCs and superintendents as crucial (‘the most powerful driver’) for leadership development.

4.3 Findings: value of leadership development programmes

Common perceptions amongst interviewees in the current research in relation to the effectiveness of the strategic command course and other leadership development programmes are listed below, along with supporting evidence from the wider evidence base.

4.3.1 Leadership development programmes can be effective

Feedback in the current study on the value of the SCC, as well as other leadership development programmes, was generally very positive in terms of the perceived benefits and impacts of attendance. There was a strong perception that the SCC had helped attendees develop leadership skills and knowledge. However, this finding must be treated with caution as it is based primarily on the perceptions of the course participants themselves. A finding from the ‘leadership development’ REA that leadership development programmes can be effective provides some weak supporting evidence that this perception might be a true one and that the SCC could lead to positive outcomes back in delegates’ organisations.

4.3.2 Mixed learning methods are effective

The perception that Operation Willow (a real-time, scenario based training session with live data) was one of the most effective elements of the Strategic Command Course is supported by evidence (presented in the 'Leadership Development' and 'Training and Behaviour Change'²⁰ REAs) that simulation based training can be preferred and more effective than classroom based training at changing behaviour. Taking a multifaceted approach to learning methods on SCC is also in-line with best practice evidence.²¹ Concerns raised by some delegates about the ineffectiveness of classroom based learning (particularly when delivered by inexperienced speakers) are supported.

4.3.3 Time for reflection

The perception that time to reflect and discuss ideas was one of the best elements of the SCC is supported by systematic review evidence from the 'Training and Behaviour Change' REA²² and the 'Leadership Development' REA²³ on the effectiveness of reflective learning methods.

4.3.4 Assessment versus development

The Hay Group Report (Hay Group, 2010, p.15) presents similar concerns amongst their research participants, as shared by some of the interviewees in the current research, that mixing assessment with development (both in SLDP2

²⁰ Cant, R. and Cooper, S. (2010). 'Simulation-based learning in nurse education: systematic review'. *Journal of Advance Nursing*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 3-15.

²¹ Leskiw and Singh, Op Cit (note 13).

²² Cordingley, P., Bell, M., Evans, D., Firth, A., (2005), 'The impact of collaborative CPD on classroom teaching and learning. Review: What do teacher impact data tell us about collaborative CPD?', Research Evidence in Education Library. EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

²³ Hartley, J. and Hinksman, B. (2003), *Leadership Development A Systematic Review of the Literature*, A Report for the NHS Leadership Centre.

modules and SCC) can inhibit honesty about development needs and negatively impact on the value of the programmes.

4.3.5 SCC prepares for ACPO and fills the gaps?

The Hay Group report, like this study, presents mixed views about whether delegates, after completing the SCC are ready for ACPO rank. The Hay research indicates that the SCC still left skills gaps, but only two of their ACC interviewees felt they were not ready when they moved to ACPO. (Hay Group 2010, p. 27.) This indicates that perceptions of 'ready' vary widely, and individual confidence and interpretation of necessary skills plays a major part. For example, in the current research, some officers felt unprepared in terms of finance and business skills, but others, who possibly had equal level of skills in this area, felt confident as they had a view there was no need to be 'expert' in this field.

4.4 Evaluation Strategy – next steps

4.4.1 Questionnaire to ACPO officers and PNAC candidates

The original project design for this KPI16 evaluation work included a second phase of research, which would involve sending out a questionnaire to all ACPO officers and to the most recent set of PNAC candidates. The purpose of this would be to gather quantitative data to support or test themes that have been identified through the qualitative interview research. This aspect of the research has been postponed, but a draft questionnaire has been devised and this or a revised version could be disseminated at a more appropriate time.

4.4.2 Follow-up research with managers and direct reports of SCC 2010 interviewees

A key limitation of the current research is that it is primarily based on senior leaders' perceptions about themselves (see section 1.3 above). Findings from this interview research could be developed by carrying out further interview work, this time with the managers, peers and those who report to the research participants (i.e. 360 degree assessments). This could add to the current research by gathering evidence on whether officers are perceived by others to

change their behaviours back in force, after attending SCC and other leadership development courses and services and whether attendance is said to have made them more ready for ACPO rank.

4.4.3 Further focus on 'EDHR' and 'finance and business' related skills and leadership development

Interview participants in this research, on the whole, were fairly harmonious in their views. Only two important areas stand out as having produced striking differences in opinion. The first was in relation to skills around promoting and showing respect for equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR), and EDHR issues generally. Three areas could warrant further investigation:

- Are leadership development opportunities in the police service accessed in accordance with EDHR principles?
- How effective are current approaches to developing police leaders to make them more skilful at promoting EDHR?
- What are the optimum leadership development approaches in relation to developing EDHR related skills and understanding?

The second significant area of contention was around finance and business skills. It could be helpful to explore the following issues in more depth:

- What level and range of finance and business skills are required at ACPO rank? What are the common quantitative skill needs?
- What level of skills do current ACPO officers and aspiring ACPO candidates have in this area?
- If necessary, how could finance and business skills for ACPO rank be more effectively developed?

