
Perceptions of PSNI Recruits Three Years After Probation

(Time 5 Report)

Results from Intakes 1 – 6



Report produced for PSNI

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Executive Summary

- (i) This report is the last of five research reports into the perceptions of new recruits. The study itself has spanned six years.
- (ii) The report contains results from a longitudinal study conducted with the first six intakes of new recruits to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). These officers joined the organisation between 4th November 2001 and 5th May 2002.
- (iii) The data presented represents the officers' perceptions three years after they have completed their probation period, referred to in this report as Time 5. The report also includes comparative data from Time 4, during the officers' post-foundation training and from Times 1, 2 & 3 where appropriate.
- (iv) This evaluation is officer centred and is complimentary to other evaluation work being carried out by Foundation Programmes.
- (v) The officers' (previously probationers) perceptions were explored in four areas using qualitative and quantitative data. The original sample of 297 officers was approached to participate in the study one last time. A 40% response rate was achieved. The four areas explored were:
 - Perceptions of the Learning Climate
 - Feelings of Job Satisfaction
 - Levels of Organisational Commitment and Career Aspirations
 - Attitudes to Diversity
- (vi) The term Learning Climate refers to how well an organisation promotes a learning environment and an atmosphere of continuous learning. The learning climate score at Time 5 was 36.88 on a scale, which ranges from 10-70. This score is slightly lower than that previously achieved at Time 4 (36.58) and is also below the range recommended for an effective learning culture (50-70). Throughout the study learning climate scores have gradually dropped. The only exception to this has been the tutorship period (Time 3) during which perceptions of the leaning climate temporarily became more positive only to fall again at the next intervention point (Time 4).

- (vii) Differences were found in the overall learning climate score based on gender, age and previous police experience. However, analysis of scores over time did not uncover a clear trend that any one group rated the learning climate higher or lower than any other group.
- (viii) The key factors that have consistently had a positive influence on the officers' perceptions of the learning climate throughout the study include the practical help available to them and the warmth and support of their colleagues and managers. The consistency of these findings over time would lead to the conclusion that officers work within a positive culture where colleagues and managers are friendly, trusting and willing to lend a hand.
- (ix) Data from the current intervention point has highlighted that with regard to continuous learning, personal responsibility and self-motivation are becoming increasingly important now that the officers are detached from the formal training environment and based in districts and departments.
- (x) Throughout the study the non-monetary rewards and recognition that the officers receive has been consistently rated poorly. Suggesting that there may be scope for managers to provide increased feedback to officers for a job well done. However, this result appears to conflict with positive results found on the same issue in the area of job satisfaction. Lastly, a new finding reveals that many of the officers do not feel encouraged to offer new ideas or experiment with new ways of doing things. If this result becomes a continuing trend it could become one of concern.
- (xi) Job satisfaction results have generally become less positive throughout this study, with the lowest results achieved at the current intervention point. However, across the study there have been consistent factors, which have contributed to the officers' feelings of job satisfaction, namely supportive colleagues and line management and the level of challenge and variety in an officers' role.
- (xii) Stress levels, which appears to be linked to the amount of administrative work an officer has to complete have also been consistently highlighted as areas of least satisfaction. Interview data suggests that often the amount of paperwork an officer must complete and the subsequent stress is often dependent on an officers' role.

- (xiii) Analysis of responses based on demographic variables highlights significant differences amongst respondents based on the officers' education, rank, age previous police experience and gender. These results did not reflect any trend in responses over time.
- (xiv) Organisational commitment measures the extent to which individuals buy into organisational goals and are motivated to work to achieve them. The commitment score at Time 5 was 16.29 on a scale that ranges from 6 (very high levels of commitment) to 30 (very low levels of commitment). Although this result indicates strong levels of commitment, it is less positive than that achieved at the last intervention point. Prior to the current intervention point commitment levels remained fairly constant. This change in levels of organisational commitment is explored in Section 6.7.
- (xv) Differences were found in the overall commitment score based on age and rank. Analysis of scores over time did not reveal any clear trends based on demographic variables.
- (xvi) Questionnaire and interview data indicates that the officers feel they fit in well to the organisation and that they plan to remain with PSNI until they retire. Friendships and being part of a team appear to be key to officers' feelings of organisational commitment.
- (xvii) Officers career aspirations and two snap-shots of officers' careers to date have been included in Section 6.5. Results indicate that already 16% of the original research group have already achieved promotion to the rank of Sergeant.
- (xviii) Responses under the heading of diversity remain fairly positive despite a slight drop in positive responses over time. Results portray an environment where officers are respectful of peoples' differences and see the protection of the human rights of others as a central to their role. Officers described their work environment as relaxed, where they can have a joke with colleagues but are aware of each other's boundaries. Although, throughout the study results have consistently indicated that many officers do not believe contentious issues can be openly discussed in the work environment. Interview data highlights that this situation can often be dependent on the people involved.

- (xix) A detailed breakdown of individuals who feel threatened or intimidated as a result of various personal factors is provided in Section 7.3. Although the majority of the results are positive there remains a small number of individuals who have indicated that they feel threatened or intimidated as a result of personal factors.
- (xx) Difference in responses to questionnaire items were found based on officers education, martial status and previous police experience. No consistent differences in response patterns were found over time.
- (xxi) A number of recommendations are suggested in Section 8 of the report. The overarching recommendation is that the current results are brought to the attention of officers and managers alike, in order that they can both take credit for the supportive working environment which they contribute to and also to raise awareness of the areas for improvement that have been highlighted throughout this study.
- (xxii) The Occupational Psychologist on this project will endeavour to share these findings with as many key individuals throughout the organisation as possible in order to initiate debate and the process of addressing the issues uncovered throughout this study.

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1 Introduction

This longitudinal study has been conceived and designed by the Occupational Psychology unit in collaboration with Foundation Faculty. The study began in November 2001 and has been running ever since gathering data at various points in time over the last six years. The current report details the final intervention point and completes the study.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the perceptions of a specific group of new recruits towards key aspects of the PSNI organisation, the training environment and organisational climate. To achieve the project aim, the following objectives have been set:

- To measure the recruits' perceptions of the **learning climate** that exists within the organisation.
- To assess the recruits' **satisfaction** levels with key components of the job itself and the training provided.
- To explore the extent to which the new recruits are **committed** to PSNI, its values and goals, and are motivated to work to achieve these goals.
- To assess the recruits' perceptions of how the organisation manages and promotes **diversity** in working practices and service provision.
- To monitor any **changes in perceptions over time** as the recruits become established in their roles throughout the organisation.
- To monitor any significant **differences in perceptions due to demographic variables** including gender, marital status, age, community background, family police connections, previous experience of working with PSNI, level of education and work location.

