

Evaluation of the Police Now National Detective Programme Pilot (2019-2021)

Canterbury Christ Church University Report of Interim Findings

Introduction

Police Now was created by Constables, Sergeants, and Inspectors through a Metropolitan Police Service programme designed to encourage innovation by more junior colleagues. Since 2015, Police Now has recruited, trained, and developed close to 2,000 police officers across England and Wales. Police Now's mission is to transform communities by recruiting, developing, and inspiring diverse leaders in policing. Police Now's vision for the future is for there to be a safe environment where everyone, including the most vulnerable and deprived, has a chance to thrive.

In September 2019 Police Now, supported by the Home Office, introduced a pilot National Detective Programme (NDP) with eight partner forces to recruit, train and develop new detective constables; one of several solutions being employed by the police service to address the national shortage of investigative officers in the UK. The programme is designed to equip participants with the core skills required to undertake modern investigative police work. Throughout the two-year programme, participants play an essential role in tackling serious and complex crimes, improving victim satisfaction, and increasing the public's confidence in policing.

With the introduction of the new National Detective Programme, Police Now commissioned Canterbury Christ Church University's (CCCU) Canterbury Centre for Policing Research to undertake an independent evaluation of the pilot two-year programme. The research to date has consisted of a mixed method approach and has been conducted at key points throughout the programme, namely during the Police Now Academy and one-year into the programme. Research conducted in the first year of the evaluation has involved observation, surveys, interviews and focus groups with participants, Syndicate Leads¹, response line managers/tutors and Police Now HQ staff. The research has covered key aspects of the National Detective Programme including reflections on the application and assessment process, the quality of training and learning, levels of knowledge and confidence in role and alignment to the Police Now mission.

This document intends to provide Police Now partner forces with an update on CCCU's research to date. The summary will provide an overview of the interim findings according to the chronological stages of participant experience including *Application and Assessment*, *Police Now Academy Training*, and *Operational Experience*. A corresponding document [Appendix A] outlines evidence of the programmatic changes that Police Now have implemented to improve the National Detective Programme and participant experience for current and future cohorts. These changes have been based on the interim findings of the evaluation report and wider feedback from participants developed by CCCU.

Findings

1. *Application and Assessment*

Competitiveness for a place on the National Detective Programme was high, with Police Now attracting 3,992 applications for 93 places in the pilot year. Encouragingly, the programme also attracted a diverse group of graduates and career-changers. Of those who started the National Detective Programme in 2019, **61% identified as female, 10% identified as black, Asian, or minority ethnic (56% of whom were female)**, 12% identified as LGBTQ and they graduated from 45 different academic institutions with 12 unique languages spoken across the cohort². Police Now successfully recruited a higher number of female and black, Asian or minority ethnic officers than national police workforce figures in England and Wales³. Additionally, participants demonstrated high levels

¹ Syndicate Leads are seconded operational Constables, Sergeants, and Inspectors from Police Now's partner forces. They work with Police Now staff members to co-deliver both the neighbourhood and detective academies. They bring the expertise of being an operational police officer and localised knowledge of their force and communities.

² Of those who started the National Detective Programme in 2021, 66% identify as women, 24% identify as black, Asian or from a minority ethnic background, 16% identify as women from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background, 10% identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual and 13% received free school meals. They graduated from 85 different academic institutions with 29 languages spoken across the cohort. 80% of participants are career changers, with the remaining 20% being recent university graduates.

³ As of 31 March 2020, female officers make up 31% and black, Asian or minority ethnic officers 7.3% of the total police workforce in England and Wales.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955182/police-workforce-mar20-hosb2020.pdf

of motivation to learn (92% agreed/strongly agreed that they are motivated to learn the skills emphasised in their courses⁴), confidence (89% agreed/strongly agreed that they can perform effectively on many different tasks⁵) and self-reflection (97% agreed/strongly agreed that they know how to show empathy and compassion⁶).

Areas for development that participants identified for this period of the programme concerned a lack of consistent messaging between Police Now and partner forces, and the difficulties involved in the timing of conditional offers and the implications this had for negotiating the notice period in their previous role:

“And then it’s when the force came in that I think the communication barriers broke down, and it was probably obvious that it was like a new phenomenon for the force really, like it was a new thing. And a lot of the things that Police Now wanted to push weren’t happening quite as fast from the force.”

“I actually handed my notice in before I got the actual job offer, which is a big risk, especially with a mortgage and kids as well.”

“Final offers come out far too late and caused stress re handing in notices. The process could be improved by opening the applications earlier.”