4.4.4 Longer term, more robust evaluation of NCPL development services

Prior to the start of this research project, the research team presented costed options for different project designs including studies that would attempt to measure changes in delegates' behaviour after attending an NCPL leadership development course (through 360 degree before and after surveys with in-force colleagues or only using 'after' surveys by asking 'retrospective degree of change' questions). The options paper also included a brief outline of a

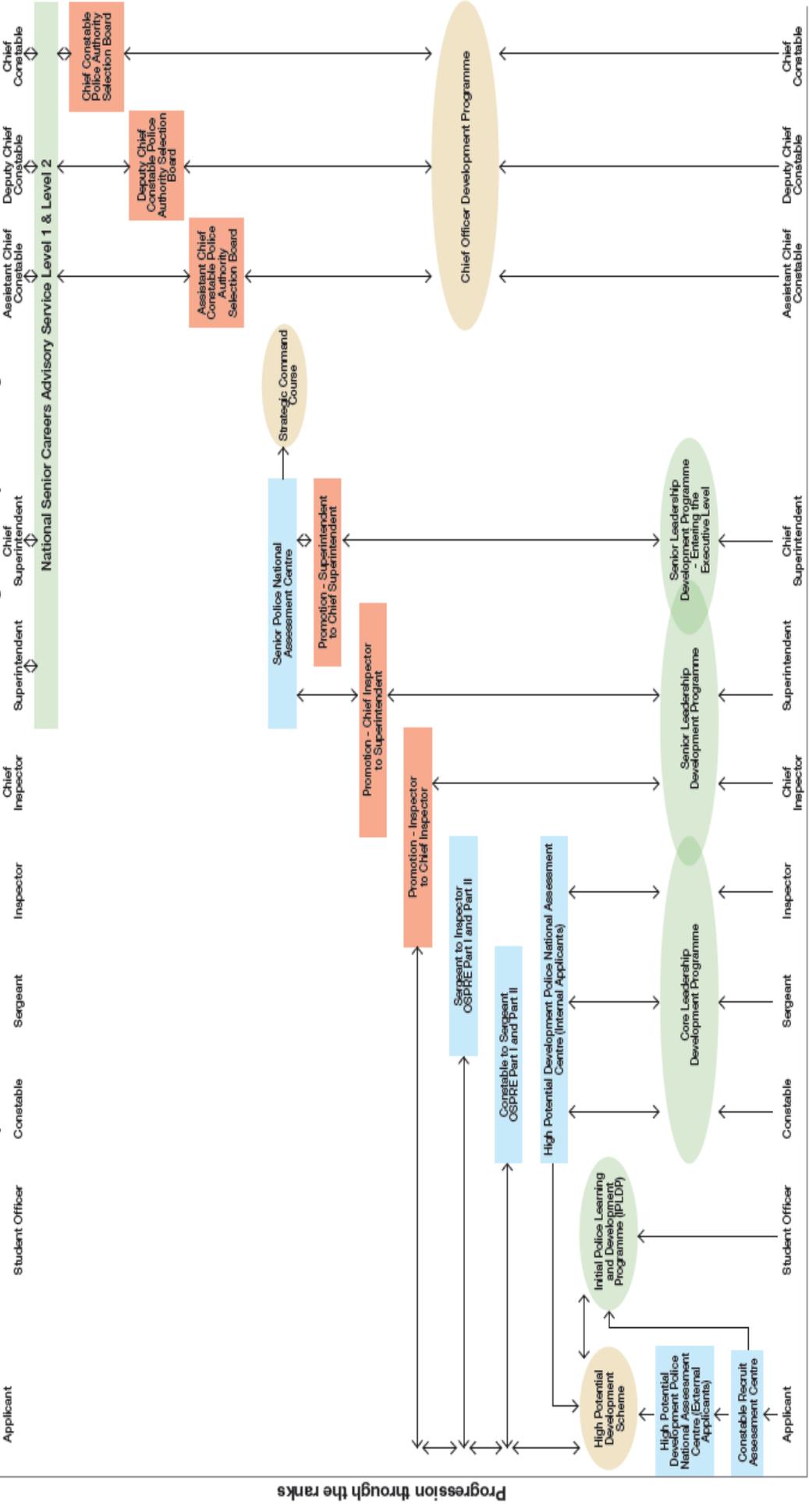
longitudinal study design that could track the career progression of officers that have or have not attended NCPL courses for example. These research options were not pursued because of the time involved (and the reporting deadline of March 2011) and because a lengthy lead in time would be required to develop a robust design. However, these proposals could be developed further to set in place a long-term evaluation for NCPL.

An important finding of the REAs on leadership conducted by NPIA was the limitation of the evidence base and lack of robust and police specific evaluation evidence on leadership development. Quasi-experimental longitudinal designs which attempt to draw more causal inferences would be challenging, but potentially helpful. It has been argued that this area of study is best researched through a 'realist' approach and by building up a bank of more context specific but detailed case studies (see Hartley and Tranfield 2011²⁴). Studies that include direct observations and more sensitive qualitative methods, such as repertory grid, might also be useful, as well as ethnographic approaches. However, qualitative case study work will not be able to answer research questions on causal relationships. Therefore, the challenges of conducting quasi-experimental and longitudinal evaluation should be considered alongside the potential benefits and limitations of such qualitative approaches when planning further research and evaluation in this area of police leadership development.