This report outlines the key findings from the fifth and final evaluation of the first six intakes of new recruits to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, referred to as Time 5. Throughout this report this group of participants are referred to as 'officers' or 'the officers'. The evaluation was conducted as many of the targeted group enter their fourth year as a fully trained officer. The study covers courses 1-2 of 2001 and Courses 1-4 of 2002. All of these individuals were recruited during the first campaign run by Consensia from February-September 2001.

2 Method

A questionnaire survey was conducted with the officers, a copy of which is contained in the Appendices. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to all 294 of the target group to complete in their place of work. A 40% response rate was achieved in the questionnaire survey with a total of 117 respondents. Questionnaire returns were anonymous, however a breakdown of biographical information of the whole group is given below. Data was not collected on respondents' specific role. It may be useful to gather this information if this study is replicated in the future.

Total group = 117 Officers			
Age	18-24: 2% 25-30: 29% 31-40: 60% 41+: 9%	Community background	Protestant: 50% Roman Catholic: 50%
Gender	Male: 67% Female: 33%	Previous police experience	Yes: 18% (13%FTR, 1%PTR, 4% other) No: 82%
Education	GCSE/NVQ: 22% A Level & higher: 78%	Marital status	Single/sep/div: 34% Married/cohabit: 66%
Ethnic origin	White: 100% Non-white: 0%	Disability	Yes: 2 People No: 114 People (Missing: 1)
Family member previously served	Yes: 35% No: 65%	Rank	Constable: 84% Sergeant: 16%

Table 2.1 Summary of biographical information from questionnaire sample

Interviews were also carried out with a sample of the officers. Interviewees were recruited on a voluntary basis at the beginning of the study in 2001. The sample is broadly representative of the population. The same group of volunteers have been invited to interview at each intervention point in the study. On this occasion 11 officers participated in interviews.

Sample = 11 Officers	
Gender	Males: 6 Females: 5
Community Background	Protestant / Other: 4 Roman Catholic: 7
Age	Minimum age: 44yrs Maximum age: 27yrs
Previous Police Experience	Yes: 2 No: 9

Table 2.2 Summary of interviewees' biographical information

3 **Headline Results**

The study has generated a wealth of information. The main findings presented in this report are classified under four headings:

- Perceptions of the Learning Climate in PSNI
- Feelings of Job Satisfaction
- Levels of Organisational Commitment
- Attitudes to Diversity

In each area the quantitative results from the questionnaire survey are presented initially and supplemented, where appropriate, with qualitative data from interviews. Also included under the four headings are the results of analysis of all the survey results across time.

4 Perceptions of Learning Climate

4.1 Introduction

A learning organisation is one, which aims to generate a culture and climate of continuous learning among its members. Perceptions of the learning climate within the PSNI were measured in this study using the 10-items contained within the Learning Habit Questionnaire (Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1997). These items allow PSNI to analyse the extent to which important factors, conducive to a healthy learning environment, are perceived to be present within the organisation. The factors measured include the physical environment, availability of learning resources, active encouragement to learn, warmth and support, and practical help available from colleagues.

The output of the questionnaire is two fold. Firstly, it provides an overall learning climate score. Secondly, it produces frequency scores of ratings on individual questionnaire items.

4.2 Learning Climate Score

Research based on the Learning Habit Questionnaire recommends that learning organisations should achieve a mean score that lies between 50-70, on a scale where 10 is the minimum score and 70 is the maximum score.

The overall mean score based on results from Time 5 is 36.88. This score is below the recommended range for an effective learning climate (50-70). However, it is also almost identical to the learning climate score achieved at Time 4 (36.58) almost 4 years ago.

A review of the learning climate scores over time, illustrated in Figure 4.1, highlights that the officers perceptions of the learning climate were most positive at Time 1, 2 & 3, when officers were in the structured learning environment of the training college or tutorship. Perceptions of the learning climate have fallen as officers moved into a more independent role in the districts. However, the consistency between the learning climate score at Time 4 and Time 5, appear to reflect a plateau in perceptions, as the officers working environment remains constant ie: both sets of data were gathered from officers when they were based in districts. Section 4.3 provides more detail on the key factors that have contributed to a drop in positive perceptions.

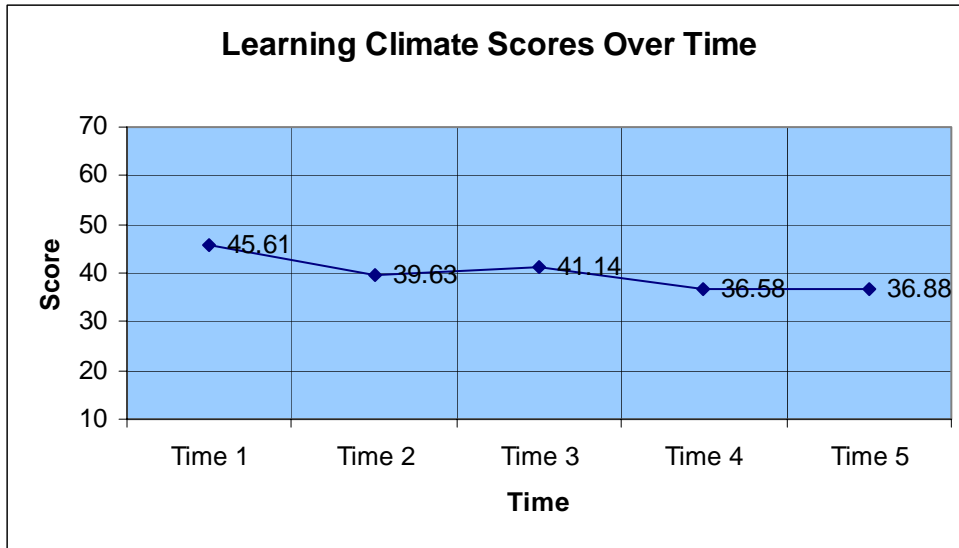


Figure 4.1 Learning climate scores over time

Analysis of the learning climate score broken down by respondents' demographical information indicates some variance between groups. Females (39.35) scored the learning climate slightly higher than males (35.10). Younger officers aged 18-24 scored the learning climate higher than all other age groups (38.00). Lastly, officers with previous police experience tended to score the learning climate higher than their colleagues with no previous police experience.

Analysis of learning climate scores by demographics over time does not reveal any clear trend that any one group tended to rate the learning climate higher or lower than any other group.

4.3 Ratings on Individual Questionnaire Items

Ten learning climate items were rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 = poor, 7 = excellent). The percentage of officers awarding particular ratings to each of the dimensions is given in Table 4.1.

4.3.1 Positively Rated Items

Positive responses on individual items have dropped since Time 4 for the majority of items.