“...we’ve all got full-time jobs, and obviously the (pre-Academy) revision (is) unpaid. But we were doing that without having a concrete job offer as well, and so people were investing a lot of time in revising without actually being aware of whether they’d actually got a job, which they felt was a little bit unfair.”

Additionally, clarity around the structure and commitments involved in the two-year programme was highlighted as an area for development during application and assessment. Some participants felt that information regarding the nature and extent of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) - in which participants work towards the attainment of a Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice, as well as the Professionalising Investigation Programme Stage 2 accreditation (PIP2) – was unclear during the application and assessment process. Having clear knowledge of this element of the programme earlier in the process was noted as something that would have been beneficial to participants in preparation for the programme.

Moreover, survey feedback suggests that overall, **90% of participants felt that their overall experience during Police Now’s application and assessment process was good or very good**, with high levels of satisfaction with the online assessments, the delivery of assessment centres and Police Now’s communication of their conditional offer:

“Their (Police Now’s) execution of the assessment centre was really good. It was quick and efficient, with the process of applying and doing the little assessments. The assessments were really good, and then the letter and the phone call for conditional was really positive.”

“I liked the fact that it was all skills based as opposed to competency based, and that interview was like the nicest interview I think I’ve ever had.”

2. Police Now Academy Training

Participants began the National Detective Programme with an initial three-month intensive Police Now Academy which involves theoretical teaching, practical field training and a focus on developing both core policing skills and an investigative mindset. In November 2019, participants on the first cohort of the National Detective Programme sat the National Investigators’ Exam (NIE) in week ten of the Police Now Academy. **Overall, 85% of**

⁴ Measured via an online survey on the first day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, by selecting the relevant number. The range is from 1 (strongly disagree) through to 5 (strongly agree): In general, I am motivated to learn the skills emphasized in my courses’.

⁵ Measured via an online survey on the first day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, by selecting the relevant number. The range is from 1 (strongly disagree) through to 5 (strongly agree): I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.’

⁶ Measured via an online survey on the first day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Throughout the programme Police Now will encourage you to reflect on your own and others performance and act on that reflection. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: I know how to show empathy and compassion.’

participants passed the NIE first time, which is 23% higher than the national average⁷. This appears to reflect the high levels of talent and motivation among the trainee detectives, considering that 56% of participants had not previously considered a career in policing before hearing about Police Now⁸. When asked to elaborate on their primary motivation for applying to Police Now, some participants said:

“I love investigating things and...I particularly wanted to increase the positivity of the police within minority communities.”

“I wanted a role with a purpose that serves the wider community that I live in. I wanted to make a positive contribution to the lives of the most vulnerable people in society, whilst using my skills in a problem-solving environment.”

“A pathway to qualify as a detective dealing with the most serious crime was what attracted me most, rather than the traditional route into policing.”

“I support what the Programme aims to achieve. I welcome working with a diversity of people who bring a range of lived and learnt experiences to policing. I welcome working with 28 colleagues motivated to drive crime levels down and make a positive difference in communities they work.”

Participants felt that overall learning content provided at the Police Now Academy was good, especially with regard to support for the NIE, guest speakers and newly introduced innovative learning techniques, such as Situation Carousels⁹ and Deliberate Practice¹⁰. Syndicate Leads and in-force field training were also considered important for gaining force-specific knowledge, expertise, and support, which enhanced participant learning:

“...it is good that you’re in a room and you’ve got maybe six to eight different detectives in there delivering... good, accurate information relating to the force.”

“...we liked the field training aspects because (on) the normal police route, you don’t get that. We thought that was really helpful, so we’ve got an idea of what we’re going into.”

Observation at the Academy found that Syndicate Leads were primarily chosen for their operational experience and knowledge. As a result, their role is important to the success of both the delivery of programme content and the experience of participants on the programme. Encouragingly, Police Now were already exploring opportunities to gain formal accreditation for the trainers.

A central theme in participant and Syndicate Lead responses is the praise they both had for the receptiveness of Police Now staff to feedback. Police Now demonstrated a clear willingness to engage with the cohort at regular intervals to understand their views and experiences to inform short- and long-term improvement to the Police Now Academy:

“They have tried to make lots of opportunities to take our feedback. For example, with the NIE they did make changes very quickly after they saw the mock exam results to factor in what we’d been saying.”

With regard to areas for programme improvements, participants highlighted a desire for more detailed content and practically oriented training that provided realistic scenarios to enrich their learning and development in key investigative policing skills. For example, interviewing content, which participants felt was given insufficient depth during the Academy, and a drink drive scenario that was considered to be particularly unrealistic to the point of being unhelpful.