²⁴ Hartley J and Tranfield D (2011) Leadership Learning in Changing Times: Evaluating Leadership Development in the Civil Service. London: National School of Government

Appendix A. National Rank Recruitment and Selection Processes and Learning and Development Programmes

National Rank Specific Recruitment/Selection Processes and Learning & Development Programmes/Services



Progression through the ranks

Rank Specific Recruitment/Selection Processes and Learning & Development Programmes

- Centrally designed and locally delivered recruitment / selection process
- Locally designed and locally delivered selection processes
- Centrally designed and locally delivered learning and development programmes / services
- Centrally designed and centrally delivered learning and development programmes

Strategic Command Course

The Strategic Command Course (SCC) prepares selected police officers for promotion to the most senior ranks in the Service. The course is also open to police staff at equivalent grades.

This course is open to police officers at superintendent and chief superintendent ranks from all UK forces who have shown the potential to progress further in their careers and is a statutory requirement for officers seeking promotion to Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) ranks. Selection is by way of the Senior Police National Assessment Centre (Senior PNAC).

It is also open to police staff at equivalent grades and selection is by way of the Senior Staff Selection process.

Overview

The Strategic Command Course (SCC) is regarded as the prestigious senior leadership development programme in policing. It is a prerequisite for officers and staff seeking to attain the rank of chief police officer in the UK and is open to international police delegates and those from other law enforcement agencies aspiring to the most senior positions in their home countries.

The course is primarily delivered through a series of highly demanding strategic exercises, which are designed to stretch the participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities across the following three key areas:

- Business Skills
- Executive Skills
- Professional Policing Skills

This is augmented by external speakers from a broad range of organisations who bring their own experiences of leading at the strategic level. Additional expertise is provided by subject matter experts who work with the participants during the exercises.

The course is syndicate based, with each syndicate led by an experienced chief officer; and a significant amount of the learning also takes place with peer support.

Aims

The principle aim of the Strategic Command Course (SCC) is:

“to help selected UK and international police officers and police staff prepare for appointment to the most demanding executive roles in the police service”.

There are 9 learning objectives and 12 ACPO behaviour competencies. These were written in consultation with ACPO/(S) and have been accepted as ACPO policy and endorsed by the Police Leadership Development Board.

Objectives

Business:

- Demonstrate the essential strategic leadership skills required to manage the risk created by the increasingly fluctuating demands of a dramatic financial environment and the impact this has on the policing provision to communities
- Further develop business skills within policing in order to have appropriate resource control where you can be confident about: the use of assets, productivity, preparedness for rapid change and a clear understanding of policing priorities
- Create an organisational culture that encourages innovation and engagement from the entire workforce, be able to negotiate on all aspects of organisational capability ensuring effective resource leverage and utilisation, value for money, and taking cost out of the organisation whilst maintaining or improving performance and be capable of maintaining organisational focus in a negative operating environment

Executive:

- Demonstrate the adaptive leadership characteristics necessary to lead policing through a complex, challenging and frequently competing modern landscape
- Understand the current and emerging constitutional position of policing in a democratic society and the debate on accountability, to be in a position to significantly influence this debate through the current stage of extra

ordinary complexity

- Articulate an inclusive vision for the future of the service, incorporating your leadership style, values, decision making skills and emotional intelligence and to be able to communicate that vision, whilst understanding the importance of making a positive contribution to national police service development

Professional:

- Understand and have the ability to balance the demands of civil liberties and civil legitimacy
- Develop high level competence in critical incident leadership and management of local and national situations and respond in a way that secures and enhances public confidence and be absolutely clear about the value added by effective strategic command
- Take on the challenges and responsibilities of leadership in Gold command in high risk operations and demonstrate the necessary skills of negotiation internally, externally and with government agencies in order to achieve the most appropriate of outcomes

Additional Information

Course participants attend seminars and lectures, engage in coaching and mentoring, directed learning, exercises and action research.

Participants have the opportunity to explore their future working environment and present their findings to panels drawn from the Police Service, academia and public and private sector executives.

Course / Module duration

400 hours over 45 days plus 2 hours final tutorial

Assessment process / accreditation details

It is a nine week assessed course.

Appendix B. Glossary of Terms

- ACC:** Assistant chief constable – the first ‘Chief Police Officer’ rank or Commander in the Metropolitan Police Service.
- ACPO:** Association of Chief Police Officers
- Bramshill:** National Policing Improvement Agency site in Hampshire where the National College of Police Leadership is based
- EDHR:** Equality Diversity and Human Rights
- Hydra:** Immersive learning simulated exercise for critical incident training
- ICF:** Integrated Competency Framework (replaced by Police Professional Framework in 2010)
- ICP:** Independent Command Programme, launched by NCPL in 2010 to replace previous senior leadership development programmes (SLDP2) and since renamed ‘Leading Powerful Partnerships’. This is a multi-agency, one week course for Chief Superintendents and equivalent grade staff from the police service and partner organisations, delivered at Bramshill.
- LPP:** Leading Powerful Partnerships programme – see ICP above.
- NCPL:** National College of Police Leadership, based at Bramshill, Hampshire. The College is run by the NPIA and provides leadership development courses for police officers and staff and other public sector workers from across the UK and abroad.
- NIM:** National Intelligence Model: an intelligence led, problem solving approach to crime and disorder.
- NPIA:** National Policing Improvement Agency (for England and Wales) is a non-departmental public body that was established in April 2007 to supply support to the police service by providing critical national services; building capability across the police service and providing professional expertise to police forces and authorities. It acquired functions and responsibilities from previous bodies – including leadership development services, previously delivered by Centrex.
- NSCAS:** National Senior Careers Advisory Service – a NPIA delivered career and leadership development service designed to support senior

police officers and police staff operating at Superintendent level and above. Previously, NSCAS support, including one-to-one coaching, could be accessed through success at a specific assessment process, and by ACPO officers and staff on request. NSCAS also provided a range of other services such as support to the Strategic Command Course and positive action activities. The service has recently been subject to a major review.