The top two rated questionnaire items at Time 5 were:

1. Practical help available (62% rated this item as good to excellent)
2. Warmth and Support (56% rated this item as good to excellent)

Questionnaire Item	Good to Excellent	Average	Very poor to poor
<p>1. Physical Environment. The amount and quality of space and privacy afforded to people; the temperature, noise and comfort levels.</p>	28%	17%	55%
<p>2. Learning Resources Numbers, quality and availability of training and development staff, books, films, training packages, IT facilities, equipment, etc.</p>	26%	15%	59%
<p>3. Encouragement to learn The extent to which people feel encouraged to have ideas, take risks, experiment and learn new ways of doing old tasks.</p>	20%	23%	57%
<p>4. Communications Generally speaking how open and free is the flow of information? Do people express ideas and opinions easily and openly?</p>	33%	21%	46%
<p>5. Non-Monetary rewards & recognition How well rewarded are people for effort? Is recognition given for good work or are people punished and blamed?</p>	13%	16%	71%
<p>6. Conformity The extent to which people are expected to conform to rules, norms, regulations and policies rather than think for themselves.</p>	32%	27%	41%
<p>7. Value placed on ideas How much are ideas, opinions and suggestions sought out, encouraged and valued?</p>	22%	22%	56%
<p>8. Practical help available The extent to which people help each other, lend a hand, offer skills, knowledge and support.</p>	62%	17%	21%
<p>9. Warmth and Support How friendly are people in PSNI? Do people support, trust and like one another?</p>	56%	21%	23%
<p>10. Standards The emphasis placed upon quality in all things; the extent to which people set challenging standards for themselves and each other</p>	36%	28%	36%

Table 4.1 Summary of Learning Climate responses at Time 5

Over time the two areas of Practical Help Available and Warmth and Support, have consistently been highlighted as being key contributors to a positive learning climate for officers. It is encouraging to see this trend over time and it would lead to the conclusion that a supportive culture exists, not just in the training college but also in the districts. Results would indicate that this culture is one where officers are friendly, trusting and willing to lend a hand to help and support each other.

Responses from interviewees align with these quantitative findings and provide further insight into the existing learning climate culture.

The majority of interviewees indicated that they are getting on well in their current roles and are enjoying working in districts. When asked specifically about the extent to which they are continuing to learn on the job, interviewees highlighted personal responsibility and self-motivation as key factors in ensuring they continue to learn and grow in their current role. Similar to the quantitative findings, officers also highlighted their colleagues as key in helping them to maximise their learning.

“Everybody helps each other whenever they need it. They (experienced officers) have a wealth of knowledge.”

Constable, Roads Policing

Interview results also highlighted two practical issues, which can on occasion limit opportunities to learn. Specifically, a high number of conflicting pressures within the officer’s role can make it difficult for officers to find the time to develop. Additionally, interviewees outlined that much of officers training resources and useful police information is now held on Policenet. Often, officers are unable or not authorized to take this information home for review. Hence, these learning opportunities must take place in the workplace where there is access to a common terminal. However, a number of officers have stated that after a long days work they are less inclined to remain in work to review learning resources.

4.3.2 Negatively Rated Items

Analysis of questionnaire responses reveals a number of areas that a majority of officers rated as poor or very poor. Overall negative responses have generally increased. In fact, the highest percentage of negative responses were achieved during this intervention point of the study than ever before.

The questionnaire items to receive the highest percentage of negative responses are:

1. Non-monetary Rewards & Recognition (71% rated this item as poor or very poor)
2. Learning Resources (59% rated this item as poor or very poor)
3. Encouragement to Learn (57% rated this item as poor or very poor)

The questionnaire item non-monetary rewards and recognition has featured as a negatively scored item both at this intervention point and the last (Time 4). Interview data provides some insight into this area, but does not clarify exactly why this item has received such a high number of negative response. In response to the question ‘are people rewarded for their efforts or blamed for mistakes?’ interviewees stated that if officers have done well it is generally recognised. This may be done by a line manager mentioning their good work at a team briefing or by being spoken to personally by their supervisor. Conversely, officers indicated that if they have made a mistake and it is their fault, they would get the blame. The general theme from interviewees’ responses was that people are rewarded for their efforts and blamed for their mistakes in equal measure, although this can be dependent on an officers supervisor.

The item relating to Learning Resources was also rated as poor or very poor by a large percentage of officers. This item relates specifically to the number, quality and availability of development staff, books, films, training packages, IT facilities and equipment. Over time this item has received increasingly negative scores. Particularly since officers have left the training college and are based in districts. As mentioned previously, the officers best learning resource in the districts appears to be their colleagues.

Lastly, results indicate that the majority of officers rated the item Encouragement to Learn as poor or very poor. This is the highest negative response this item has had since the study began. Indicating that the majority of officers do not feel encouraged to offer new ideas, take risks or experiment with new ways of doing things.

4.4 Demographical Differences

Analysis of individual questionnaire items based on demographic variables has highlighted significant differences among three different groups.

- Officers with a disability rated the item Conformity more positively than officers who did not have a disability.
- Officers who had previous police experience rated the amount of warmth and support available to them more positively than officers with no previous police experience.
- Male officers rated the physical environment more negatively than their female counterparts.
- A higher number of female officers rated the amount of learning resources in districts as good or excellent compared to male officers.

Analysis of demographical differences over time, has not uncovered any pattern in responses from any specific demographic group.

4.5 Analysis of Results over Time

As this is the last intervention point for this study it is deemed appropriate to examine the Learning Climate results over time to uncover any specific trends.

A review of the learning climate scores over time indicates that at no point during the study did responses from officers achieve a Learning Climate score within the recommended 'learning organisation' range (50-70) despite the great efforts of all the various training teams and personnel involved.

Analysis of specific questionnaire items reveals that the items relating to the practical help available to officers from colleagues and the warmth and support they provide have received consistently high positive ratings. This trend would indicate that in both the college and the districts there appears to be a trusting, supportive and friendly work environment. However, the items relating to the physical environment, non-monitory rewards and recognition and learning resources have consistently received negative ratings.

Positive responses to items have tended to fall throughout the study. The one exception has been during the tutorship when positive responses increased, only to fall again when officers begin to work independently in the districts. This finding is reflected both in the individual

questionnaire items and in the overall Learning Climate score, which has been steadily dropping at each intervention point with the exception of the tutorship period.

From these falling results it could be concluded that as officers have moved from Garnerville through their tutorship to finally settle in the districts & departments, they have found the environment in which they work progressively less conducive to continuous learning, with the exception of the tutorship period.

However, it is suggested that this gradual drop in positive responses to the learning climate could almost be expected. The training programme for new recruits guides the officer through 21 weeks of intensive training in the Police College, onto their tutorship where officers work semi-independently shadowing a more experienced officers and finally onto an independent role as an officer based in a district. As such, the training process is designed to gradually reduce the formal input as officers become increasingly competent. Hence, it would be expected that there would be a difference between Learning Climate perceptions from officers when they were based in the Police College with a formal training input and when they are in the districts where training is often less formal. This suggestion is further supported by the fact there appears to be a plateau in perceptions of learning climate between the intervention points Time 4 and Time 5 which both collected data from officers while they were based in districts.

