


# Racists can be driven out by setting values that run through service like 'letters in a stick of rock'

 Racism is not a 'training issue' and should be dealt with by setting values in the service which would drive out 'racists and bigots', says Dick Winterton, in charge of ensuring police officers have the right training and skills to deliver a first-class service to the public.

Mr Winterton, chief executive of Skills for Justice, spoke to *Police* giving his views on the skills police officers need at a time when the service is undergoing a raft of reforms.

When asked what would make the police service more attractive to ethnic minority recruits, he said 'you cannot train someone not to be a racist, it's applying training to something that is not a training problem'.

His comments come at a time when many forces are focusing on diversity training for police recruits and methods of 'weeding' out racists during the recruitment stage.

'Quite often I hear people say we have to recruit to reflect society. I query that, it does not mean we have to recruit lager louts and everyone else and there is a professional standard.'

Mr Winterton said 'you cannot select people who [you know] are not racists' and added that part of the answer was in firmly setting down the values, one being that the service will not tolerate racists and bigots.

He said a string of values should be built into every policing role 'like letters going through a stick of rock'.

In the February edition of *Police* magazine, Mr Winterton said that in terms of being professionals, police officers were close but 'no cigar' and he still holds that view.



**Dick Winterton, chief executive of Skills for Justice**

He believes there are many changes on the horizon which are set to professionalise the service and give officers more recognised qualifications and accreditation for the work they do.

Mr Winterton left the Royal Air Force in 1996 before going on to hold senior management positions in national training organisations and has drawn on his experiences when looking at the police service.

He said the Air Force define 'training performance standard' and 'operational performance standard' but the police service do not differentiate between the two.

'Sometimes officers are expected to pick it up by osmosis and that is not professional.

'The willingness from individuals to be professional is large but collectively the service needs to make that final effort to help them become professional.

'They [officers] can spend one year with a tutor constable

who says they are fit for patrol but they still have 'L-plates' on, so their managers need to check them carefully.

Skills for Justice has been central in drawing up the key competencies needed for different roles in the service, including constables and PCSOs, under National Occupational Standards.

'The police have now cottoned on to what the game is. In the beginning it took a bit of getting used to occupational standards.'

The competencies drawn up for PCSOs mirror those of a constable but only certain elements, something Mr Winterton feels will smooth the path if they choose to become a police officer.

'I see no difference between the standards of PCSOs and constables. The range and level of skills required of police officers are greater than those demanded of a PCSO.

'But I see no reason why someone who is a PCSO cannot go on to become a police officer.'

In terms of the new probationer training programme, the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP), is made up of 22 units which form part of the occupational standards.

Mr Winterton says forces are working to these standards or working with neighbouring forces on the training.

The Federation has raised issues with inconsistency in the training being delivered but Mr Winterton says that it should create a 'level playing field' where standards are consistent throughout the country and the public are assured that is the case.

There is also the introduction of a National Vocational Qualification for probationers.

'Other industries have had NVQs for years, the same issues apply to Woolworths or BT or any company as they do to the police.'

Finally, he concedes that some police forces are letting down officers with a lack of training but that 'being professional' also means officers have to take responsibility for their own skills and learning.

There is also a tendency of 'waiting for it to happen to me rather than taking a proactive approach. I do not think police officers are fully professionals'.

How does he envisage the future role of the constable will change over the next few years?

'It will be more professional and there will be a requirement to keep skills up to date and relevant. The service should be looking for the best they can get. I think the standard is very high at the moment but the police need greater clarity in the kind of people they are recruiting.'