- Operation Willow:** A real-time, scenario based training session within the SCC using live data that involved officers developing proposals for 25% budget cuts
- Senior PNAC:** Senior Police National Assessment Centre - a process to identify the future leaders of the Police Service. Superintending officers who have been signed-off by their Chief Constable as 'ready now' to operate at Assistant Chief Constable/Commander rank are eligible to apply. The assessment involves role play and written exercises.
- PPF:** Police Professional Framework, an online competency management system, designed to help police officers and staff measure and record competence
- Ready Now** To be eligible to apply for senior PNAC, candidates must be signed off by their Chief Constable as 'Ready Now' to perform at ACC/Commander rank. This involves the candidate supplying evidence against four core skill areas, which the Chief Constable must judge as satisfactory (see Appendix A and F.)
- RIPA:** Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000)
- SCC:** Strategic Command Course – a three month residential leadership development programme delivered by NCPL at Bramshill, for Chief Superintendents that have passed senior PNAC. Attendance is a statutory pre-requisite for promotion to ACPO rank. After successfully completing the course, attendees may apply for ACC.
- SLDP2:** Senior Leaders Development Programme 2 was a non-compulsory programme for superintendents/ chief superintendents, delivered by NCPL at Bramshill. It was phased out in 2010 and replaced by other programmes including the LPP. It consisted of six modules.

Appendix C. Research Methods

This preliminary work, combined with the Police Professional Framework, was used to frame the current interview research. An interview guide and sampling strategy was designed to explore career development and formative experiences in developing leadership skills for ACPO, experiences of the SCC and SDLP2 and readiness of aspiring ACPO officers in the key skill and competency areas identified in the scoping research.

Twenty-eight semi-structured interviews were conducted by RAI team members with ACPO officers, graduates of the January 2010 Strategic Command Course and other key police stakeholders. All RAI interviewers were members of the Government Social Research Service (GSR) and work to its professional code.²⁵ The SCC 2010 graduate sample was drawn from 36 officers that were attending a SCC reunion event in October 2010. Of those that volunteered, a final selection of participants was chosen to ensure a good geographic spread (i.e. the selection included officers from Welsh forces and from regions across England) and representation of female officers. Similarly, the ACPO sample was drawn from 77 officers of ACPO rank who attended the ACPO autumn conference in November 2010. A sample was randomly selected, then adjusted to achieve a good geographic spread and representation of female officers and different ACPO ranks. Two police staff were included in the SCC 2010 sample. Stakeholders were selected based on advice from NCPL colleagues, setting aside those who had already been consulted by them in the scoping stage. The distribution of the interviews were as follows:

- 9 ACPO officers – Interviewed face-to-face at the October 2010 ACPO Conference and in telephone interviews (referred to as 'ACPO' when quoted in the report)

²⁵ Available at www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/networks/professional/gsr/professional-guidance/gsr-code-main-page.aspx

- 15 SCC graduates – Interviewed face-to-face in September 2010 and in follow-up telephone interviews (referred to as 'SCC 2010' when quoted in the report)
- 4 stakeholders – Representatives from the Home Office, Association of Police Authorities, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) (referred to as 'Stakeholders' when quoted in the report)

Total interview time with each participant ranged from half an hour and to an hour with each ACPO interviewee, to between one hour and two hours with SCC 2010 graduates. Interviews were confidential and participants were assured that they would be in no way identifiable in any resulting reports. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then examined by researchers. From this, common themes were identified and a coding frame produced. Two RAI researchers separately reviewed each interview transcript and coded responses according to the coding frame. For each theme that an interviewee discussed, illustrative quotes from their interview transcripts were copied into one excel spreadsheet – making it possible to read through all respondent views on a particular theme and reach conclusions about what were common and uncommon perceptions. This report of results is structured around the themes used in the coding frame. Verbatim quotes from interviewees are included throughout the report to illustrate themes and common points of view. In each case, participants are only quoted once, to avoid over-representing one person's feedback.

The interviews were structured into three parts and slightly varied by sample group (see Appendix D). For both the SCC 2010 participants and longer serving ACPO, the first part of the interviews asked about career development and formative experiences in developing leadership skills for ACPO. Non ACPO officers were asked how ready they felt for ACPO and serving ACPO officers were asked about any skills gaps they may have experienced when they were first promoted to the executive level. The second part of these interviews asked more directly about experiences of the Strategic Command Course as well as any previous national police leadership training and preparation for PNAC. This order of questioning was designed to help gauge the extent to which interviewees

valued NPIA delivered leadership development opportunities, compared with other means of developing skills for ACPO.

The final part of the SCC 2010 and ACPO officer interviews explored perceptions of personal readiness for ACPO in the key skill and competency areas identified in the scoping research. Questions were also asked about how these skills and competencies had been developed and perceptions about barriers and facilitators for their development. In the stakeholder interviews, participants were asked a similar range of questions but were requested to give their own views about the organisations they represented, rather than speak from personal experience.