5 Feelings of Job Satisfaction

5.1 Introduction

The second part of the questionnaire measured levels of job satisfaction among officers. Questions were derived from a review of established job satisfaction questionnaires as well as data gathered from research into morale and motivation within Police Services.

5.2 Ratings on Individual Questionnaire Items

Twenty-one job satisfaction items were rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied). The percentage of officers indicating levels of job satisfaction with various aspects of their work is provided in Table 5.1. The responses are based on 117 student officers from the first six intakes.

5.2.1 Positively Rated Items

Apart from two exceptions, participants' ratings of individual job satisfaction items have generally become less positive, indicating a reduction in job satisfaction. However, there were still a number of items, which received high positive ratings. The top three rated items were:

1. The presence of supportive colleagues (78% of participants satisfied or very satisfied)
2. The help and support available from your immediate manager (76% of participants satisfied or very satisfied)
3. The levels of challenge and variety in your job (72% of participants satisfied or very satisfied)

These top three rated items are the same ones that received high ratings at the last point in the study (Time 4). This consistency across time gives credence to the findings, which are further supported by qualitative data.

Job satisfaction results highlight the presence of supportive colleagues as an important contributor to an officers working environment. This result is very similar to the findings under the heading of learning climate where officers highlighted the warmth and support of their colleagues and practical help they offered as important aspects of the learning environment. These combined results highlight the importance of colleagues in the working environment.

Questionnaire Item	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied
11.The financial rewards you receive for doing your job	38%	20%	42%
12.The competitiveness of your pay and benefits when compared with people of your own age in other organisations	36%	22%	42%
13.The feedback you receive on your performance	44%	23%	33%
14.The recognition you get from your immediate manager for a job well-done	69%	14%	17%
15.Opportunities for career progression & promotion	56%	23%	21%
16 Your job security	71%	21%	8%
17. Your ability to do the job without undue stress	27%	21%	52%
18. Your ability to balance work and family/personal life	33%	28%	39%
19. Your satisfaction with everyday work	53%	19%	28%
20. The levels of challenge and variety in your job	72%	12%	16%
21. The administrative work required of you	15%	6%	79%
22.Opportunities for personal growth within the job	39%	33%	28%
23. Your ability to influence events	27%	35%	38%
24. Freedom and autonomy to adopt your own approach	33%	33%	34%
25. The help and support available from your immediate manager	76%	14%	10%
26. The extent to which your manager listens to and respects your ideas	70%	17%	13%
27. Your manager’s commitment to implementing change	56%	36%	8%
28. The organisations readiness to embrace change	36%	36%	28%
29. The presence of supportive colleagues	78%	15%	7%
30. Opportunities to effectively serve the public	46%	20%	34%
31. Freedom to challenge colleagues and supervisors when you feel it is appropriate	51%	28%	21%

Table 5.1: Summary of job satisfaction response at Time 5.

Results indicate that officers are very satisfied with the help and support available to them from their immediate manager. Analysis of results over time provides a little more insight into this finding. Although the majority of job satisfaction items received less positive ratings than the last intervention point in the study (Time 4), two items, which relate to management, have achieved an increase in positive ratings. Specifically, officers indicated that they were more satisfied during this intervention point than the last with the recognition they receive from their manager for a job well done and the extent to which their manager listens to and respects their ideas. This results is very different to that found under the heading Learning Climate. From these job satisfaction results alone, it could be concluded that the recognition officers receive for a job well done and the extent to which officers feel listened to by management are both having a positive impact on how supported officers feel by their immediate manager. However, further exploration of this finding would be necessary to uncover why there is an apparent contradiction with similar results found in the area of Learning Climate.

Questionnaire results reveal that a large majority of officers were very satisfied with the levels of challenge and variety in the jobs. Analysis of the qualitative data provides additional insight into what officers find to be the most enjoyable and satisfying aspects of their work. During interviews, officers indicated that some of the most enjoyable aspects of their work was dealing with the public, meeting new people and knowing that they had done their best. Officers also revealed that getting convictions or a breakthrough in a case was also particularly satisfying.

“You get satisfaction from dealing with the public, updating them and knowing you have done your best”

Beat and Patrol Constable

5.2.2 Negatively Rated Items

Overall, results indicate that negative ratings given to individual job satisfaction items have increased for most items. The items to receive the highest negative ratings overall are:

1. The administrative work required of you (79% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied)
2. Your ability to do the job without undue stress (52% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied)

Both of these items have consistently been highlighted throughout the study as areas of least satisfaction for officers. Qualitative results provide a little more insight into these findings.

Interviewee data aligns with the questionnaire results with the majority of officers stating that the amount of paperwork they have to complete is substantial. However, interviewees also highlighted that the amount of administrative paperwork that they have to complete is often dependent on the role that they are in, with response roles having the highest amount.

With regard to the establishment of Occurrence and Case Management Teams (OCMT's), the majority of interviewees thought they were a good idea. However, some officers were uncertain of the added benefit of their establishment in terms of reducing an officer's administrative workload, as previous to the OCMT's officers believed that Criminal Justice Units (CJU's) provided similar support for officers.

Interview data also provided more insight into the issue of stress for officers. Interviewees highlighted how their job can be stressful at times. Similar to the above results relating to administrative work, officers outlined that certain roles, which included a large amount of paperwork, such as uniform roles, tended to cause higher stress levels.

“It's fine. Now and again it's stressful but you're able to do your job most of the time.”

Constable, Neighbourhood Policing Team

It appears that both stress and paperwork are inextricably linked in the findings of this study, with qualitative data highlighting that high levels of paperwork can lead to increased feelings of stress. However, it was believed until now that the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) that officers had to complete during their probation period was having a negative impact on the total amount of paperwork officers had to complete, subsequently having a negative effect on results relating to stress and administration. But at this point in the study officers no longer have a PDP to complete. Hence we can assume that the high negative responses in relation to administration can only be contributed to the amount of paperwork officers complete as part of their daily duties.

Finally. It is worth noting that there have been particularly large increases in negative ratings for the items:

- Opportunities for career progression and promotion

- Opportunities for personal growth within the job
- Your ability to balance work and family/personal life
- Your satisfaction with everyday work

It is difficult to interpret these results without further information. However, it could be proposed that as officers become increasingly experienced in their roles they are starting to consider other options for development and progress but are finding the opportunities to achieve this are less than ideal. This may be due to the fact that the severance programme for experienced officers is coming to a close, which will probably lead to less promotion opportunities for officers in the future.

5.3 Demographical Differences

Analysis of individual questionnaire items based on demographic variables has highlighted significant differences amongst respondents based on their education, rank, age previous police experience and gender.

