

Recognising the needs of police officers and staff to help keep them safe

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How the College and the Police Federation work together to influence and help shape decision-making processes and operational implementation

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2020 has already been a challenging year, not just for policing, but for almost everyone in every corner of the world. British Policing has reacted and responded to incidents, events and situations that it could not realistically have anticipated, nor been able to calculate its impacts in any constructive pre-planned way. But policing has reacted and responded well by coordinating collaboratively and pragmatically.

What has been highlighted during this period is the ability of the College of Policing to respond promptly to demand, to shape strategy dynamically and to adapt its style of work accordingly. What has remained a constant has been the ability of representative bodies, including the Police Federation, to influence and help shape the decision-making processes and subsequent operational implementation.

I have heard some sentiments and thoughts repeated over the years – 'The police are useless', 'the Federation are toothless', 'the College of Policing is clueless' – very occasionally there may be some truth in these comments, but as we all know good work is rarely recognised, subtle but effective approaches often go unnoticed by the wider audience and positive impacts cause fewer conversations than negative ones. The College is a relatively new player on the policing field and as it establishes its place, its message of how it supports and adds (not detracts and dictates) to policing becomes clearer.

Its work permeates through every aspect of the daily lives of anyone within the police service. It influences and impacts on the delivery of every function we in the service provide to the public. The College's processes and principles may have gone unnoticed, it may have been misrepresented and misinterpreted and it may have made some mistakes – but what it has done is positively shaped the way in which policing is delivered today.

Constant engagement between the College and representatives from the workforce has achieved at a minimum the rounding of hard edges on policy, and invariably a suitable, mutually acceptable and much more effective and relevant end product.

Recognising the needs of the workforce, respecting their opinions, valuing their knowledge and skills, and – of equal importance – keeping them safe and secure is fundamental to creating a successful organisation. This hasn't always been reflected in policing implementation, but strides in that direction are now becoming more evident.

We have been highlighting the importance of officer safety for some time, and more recently have been involved with and are supporting national work with the College on the [Officer and staff safety review](#). It's really encouraging that this work is now coming together to ensure there is a detailed picture of what officer safety should look like and how we can work together to get it to where it needs to be.

'Speaks truth to power' is a badge that should be worn with pride, but another badge that should be worn is 'Power, that listens to truth (and does not just dismiss it).' From my experience at the College, it is an organisation that listens and reflects. Does it always bend to the views and the will of others? The simple answer to that is no. Does it respect, investigate and consider those views? Increasingly the answer to that is yes, it does.

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Tags

Officer safety