The sample of recent SCC graduates was larger than the ACPO and stakeholder samples, as the research was mainly focussed on current leadership development services for preparing for ACPO. The ACPO interviews were held to explore whether SCC and other leadership development courses were perceived to have helped officers in their ACPO careers and whether they had felt they had significant skills gaps when they were first promoted to ACC. A number of the SCC 2010 graduates that were interviewed had been promoted to ACC rank by the time they were interviewed, and hence were able to discuss their experiences of 'stepping up' to ACPO.

Appendix D. Interview Guide

For ACPO and SSC 2010 participants

Open Introductory Questions

1. Looking back over your career to date, what do you think have been some of the most formative experiences that have allowed you to develop your leadership skills?

2A For interviewees that have been promoted to APCO or have been 'acting up' to ACPO rank:

2A.1 Did you feel fully prepared for your ACPO role?

2A.2 Skill/ knowledge deficits

- a) In which ways did you feel least prepared?
- b) What skills/ knowledge have you felt you have most needed to develop since taking on your ACPO role?
- c) Why do you think you did not have these skills or knowledge already – what barriers were there to you developing these skills before you took on the role?

2A.3 'Ready' areas

- a) What skills and knowledge have you been able to start using in your ACPO role, that you were not using as much before?
- b) How had you developed these skills before taking on your ACPO role
- c) Had any of the following helped you to develop these skills and knowledge
 - preparing for Senior PNAC
 - NSCAS (if an NSCAS client)
 - SLDP2 programme
 - Strategic Command Programme
 - Other education (MBAs etc?)
 - In-force work opportunities
 - Out-of-force work opportunities (secondments, career breaks etc)

- Other?

2B For interviewees that have not yet been promoted to ACPO or have not had a chance to 'act up' to ACPO rank:

2B.1 Looking back over the last ... years [insert number of years since interviewee period started SLDP2] do you feel that you have significantly developed your leadership skills?

2B.2 Looking back over this same period

- a) which skills do you feel you have most developed during this time?
- b) how have you developed these skills (ie, on-the-job and/ or NCPL programmes and/or other)

2B.3 Looking ahead now, to promotion to ACPO rank

- a) what essential leadership skills do you feel you have had less opportunity to develop?
- b) What do you think have been barriers to you developing these skills?
- c) How do you think you could best acquire/ develop these skills (eg, work experience, more training/ courses etc.)

Targeted questions for all interviewees

3. Strategic Command Course (SCC) (and same for SDLP2 if attended)

- a) What were your expectations of the Strategic Command course?
- b) Were these expectations met?
- c) What did you feel were the key strengths of the course?
- d) What did you feel were the main weaknesses, if any, of the course?
Can you suggest any modifications to the course to make it more effective at developing essential ACPO leadership skills?
- e) Have you changed any behaviours since attending the course?
- f) Have you made any changes at work since attending the course?

4. Senior PNAC

- a) Did you feel 'ready' for ACPO rank before you attended Senior PNAC?

- b) Did preparing for Senior PNAC help you to feel more ready for ACPO rank? Did it help you to develop leadership skills?
- c) What preparation did you do for Senior PNAC?

Skills Question: The following questions draw on the current work to revise the Integrated Competency Framework (ICF) and on exploratory research with key stakeholders, to find out what they considered essential skills and knowledge for ACPO rank. The first column in the table on the next page lists new ICF Personal Qualities for ACPO rank. The Second Column lists relating skill areas which were identified in the exploratory research. The third column gives more detail about the skill.

For each skill area – please ask the following questions:

a) Ready?

Do you feel your police career to date has given you sufficient opportunities to develop the level of skills in this area which are required

- for ACPO rank?
- to equip you to adapt to changing contexts – eg, the current requirements for budget cuts?

b) How?

How have you developed skills in this area (ie, on the job, MBA?, other training?)

c) SCC/ NCPL courses

Did the SCC course and/ or SLDP2 significantly develop your skills and knowledge in this area? (or any other leadership development services and courses?) Have you had opportunity to transfer this learning into the workplace? Please give examples. What suggestions would you make to ensure future modules are even better?

d) Best way?

What do you think is the best way to develop these skills?

Table presenting five personal qualities identified in ICF for ACPO rank and skills/ competencies areas identified by NCPL scoping research for KPI16.

Personal Quality (revised ICF)	Applied skill (NCPL research)	Detail/ explanation
<p>Serving the public Promotes a real belief in public service, focusing on what matters to the public and will best serve their interests. Ensures that all staff understand the expectations, changing needs and concerns of different communities, and strive to address them. Builds public confidence by actively engaging with different communities, agencies and strategic stakeholders, developing partnerships and ensuring people can engage with the police at all levels. Understands partners' perspectives and priorities, and works co-operatively with them to deliver the best possible overall service to the public.</p>	Partnership working	Working with other organisations, also negotiating and influencing skill and political acumen
<p>Leading strategic change Establishes a compelling vision based on the values of the Police Service, and a clear direction for the force. Instigates and delivers change, thinking beyond the constraints of current ways of working, and is prepared to make radical change when required. Thinks in the long-term, identifying better ways to deliver value for money services that meet both local and force needs. Encourages creativity and innovation within the force. Asks for and acts on feedback on own approach, continuing to learn and adapt to new circumstances.</p>	Finance and business skills	Particularly critical in the current climate.
	Strategic change management skills	Falls into category above – but of particular importance now
<p>Working with others</p>	Team working	Important for