- Officers educated up to the level of NVQ were more dissatisfied with the financial rewards they received for their job than officers who had higher academic qualifications.
- Sergeants were more satisfied with the financial rewards they receive for doing their job, their opportunities for career progression and promotion, the competitiveness of their pay and benefits and the levels of challenge and variety in their job than constables.
- Constables were more satisfied with the help and support available from their line manager than sergeants.
- Younger officers aged 18-24 were more satisfied with their ability to do their job without undue stress and with their opportunities to effectively serve the public than their older colleagues.
- Officers with previous police experience were more satisfied with the financial rewards received for doing their job, their ability to do their job without undue stress, their ability to balance work life and family/personal life and their opportunities to effectively serve the public than officers with no previous police experience.
- Female officers were more satisfied with the financial rewards they receive for doing their job, the competitiveness of their pay and benefits, their opportunities for career progression and promotion, their ability to balance work and family/personal life, their ability to influence events, their freedom and autonomy to adopt their own

approach and the organisations readiness to embrace change than their male counterparts.

The above findings based on demographic differences do not mirror any of the results found at the last point in the study (Time 4). The influence that individual officers demographic background has on their responses to questionnaire items continues to vary and is reflected in the fact that analysis of demographical differences over time does not uncover any specific trends.

5.4 Analysis of Results Over Time

Analysis of job satisfaction results over time reveals that levels of job satisfaction have gradually dropped.

Questionnaire items relating to the presence of supportive colleagues, help and support from line management and the levels of challenge and variety in an officer's role have consistently been highlighted as key factors in levels of job satisfaction. These results are not unlike the items that were found to be consistently important for positive a learning climate. Hence, it can be concluded that a challenging role among supportive colleagues and managers appears to be key to feelings of job satisfaction among these officers.

Analysis of results over time also reveals some negative items, which officers have consistently indicated that they are dissatisfied with namely, administration and levels of stress. As highlighted previously, these two items appear to be linked with high levels of administration contributing to high levels of stress in the work place.

6 Levels of Organisational Commitment and Career Aspirations

6.1 Introduction

Organisational commitment is a relatively new concept, which has attracted a lot of research in recent years. This is primarily due to the influence it can have on variables such as absenteeism and voluntary turnover. Individuals who are highly committed to an organisation i.e. who buy into the organisation's goals and are highly involved in organisational life have been found to be more likely to continue working with the organisation and to have lower levels of absenteeism. At a time when PSNI is trying to reduce absenteeism and retain staff from all sections of the community, it was deemed appropriate to include a measure of organisational commitment within the study. As the current data was conducted anonymously, it provides a picture of organisational commitment across the whole sample group. However, if the study is replicated in the future it could prove insightful to identify participants in order to marry their commitment scores with their absenteeism record. This could provide a comprehensive picture of the effect of organisational commitment on absenteeism.

Commitment was measured using well-researched psychological scales. Sample items included statements such as 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation' and 'I do not feel like part of the family at my organisation'.

6.2 Organisational Commitment Score

The commitment scale used in this study provides both an overall commitment score and percentage scores on individual items. The scale for the overall commitment score ranges from 6 (extremely high levels of commitment) to 30 (very low levels of commitment). At this point in the research, the overall commitment score is 16.29.

This score is less positive than the commitment score at Time 4 (14.93). Figure 6.1 illustrates the commitment scores from the entire study. The scores have remained fairly constant, although between the current and last intervention point (Time 4) the overall commitment score has begun to change and become less positive.

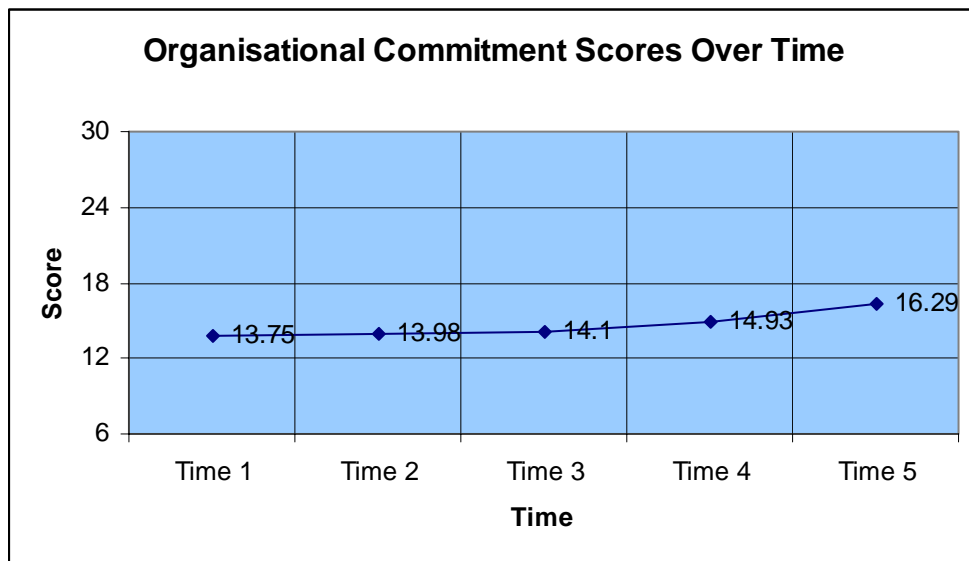


Figure 6.1: Organisational Commitment Scores Over Time
(Lower scores indicate higher levels of organisational commitment)

6.3 Demographical Differences in Overall Commitment Score

Table 6.1 lists the different organisational commitments scores for various sub-groups. The largest differences in levels of commitment appear to be as a result of age and rank. Analysis reveals that respondents aged 18-24yrs have lower levels of commitment than any other age group and that Sergeants have a higher level of commitment than Constables.

Analysis of commitment scores over time does not identify any one demographic group as having consistently higher or lower commitment scores than another group. However, it is worth noting the big difference in the commitment score for younger officers aged 18-24 which is a lot higher, indicating lower levels of commitment, compared to their older colleagues. At all previous intervention points this group of respondents had achieved commitment scores fairly congruent with other age groups. Why at this stage of their career are younger officers displaying less organisational commitment? Is it because younger officers no longer view a career in the police as a job for life? This study is unable to answer the question, but it is one, which may warrant further investigation.

Commitment Score			
(Note: lower scores indicate higher levels of commitment)			
Male:	16.42	Police experience:	16.81
Female:	16.00	No experience:	16.25
Married/co-habiting:	16.62	Family history:	17.05
Single/sep/div/widowed:	15.64	No family history:	16.03
Protestants:	16.49	Up to GCSE/NVQ:	16.20
Roman Catholics:	16.13	A Level or higher:	16.33
Age Group:		Rank	
18-24yrs:	19.00	Constable	16.68
25-30yrs:	15.76	Sergeant	14.56
31-40	16.49		
41+yrs:	16.18		

Table 6.1: Commitment scores for different demographic groups

6.4 Ratings on Individual Questionnaire Items

As previously outlined, the questionnaire used provides an overall commitment score and also percentage scores on individual questionnaire items. The percentages of officers agreeing or disagreeing with various questionnaire items are provided in Table 6.2.

