



John Giblin, secretary of the promotion and training sub-committee

Federation focus

Federation focus is the first in a series to highlight some of the work carried out by the Police Federation's sub-committees on behalf of police officers. This month John Giblin writes.

The promotion and training sub-committee has been particularly busy in a number of areas this year. We have put forward our views to a number of working groups and organisations including the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Last month the Independent Police Leadership Development Programme, or probationer training to you and me, went live in England and Wales. The idea behind the programme is that it will allow forces to be flexible in their delivery of a national programme at a local level. Forces will be able to deliver the programme themselves, contracted to further or higher education colleges, or other specialist providers.

However, although the intention is that all providers will need to meet nationally agreed standards to ensure consistency across the board, this is likely to prove difficult. Currently, there is no single qualification for the programme and forces will be free to go down the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification), Foundation Degree or no qualification route.

The new programme has also put a burden on forces financially. There are the set up costs and any on-going funding needed for students that would previously have gone to Centrex, the national police training provider.

The sub-committee has also raised concerns about the amount of homework, work/life balance, bureaucracy and issues around pay and expenses for officers involved in the training.

Finally, with force restructuring and amalgamations are we now likely to see a return of regional police training centres?

In relation to promotion, there has also been a great deal of work going on. An independent company, Symbia, recently revealed their initial findings of the work-based assessment trials, an alternative to the Ospre promotion system for sergeants and inspectors.

The evaluation did provide a basis for further work to be conducted in order to establish if work-based assessment is a better alternative to Ospre in terms of validity, reliability and fairness.

However, we have raised doubts, again, in relation to a potential lack of standardisation and consistency in the way the assessments are being delivered across the seven forces involved in the trials.

We have asked that serious consideration should be given to extending the length of the trials in order to establish this. We also believe the forces involved should work to a mandatory national standard and that there should be a rigorous quality assurance process to monitor and evaluate this.

Some of you may also be aware of performance development reviews (PDRs). For those who aren't, they are basically the system used by line managers and staff to review the past and future performance of officers.

The idea is that by improving the contribution of every individual, overall performance can be enhanced. Individuals and line managers also have responsibilities under this procedure.

We have been pushing for the effective and efficient use of PDRs and all forces are expected to provide them for their officers. However, the implementation of the PDR process across forces has been sporadic. We believe there must be a real improvement in the take up and understanding of the reviews for them to be effective.