<p>Builds effective working relationships with people through clear communication and a collaborative approach. Maintains visibility to staff and ensures communication processes work effectively throughout the force. Consults widely and involves people in decision-making, speaking to people in a way they understand and can engage with. Treats people with respect and dignity regardless of their background or circumstances, promoting equality and the elimination of discrimination. Treats people as individuals, showing tact, empathy and compassion. Sells ideas convincingly, setting out benefits of a particular approach, and striving to reach mutually beneficial solutions. Expresses own views positively and constructively, and fully commits to team decisions.</p>	<p>skills</p>	<p>all police officers but even more for ACPO?</p>
<p>Professionalism Acts with integrity, in line with the values of the Police Service. Delivers on promises, demonstrating personal commitment, energy and drive to get things done. Defines and reinforces standards, demonstrating these personally and fostering a culture of personal responsibility throughout the force. Takes responsibility for making tough or unpopular decisions, demonstrating courage and resilience in difficult situations. Remains calm and professional under pressure and in conditions of uncertainty, openly acknowledges shortcomings in service and commits to putting them right.</p>	<p>Experience of working in different organisations (police and non police) and value of acting up to ACC</p>	<p>'Big' force experience, secondments to non police organisations, period of acting or temporary ACC prior to PNAC. Ability to work regionally and to be able to take on a national remit</p>
	<p>Technical skills</p>	<p>'Higher order' technical skills such as a grasp</p>

		of RIPA, PIP & NIM at the strategic level
	'Safe pair of hands'	Credible Critical Incident experience
<p>Decision making</p> <p>Assimilates complex information quickly, weighing up alternatives and making sound, timely decisions. Gathers and considers all relevant and available information, seeking out and listening to advice from specialists. Asks incisive questions to test facts and assumptions, and gain a full understanding of the situation. Identifies the key issues clearly, and the inter-relationship between different factors. Considers the wider implications of different options, assessing the costs, risks and benefits of each. Makes clear, proportionate and justifiable decisions, reviewing these as necessary.</p>	Ready now and EDHR (equality, diversity and human rights	Ability to deal with the more 'gritty' issues. Problem some lack of experience of working in challenging areas

Appendix E. KPI 16 NCPL Summary of Initial Scoping Research, June 2010

This paper summarises the purpose, methodology, scope and findings of the initial research in respect of deliverable b for the NPIA's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 16 , namely :-

To develop a framework to assess readiness and quality of candidates at PNAC; ACPO interview; and in post. (30/06/10)

1. Introduction

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to outline a proposal as to how the Leadership and the Workforce KPI 16 can be delivered.

KPI Title: Demonstrate through working with Candidates and Police Authorities a reported **improvement in readiness and quality of ACPO candidates** in preparation to deliver subsequent appropriate improvements.

The **purpose** of this KPI is to demonstrate the positive impact of NPIA's senior leadership training, talent management and NSCAS in better supporting senior policing leaders to meet current and future challenges.

Background to the concept of 'readiness'.

The current situation is that potential ACPO candidates are required to consider their eligibility for Chief Officer rank in the context of being 'ready now' for ACC / Commander roles, Guidance notes for Chief Officers state

'You should be looking for evidence that the applicant is an exceptional performer and is, additionally, 'ready now' to work at ACC/Commander rank'.

In effect this requires the individual applicant to provide evidence of four core eligibility criteria at the point of application, these are as follows:-

- Executive Policing or Effective Leadership: Substantial and challenging command in a Significant role.
- Professional policing or operational command: Policing operations.
- Business policing or Business / Management Principles: Organisational Strategy.
- Promoting, Managing and Respecting Race and Diversity

Chief Constables must be satisfied that the candidates are in fact 'ready now' before recommending them to go forward to PNAC. The requirement to ensure that applicants are only recommended for PNAC if they are 'ready now' was reiterated by Sir Hugh Orde OBE in a memo to all Chief Officers in May 2009. This followed on from feedback from Senior PNAC assessors and others involved in the process who expressed concern about the experience and readiness of some candidates presenting themselves at Senior PNAC in 2008.

Content Analysis

A number of documents were identified which provided useful background reading to the KPI, in particular the following were found to be helpful:-

Letter from Sir Hugh Orde to all Chief Constables reminding them of the need to be sure that any candidates put forward were in fact 'ready now' and that they met the four eligibility criteria. Letter dated 13 May 2009

Background summary of where the ready now criteria originated from compiled by NPIA Exams and Assessment as guidance for PNAC. Document dated May 2010

Stepping up – Making the Move to ACPO – Compiled by the Hay Group, the paper examines the current methods for preparing and selecting officers for ACPO. Report dated July 2009.

Guidance notes for candidates applying for PNAC. Written by Exams and Assessment, the notes give guidance to Chief Officers regarding the four eligibility criteria. Document updated annually prior to PNAC.

Initial research

The purpose of the initial research phase was to fulfil the first goal of the project:-

1. Develop a framework to define the term 'ready now' – Currently there may be a degree of ambiguity over exactly what the term means, whilst guidelines exist (see above) these are likely to be interpreted by different Chief Constables and Police Authorities in a variety of ways. This will involve conducting research with key decision makers who have responsibility for the selection and recruitment of potential ACCs and Commanders from pre PNAC to appointment.

2. Methodology

The methodology for the research was as follows:-

- A key range of stakeholders were identified who have an interest in the concept of readiness.
- Contact was made and interviews were arranged with a cross section of stakeholders from a representative range of protected characteristic groups.
- A series of semi structured interviews were carried out with the identified stakeholders. These were done by a range of means including, face to face, telephone and in one case through an intermediary who liaised with a police authority. A strategic question was set on the June Independent Command Programme which culminated in a presentation and a 4000 word research paper.