6.4.1 Positive Commitment Responses

Analysis reveals that positive responses to individual commitment items have fallen slightly over the time of this study. Indicating a gradual drop in respondents' feelings of organisational commitment. However, results still remain fairly positive and there are a number of specific items, outlined below, which have achieved high ratings.

1. Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part (69% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
2. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organisation succeed. (65% of respondents agree or strongly agree)
3. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation (60% of respondents agree or strongly agree)

Questionnaire Item	Agree / strongly agree	Undecided	Disagree / strongly disagree
32. I would be happy to spent the rest of my career with this organisation.	60%	25%	14%
33. I really feel as if the organisations problems are my own.	29%	21%	48%
34. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the organisation.	24%	19%	56%
35. I do not feel emotionally attached to the organisation.	27%	25%	47%
36. I do not feel like part of the family at my organisation.	27%	26%	45%
37. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	56%	19%	23%
38. I find that my values and the organisations values are very similar.	36%	29%	33%
39. I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for.	35%	15%	49%
40. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this org succeed.	65%	19%	15%
41. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation.	50%	21%	28%
42. Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.	7%	21%	69%
43. Taking everything into account, I am optimistic about the future of policing in Northern Ireland.	42%	35%	21%

Table 6.2: Summary of organisational commitment response at Time 5

Due to missing data some of the above responses to questionnaire items are incomplete.

These three questionnaire items have consistently been the most positively rated items throughout the entire study. Indicating that officers are content with their decision to join PSNI, plan to remain with the organisation and are willing to go the extra mile to help the organisation succeed.

“I’m proud of what I’m doing.”

Constable, Head Quarters Department

Interview data provides further insight into officers’ feelings of organisational commitment. Respondents stated how they feel they fit in well to the organisation and plan to remain with the organisation for their entire career. Friendships and being part of a team appear to be key to officer’s feelings of commitment. This finding is not unlike the results found in both the learning climate and job satisfaction sections of the study.

“What probably helps me is the support from other people, being part of a team and knowing my surroundings and colleagues.”

Custody Sergeant

6.4.2 Low Commitment Responses

The two questionnaire items to receive the highest negative responses were:

1. I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for (49% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
2. I really feel as if the organisations problems are my own (48% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)

Although these are the same two items, which received high negative responses at the last intervention point of the study, qualitative data relating to organisational commitment remains positive and does not concur with these results or provide further insight.

6.5 Career Aspirations

For the first time in this study, it has been possible to collect data at a time when all the participants have completed their probation period and are therefore eligible to apply for promotion. As a result, data was collected to capture respondents' actions and intentions regarding promotion and career development.

Results clearly indicate that a large majority of officers (62%) have already applied for promotion. Furthermore, 82% of respondents intend on applying for promotion in the future. Already, a large number of respondents have achieved promotion with 16% of them working as sergeants, one of which is performing the role of acting inspector.

Questionnaire Item	Yes	No
57. Have you ever applied for promotion (OSPRE Part 1)?	67%	33%
58. Do you intent on applying for promotion (OSPRE Part 1 & 2) in the future?	82%	18%

Table 6.3: Summary of responses to relating to promotion at Time 5

Interview data provides insight into to the career paths of officers to date. Below are snapshots of the career paths of two different officers who were the first officers to join PSNI six years ago.

Officer A

Demographics:

Officer A is male and from a Protestant / other background. He was aged 22 when he joined as a student officer in November 2001. Officer A was single when he joined training. He is now married and he and his wife are expecting their first child.

Career Path:

Officer A began his probation period in Response in West Belfast. He then moved to a Proactive Crime Team for two years. He successfully achieved promotion and became a Response Sergeant in South Belfast. During his time in South Belfast Officer A also performed the roles of Custody Sergeant and Neighbourhood Sergeant. Officer A has successfully completed OSPRE Part 1 and 2. He has to wait until October 2008 until he has completed two years at the rank of Sergeant before achieving promotion. He is currently an Acting Inspector in Headquarters.

Future Plans:

Officer A intends to apply to the Higher Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) once he is confirmed in the rank of Inspector. He hopes to remain working in PSNI until his retirement. In response to the question: *To what extent do you feel you belong to the organisation?* He responded “110%. I don’t know what I would do if I left the job.”

Officer B

Demographics:

Officer B is male and from a Roman Catholic background. He was 30 years old and married when he joined PSNI as a student officer in December 2001. He and his wife have recently had their first child.

Career Path:

Officer B completed his probation period in Response in Ballymoney and he remained working there for five years. A year ago he moved to Roads Policing in Steeple where is currently working as a Constable. Officer B has applied for OSPRE part 1 twice but was unsuccessful.

Future Plans:

Officer B still intends on applying for OSPRE and promotion in the future, but wants to wait a year before applying again due to the recent birth of his daughter. However, Officer B has no plans to move beyond the rank of Sergeant. He states his reasons for this are, “*I don’t want to get lost or have a desk job. The further up you go the more you lose touch.*” Officer B wants to remain in Traffic and has no desire to go back to Response, as he doesn’t wish to be on the “*front line*”. Officer B enjoys his job and plans to “*be here until the end.*”

6.6 Demographical Differences

Analysis of individual questionnaire items based on demographic variables has highlighted significant differences amongst respondents based on disability, family history, rank, marital status and gender. They are outlined below:

- Officers without a disability agreed with the item ‘I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organisation be successful’ more than officers who had a disability.
- A higher number of officers who had a disability agreed with the item ‘Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part’ than officers who did not have a disability.
- A larger number of respondents who did not have a family connection with PSNI agreed with the item ‘I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for’ than respondents who did have a family connection.
- A higher number of sergeants than constables agreed with the items ‘I find that my values and the organisations values are very similar,’ and ‘ I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organisation be successful.’
- Significantly more single respondents agreed with the statement ‘taking everything into account, I am optimistic about the future of policing in Northern Ireland,’ than their married counterparts.
- Significantly more males than females agreed with the statement ‘deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part.’

These findings do not parallel any of the findings on demographical differences found at the last intervention point in the study (Time 4) or any of the earlier stages of the study. Hence, it can be concluded that there are no clear and consistent differences in the response patterns between the various sub-groups of respondents.

6.7 Analysis of Results Over Time

Analysis of respondents’ organisational commitment scores throughout the study indicates a strong and sustained sense of commitment among the officers. A finding which is further supported by interview data.