The questions used as the basis for the interviews were as follows:-

1. What do you understand by the term 'ready now' in terms of the application process for becoming an ACC / Commander?
2. What does the term 'ready now' mean to you?
3. There are four eligibility criteria which have been set out and recently reiterated by Sir Hugh Orde as prerequisites for applying for PNAC. What are your thoughts on these criteria?
4. Although the four eligibility criteria are not 'weighted' , do you think they should be or do you intuitively feel that there is an order of importance?
5. In terms of being prepared for 'readiness', if in your view someone is not ready, what advice would you give them? (in terms of how they can further prepare themselves)
6. How do you reconcile the concept of readiness with the perceived *quality* of candidates? If you have noticed gaps, can you give examples?

Interviewees

A total of 20 interviews were conducted which took account of the views of approximately 45 individuals who had an interest in the concept of readiness, the following stakeholders were represented:-

ACPO (Chief Constable, DCC and ACC)

ACPOS

ACPO president

SAP (Home Office / HMIC)

APA

NPIA

NSCAS

Recent graduates of the SCC

Chief Superintendents aspiring to ACPO.

3. Analysis of data

Having gathered all the data from the interviews and content analysis, the intention was to develop an account of the major constructs or categories including setting context and describing the process. The data was reviewed to form cluster categories that illustrated the data for each question asked. Categories were then saturated with as many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their relevance. The result is themes described as key emerging issues, which are much more than a descriptive account or quantitative review.

Key emerging issues re 'ready now'

The issues outlined below have not been listed by importance.

- Partnership working – This was a consistent theme and was seen as 'must have' for all. The need for good negotiating and influencing skill and political acumen was also mentioned within the broad context of this issue.
- Finance skills – As above, particularly critical in the current climate. This also went hand in hand with the need for a standard level of business skills. It was identified that some officers have these skills through formal qualifications and training, such as MBA's, but others had limited skills.
- Strategic change management skills – This falls under the broad heading of business skills however two interviewees felt that due to the current and future challenges required in the service in order to deal with the scale of the anticipated cuts change management skills were vital and should be a factor in determining whether individuals are ready for ACC /Commander roles.
- Team working skills – it might be assumed that by the time officers reach ACC they have these, but a number of interviewees mentioned that these skills are critical and gave evidence where they had seen gaps and shortcomings in this area.

- Experience of working in different organisations and value of acting up to ACC – This theme was picked up in a number of different ways; there is clearly an issue that candidates from small forces are at a disadvantage as they do not have 'big' force experience. However there were also a number of comments regarding the benefits of secondments to non police organisations and also the importance of having done a period of acting or temporary ACC prior to PNAC. It was clear from one interviewee that although they had passed PNAC and the SCC they did not really have a real grasp of the complexity of the ACC role. One interviewee was very clear that in their view part of the ready now criteria should be an ability to work regionally and to be able to take on a national remit.
- Technical skills – A range were mentioned such as a grasp of RIPA, PIP & NIM at the strategic level. Other evidence has also come to light during this period of research in respect of some of the higher order technical knowledge that ACC's should have. It is noted that technical skills have become a must do within the MPS for all ACPO level officers. A conversation has also been held with NPIA training colleagues in respect of some of the higher order PIP and NIM knowledge that ACC's should have.
- Safe pair of hands – This was a theme that unsurprisingly came from a number of interviewees. This is reference to credible Critical Incident experience such that a newly appointed ACC would be able to cope with a critical / major incident from day 1. However this extended beyond dealing with the incident per se into coping with the media effectively and ultimately reputation management.
- Ready now and equality and diversity – A number of references were made to the fact that 'ready now' had an element of machismo attached to it, also the process being referred to as 'combative'. The real issue here was that due to the above perception the process could be a barrier to under represented groups. BME and female candidates were both mentioned as being groups that could be put off applying, or less likely to apply than their white, male counter parts.

- What does ready now really mean? – A number of issues arose from this question, some interviewees viewed 'ready now' as ready to tackle the PNAC – SCC journey, not that they were ready to walk into an ACC's post. This was supported by others who felt that the Hay Groups findings that 'assessment against the criteria of 'ready now' should be replaced with seeking 'potential with development'. Many interviewees agreed with the Hay Groups recommendations that seeking potential should start at Superintendent level. This was also commented upon by a number of other interviewees who said that there should be greater emphasis on talent and career management. It is also interesting to note that the research carried by the June ICP identified that 'ready now' as a concept works against the principle of recognising talent or those with high potential as effective talent management should focus on the *complete* career path. How would you truly expect an individual to pass the 'ready now' criteria when they would not have access to the development programme whose aim is to 'prepare selected officers and police staff for appointment to the most demanding executive roles in the police service', namely the Strategic Command Course. This finding links to the next issue.
- Career and talent management – Two issues can be commented upon under this heading, first, concerns regarding Chief Constables recommending people as ready and the criteria they work to. Second and perhaps more relevant was the view that the service needs to get smarter at ensuring that by the time candidates get past the SCC they are all in a similar place in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. One candidate was also very clear that the responsibility for career management lay with the individual. They had made this decision four years prior to applying to PNAC and was very focussed on what ready now meant, consequently he undertook a very rigorous approach to his own continuous professional development.
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR) – This was a significant issue for a police authority and a senior member of police staff, both of whom were quite passionate about the lack of EDHR skills in some of the candidates they saw. There was a perception amongst the interviewees that whilst candidates could be comfortable with the legislation and policy, some were not really able to demonstrate the ability to deal with the more 'gritty' issues. Some of

this was linked to a potential lack of experience and that many of the candidates they saw had not worked in challenging areas.

Conclusion

This research has examined a range of issue pertaining to the concept of 'readiness' and the main themes have been outlined above. One of the key questions was whether the meaning of the term 'ready now' correlated to the four PNAC eligibility criteria - The general feeling was that although linked they were in fact subtly different. Interviewees appeared to have an intuitive feel regarding the interpretation of what 'ready now' meant to them, thus due to its subjective nature it means different things to different people, conversely the eligibility criteria are much more objective and easier to justify through experience and may be evidenced by a 'list of events' as one interviewee put it.

Next Steps

The purpose of this particular piece of work was to assist in informing the NPIA's Research Analysis and Information Unit of the main issues pertaining to the concept of readiness and thereby help to inform the content of further detailed research to meet the requirements of internal Key Performance Indicator 16 of NPIA's 2010/11 Business Plan.

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Appendix F. Details of extra sources of research evidence

(as referenced in the concluding section)

Separate to the interview research presented in this paper, the NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit (RAI), simultaneously conducted four Rapid Evidence Assessments (REAs) that are relevant to the topics of readiness and preparation for ACPO. These studies were used to inform Chief Constable Peter Neyroud's 2011 'Review of Police Leadership and Training' (that was commissioned by the Home Secretary) and are included in the appendices to his published report.²⁶ All of the REAs were produced by systematically searching for relevant research studies, critically appraising their methods and conclusions, before synthesising their findings. The aim was to impartially review existing research literature and in each case, determine whether there was a strong enough evidence base to draw well founded conclusions.

- Campbell, I. and Kodz, J., 2010, '**What makes great police leadership?** What research can tell us about the effectiveness of different leadership styles, competencies and behaviours. A rapid evidence, A report by the NPIA RAI Unit.
- Kodz, K and Campbell, I., 2010, '**What works in leadership development?** A rapid evidence review' A report by the NPIA RAI Unit.
- Wheller, L. and Morris, J., 2010, 'Evidence Reviews: **What works in Training, Behaviour Change and Implementing Guidance?**' A report by the NPIA RAI Unit.

For information, a brief description of the scope of each of the four REAs is set out in the table on the next page. The reports are available on-line (as referenced below) and include detailed methods sections and write-up of findings.

²⁶ Neyroud, P. (2011), 'A Review of Police Leadership and Training', report commissioned by the Home Secretary, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/

What works in leadership development?

This rapid evidence assessment synthesised international research evidence from the public sector, with the aim of drawing conclusions from robust evaluations of leadership development programmes. The REA found that published police sector research in this area is limited and no police specific evaluations were found that could offer more than perception level evidence. Therefore, the strongest conclusions related to leadership development in the public sector generally and no firm statements could be made about the extent to which these are relevant or differ for policing.

What works in training, behaviour change and to implement guidance?

The evidence assessments were conducted within a three week period, following systematic principles. The time constraints resulted in a tightly restricted scope, limited to published evidence for which electronic abstracts were available and contained within databases held by the National Police Library. Strict inclusion criteria were applied so that only the strongest available evidence was included; hence the focus of the searching was on systematic reviews, with the minimum requirement for inclusion of any individual studies being a pre-post test with comparison. The search did find some strong and promising evidence for 'what works'.

What makes great police leadership? (in terms of leadership styles, competencies and behaviours)

This REA synthesised findings from police specific research studies published in English between the period 1979 and 2009, which sought to measure the impact of different leadership styles, competencies or behaviours on subordinates or organisational outcomes. The search found the evidence base was limited and no robust experimental studies were identified. However, general conclusions could be drawn about where the current weight of evidence appears to lie.

The table on the next page presents a summary of the relevant key findings from the REAs. Significantly, there were no areas of divergence, between these findings and the general perceptions of the majority of KPI16 interview research participants.

REA focus	Relevant key findings				
Leadership Development	Leadership development programmes can be effective	Embed leadership development in organisational culture	Use a range of learning methods/ tailor approaches	Incorporate reflective learning methods effective.	Coaching and 360 degree feedback sessions
Training and behaviour change	Integrate training into routine practice Use multifaceted approaches	Classroom-based training alone not necessarily effective at improving practitioner's skills or changing behaviour. Use active educational approaches, more or rather than passive dissemination of guidelines.		Use simulation-based training. Provide feedback in conjunction with other support, eg, educational material	
Police Leadership – competencies, styles and behaviours	Situational leadership – adapting style to suit context and individuals	Leaders that most commonly use a 'transformational style' (i.e. seek to positively motivate followers in contrast to a authoritarian/ disciplinarian style) can be more positively viewed and may have more positive impacts on followers than those that don't.		Role-model good behaviours and practice active leadership (be visible and 'out in the field').	

Previous survey research on perceptions of the Step-up to ACPO

Hay Group, 2010, 'Stepping Up: Making the Move to ACPO A review of the demands and attractions of ACPO level roles and the way the police service manages talent into those roles' A report commissioned by ACPO and NPIA

Previous qualitative research on NSCAS services

Gifford, J. and Springett, N. (2010) Review of the National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS) – Prepared for the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), Roffey Park Institute