However, results also show that over time there has been a gradual increase in the overall organisational commitment score, indicating a lowering in commitment levels. More

specifically, this increase is most apparent at this and the last intervention point when officers have moved from the training environment to working more independently. It could be concluded from this finding that as officers become established in the districts they feel less commitment to the organisation.

However, a slight lowering of commitment levels would almost be expected, as most individuals who join a new organisation tend to start with particularly high levels of commitment. This would particularly be the case for student officers many of whom would have waited over a year from application to commencement of training and many of whom have also given up successful careers to join PSNI. Hence, it can only be assumed that these individuals had particularly high levels of commitment when they joined. However, it is often the case that feelings of organisational commitment level out as individuals become more familiar with the organisation and both the positive and negative parts of their new role. It is suggested that this 'levelling out' is what is happening with the participants in this study and which is reflected in their scores.

7 Attitudes to Diversity

7.1 Introduction

The items for this section of the questionnaire were designed based on an analysis of previous cultural surveys and a review of the pertinent diversity issues impacting on the organisation at present. The results are given below in Table 7.1.

Questionnaire Item	Agree/ strongly agree	Undecided	Disagree / strongly disagree
44. The values of the organisation adequately emphasise the need to treat others fairly and with respect	80%	12%	6%
45. Overall, I think PSNI is an organisation, which takes equal opportunities seriously.	71%	17%	10%
46. On a day-to-day basis, I feel my colleagues at work treat me with respect and dignity.	91%	6%	1%
47. I enjoy a harmonious working environment and atmosphere at PSNI.	76%	18%	4%
48. I see protection of human rights as a fundamental part of my job.	83%	13%	2%
49. My immediate work colleagues are committed to treating all members of the public fairly.	91%	4%	3%
50. My immediate supervisors are committed to actively promoting and valuing diversity in the workplace.	83%	12%	3%
51. The organisation talks a lot about diversity but rarely does anything about it.	13%	25%	61%
52. The physical environment is sufficiently neutral in terms of not promoting a particular political or religious perspective	81%	14%	3%
53. There are aspects of the physical or working environment that I find intimidating or offensive.	11%	5%	82%
54. Contentious issues are openly explored and debated in a non-threatening manner.	39%	32%	27%
55. Harassment of any kind is not tolerated in this organisation.	60%	21%	17%

Table 7.1: Summary of diversity response at Time 5

Due to missing data some of the above responses to questionnaire items are incomplete.

7.2 Positive Results

Responses to diversity questionnaire items remain positive portraying an environment where officers are respectful of peoples' differences both within the organisation and externally among the public. The items that received the highest positive ratings are listed below:

1. On a day-to-day basis, I feel my colleagues at work treat me with respect and dignity. (91% agreed or strongly agreed with this item)
2. My immediate work colleagues are committed to treating all members of the public fairly. (91% agreed or strongly agreed with this item)
3. I see the protection of human rights as a fundamental part of my job. (83% agreed or strongly agreed with this item)
4. My immediate supervisors are committed to actively promoting and valuing diversity in the workplace. (83% agreed or strongly agreed with this item)

Analysis of results over time reveal that the questionnaire items relating to colleagues treating each other with respect and dignity and seeing the protection of human rights as a fundamental part of an officers job, have consistently received high positive ratings. Indicating officers enjoy a respectful and positive work environment where they see the need to protect the human rights of others as central to their role.

Qualitative data further supports these positive findings. Interviewees described their work environment as relaxed and not overly politically correct, where they can joke with colleagues but are aware of each other's boundaries.

“There is banter within groups. But we don't cross any lines.”

Constable, Neighbourhood Policing

7.3 Barriers to a Diverse Environment

Responses to diversity questionnaire items remain fairly positive, although analysis over time reveals that there has been a small reduction in positive responses.

However, one particular questionnaire item has consistently received low positive ratings compared to other diversity items. The item “contentious issues are openly explored and debated in a non-threatening manner,” received its lowest rating yet at the current intervention

point with only 39% of respondents agreeing with the statement. Qualitative data provides some insight into this finding revealing that contentious issues are often discussed among officers, although it can be dependent on the people involved.

Table 7.2 outlines the results from a final question in the area of diversity, which asked officers if they felt under threat or intimidated due to a range of factors. The data in Table 7.2 is presented in frequencies rather than percentages for clarity. The total number of respondents was 117.

Results indicate that the majority of officers do not feel threatened or intimidated as a result of their background. However, for a few officers their experience is different. Specifically, for the majority of officers who have indicated that they feel threatened or intimidated it is as a result of their gender, religious belief, political opinion or ethnic origin.

Interview results regarding officers' experiences reflect similar findings to those below, with the majority of officers having positive experiences. Although, it can't be ignored that for a minority of officers there are occasions where people are not tolerant of difference and they behave in a way that is threatening or intimidating to others.

I feel under threat or intimidated because of my:	Agree / strongly agree	Undecided	Disagree / strongly disagree	Not Applicable / Incomplete
Religious belief	7 (3 P, 4 RC)	9 (3 P, 6 RC)	96 (50 P, 46 RC)	5
Political opinion	7 (5 P, 2 RC)	7 (3 P, 4 RC)	98 (48 P, 50 RC)	5
Gender	12 (8 M, 4 F)	9 (3 M, 6 F)	95 (67 M, 28 F)	1
Marital status	6 (5 Single, 1 Married)	5 (2 Single, 3 Married)	104 (31 Single, 73 Married)	2
Ethnic origin	7	41	68	1
Sexual orientation	1	5	110	1
Disability	1	4	61	51

Table 7.2: Summary of variables contributing to students' feelings of intimidation at Time 5.

Figures provided reflect the number of individual responses.

7.4 Demographical Differences

Detailed analysis of officers' responses to diversity questionnaire items has identified differences in responses based on officers' education, marital status, and previous police experience. Below is an outline of the items where these differences lie.

- Significantly more officers who were educated to an A-level standard or higher agreed with the statements *'I see the protection of human rights as a fundamental part of my job,'* more than officers with less qualifications.
- More officers who were educated to the level of NVQ agreed with the statement *'Contentious issues are openly explored and debated in a non-threatening manner,'* than officers with higher qualifications.
- A higher percentage of married officers agreed with the statement *'My immediate supervisors are committed to actively promoting and valuing diversity in the workplace,'* than their single colleagues.
- More single than married officers agreed with the statement *'There are aspects of the physical working environment that I find intimidating or offensive.'*
- A higher percentage of officers who had previous police experience agreed with the statements *'Overall, I think the PSNI is an organisation which takes equal opportunities seriously,'* and *'I enjoy a harmonious working environment and atmosphere in PSNI,'* than officers who had no previous police experience.
- More officers who had no previous police experience than those who did agreed with the statement *'The organisation talks a lot about diversity but rarely does anything about it.'*

These findings do not parallel the findings of demographical differences found at the last intervention point in the study (Time 4) or any of the earlier stages of the study. Hence, it can be concluded that there are no clear or consistent differences in the response patterns between the various sub-groups of respondents.

7.5 Analysis of Results Over Time

Analysis of results over time, indicate consistently high positive responses to individual diversity questions, although there has been a slight drop in positive responses for the majority of questionnaire items.

The most positive results relating to diversity were gathered while officers were completing their training and tutorship. However, even considering the slight drop in responses over time it appears that officers working in the districts are still working within a respectful environment that actively promotes and values diversity.

8 Summary

The current report concludes this ambitious study, which began six years ago in 2001. Over that time results from the study have varied both positively and negatively as officers have moved between different training and work environments. Below is a summary of key issues and trends that have emerged from the study, along with a number of recommendations to enhance the experience of officers, where appropriate.

Perceptions of the Learning Climate

Throughout the study the officers' perceptions of the learning climate have gradually dropped, although now that officers are in districts and departments it appears as if perceptions of the learning climate are beginning to plateau. The drop in positive responses throughout the study has one exception, the tutorship period. During this phase of training, learning climate results became more positive indicating that for a large majority of student officers the tutorship period was a very positive learning experience.

At each stage of the study the officers have highlighted they work in a supportive environment where colleagues play an important role in encouraging and helping each other. As the officers have progressed out of the formal training environment results have indicated that personal responsibility and self-motivation begins to play a more important role in ensuring officers continue to grow and develop. Although it appears that the reality of the officers busy working life can make it difficult for them to find the time to undertake self-driven development activities.

Throughout the study the non-monetary rewards and recognition the officers receive has been consistently rated poorly. This indicates that there could be scope for managers to provide increased feedback to the officers for a job well done. However, this result appears to contradict results on a similar topic under the area of job satisfaction. This apparent contradiction in results requires further research to uncover the full picture.

The current report has identified a new finding which is worthy of flagging at this stage. Specifically, analysis highlights that many of the officers do not feel encouraged to offer new ideas and experiment with new ways of doing things. This finding raises the question are we recruiting and training individuals to work within a culture where they are not 'paid to think' and where challenging old working practices is discouraged?

A key recommendation in this area, is, that these results are brought to the attention of supervisors and line managers. In raising awareness of these results it is hoped that managers will become more mindful to seek opportunities, as far as is practical, to release officers to pursue work relevant development activities, provide more regular feedback to officers on their performance and create more space for officers to challenge the norm and experiment with new ways of doing things within safe boundaries.

Feelings of Job Satisfaction

Despite a general drop in the officers levels of job satisfaction over the course of this study results remain fairly positive. Similar to results found in the area of Learning Climate, supportive colleagues feature high as a key contributor to levels of job satisfaction. This finding has been consistent throughout the study. The challenge and variety of the job of a police officer also appears to be a consistent source of job satisfaction. In particular this includes dealing with the public and achieving convictions.

Both support and recognition from line management have been highlighted as important factors in the officer's levels of job satisfaction. However, as mentioned above, this result appears to contradict results found in the area of Learning Climate, which highlighted a lack of recognition from management. Further research to understand and explain this apparent contradiction is required.

Throughout the study administrative work and stress have consistently been interconnected and have been a source of frustration for the officers. At earlier intervention points in the study, it was considered that the paperwork associated with the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP), which the officers completed as part of their probation period, was contributing to negative results. However, at the current intervention point the officers have completed their PDP and negative results regarding administrative work and stress remain high. Further exploration of this finding has identified that an officers role can have a considerable effect on the amount of administrative work they have to complete and subsequent stress experienced. Specifically, uniform roles have been highlighted as having particularly high levels of paperwork.

Finally, there are a number of subtle shifts in perceptions that are emerging at this final stage of the study. In particular, there has been large increase in negative ratings of items relating to career progression and opportunities for personal growth. Is it the case that as these officers mature in their roles they are beginning to consider other options for career progression only to find their options limited? Perhaps this result is due to the fact that the severance

programme is coming to an end and that it will probably lead to less promotion opportunities in the future?

The key recommendation in this area is to publicise these results to line managers and officers alike to make them more aware of the positive contributions they make to the work environment of these new officers. Furthermore, it is recommended that with regard to administrative work, options continue to be explored with the OCMT's to minimise and streamline the amount of paperwork required from officers, particularly from those within uniform roles.

Levels of Organisational Commitment

The officers' levels of commitment have remained fairly high throughout the study despite a slight drop in positive responses in recent data. Both qualitative and quantitative results indicate that the officers have a sustained sense of commitment and intend to remain working as a police officer until their retirement. In a similar trend to the previous Learning Climate and Job Satisfaction results, friendships with colleagues and teamwork appear to have a highly positive impact on the officers' feelings of commitment.

Research regarding the officers' career aspirations uncovered that the majority of respondents intend to climb the career ladder and apply for promotion to the next rank. A number of respondents have already been successful and are working as Sergeants. However, over the coming years as the severance programme comes to a close, which will probably lead to less promotion opportunities, it will be interesting to see if the officers levels of commitment are effected.

Undoubtedly, a large part of the above results can be attributed to the positive contributions that trainers, tutors, line managers and colleagues have made to support the officers throughout their training and during their roles in the districts and departments. It is suggested that the positive results contained in this report are disseminated to these groups of individuals and they should be acknowledged accordingly.

Attitudes to Diversity

Throughout this study the officers' attitudes to diversity have remained positive portraying an environment where the large majority of officers treat each other and members of the public with respect and dignity. This is a good news story for PSNI, as results appear to indicate that the organisation is successfully rising to the diversity challenges that the introduction of a 50:50 recruitment process can have and the subsequent impact on organisational culture.

A key theme that has emerged throughout this study is that as the officers have progressed out of the formal training environment of the Police College into the Districts they have found a more relaxed working environment, which is more realistic and not necessarily always politically correct. The majority of the officers view this as a positive situation. In this relaxed environment officers feel they can have a joke with colleagues and build friendships, yet they appear to remain mindful to respect different peoples boundaries.

An additional theme that has remained constant throughout this study is that for many of the officers there is a lack of open discussion of contentious issues in the workplace. Recent data has highlighted that often the discussion of contentious issues can be dependent on the individuals involved. The officers appear to have a preference for a more realistic environment where all issues can be discussed. Encouraging a more open atmosphere in the workplace where all issues can be discussed in a respectful manner would also allow for shared learning and develop understanding.

In conclusion, a number of general issues have arisen from this research, some persistent over time, some newly emerging. The Occupational Psychologist on this project will endeavour to share these findings with as many key individuals throughout the organisation as possible so that the issues will begin to be addressed. It is also recommended that frontline managers and senior managers disseminate the findings in this report and encourage debate and creative solutions to the issues highlighted.

9 References

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