⁷ College of Policing Limited (2019). *NIE November 2019 – Results and Analysis Overview*. Available at: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Investigation/Documents/NIE%20Results%20Overview.pdf>

⁸ Measured via an online survey on the first day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Were you planning to join the police before you heard about the Police Now National Detective Programme?’

⁹ Situation carousels are short scenarios designed to help participants manage challenging situations in a structured and safe environment. They are an opportunity to retrieve and embed learning whilst managing initial reactions. Participants also have an opportunity learn from each other through observation, debrief and reflection.

¹⁰ Deliberate practice involves breaking key skills into micro-skills which are purposefully practiced and built-upon. Participants are then asked to repeatedly practice these micro-skills, receiving immediate and actionable feedback to help them improve. Although this can feel challenging, the process of repeating a micro-skill helps to instil an automatic response in participants and reduces their cognitive load.

“... the knowledge that we’ve been taught is very surface level, so like awareness level, and ... we don’t have much of a deeper knowledge in terms of ... what we might do force specific, considering that we’re going into different forces.”

Additionally, field training presented a good opportunity for participants to put this theory into practice, however there appeared to be varying experiences across and within force as some were exposed to more core activities and responsibilities than others.

“I think it’s difficult because the field training is a really good idea in theory, but you can never guarantee that you will actually be able to go out and practice those skills because no one can ever guarantee that you’re going to be able to ...”

The Police Now Academy timetable was identified as a particular challenge by participants and Syndicate Leads, due to its intensive nature. This posed questions among participants and Syndicate Leads about the inclusion of leadership training during the Academy, as there were already many competing theoretical and practical priorities. Whilst respondents felt that leadership training was an important aspect of the National Detective Programme, it was recommended that this should be positioned as a point of focus later on in the programme.

Moreover, the length of days at the Academy were a particularly prominent theme identified in the research due to the demands it placed on learning, personal time, and wellbeing:

“...this is a twelve hour or eleven-hour residential course away from their families for five days a week with an expectation that on the Sunday they travel back here, so they essentially get one day back with their family.”

“You can’t do it all in one go. You need 45 minutes, 15 minutes, 45 minutes, 15 minutes, and good nutrition and good sleep. When you’re saying to us work from ... well, the day starts at 8:00 and finishes at 7:00 most days, and then you’ve got to chuck revision either side of that and then wellbeing...In terms of your capability to learn, it didn’t match up.”

The high intensity of Police Now Academies has been shown to provide “levels of learning indistinguishable or greater than those demonstrated by students in conventional courses. In some cases, high intensity approaches produced more than double the success rate in half the time” (The Smarty Train, 2017, p. 3¹¹). This was very much the case for the 2019 Police Now Academy, as demonstrated by the high NIE pass rate. Nevertheless, it was recommended that future Academies should increase the focus on participant wellbeing in the context of highly intense, residential training which Police Now have taken steps to address for their 2021 cohort.

Furthermore, at the end of the Academy, **the majority of participants (62%) felt that they had good knowledge of the law¹² with 70% agreeing that they were confident in their basic investigative skills¹³**. They also had a strong motivation to transfer the knowledge they had learnt into the workplace by embedding¹³ their learning into daily police practice.

3. Operational Experience

Participants began their operational phase in response units within their respective forces for a total of 12+ weeks. The time participants spent on response was variable due to differences in force requirements, individual development needs and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with their operational duties, participants receive further advanced content through Impact Events, held three times over the duration of the two-year programme to hold participants to account on behalf of the communities they serve. Impact Events also provide an opportunity for participants to share learning, hear from experts in the field and present the work they have been doing to peers and colleagues.

¹¹ The Smarty Train (2017). The Police Now Summer Academy: Research Paper on High Intensity Learning.

¹² Measured via an online survey on the last day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The range is from strongly agree (1) through to strongly disagree (5): I feel that I have a good level of knowledge of the law.’

¹³ Measured via an online survey on the last day of the 2019 Police Now Academy (n=87) – ‘Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. The range is from strongly agree (1) through to strongly disagree (5): I feel confident in my basic investigative skills.’

Since arriving in their respective forces, requirements of the PEQF have increased at a rate that was unexpected to participants, reflecting the perceived lack of clarity regarding this element during the application and assessment stage of the programme. Participants, response line managers/tutors and Leadership Development Officers (LDOs)¹⁴ all identified large volumes of work and high expectations for participants during the operational phase of the programme. The university module deadlines within the first few months of arriving in force were reported to have increased stress amongst participants and impacted upon levels of wellbeing:

"...the university work has been really difficult to fit in, I have got two young children so it has been really difficult to manage working full time and the quantity of university work which I wasn't really anticipating. It has been hard, and it has been stressful."

"A steep learning curve probably, would be the best way of describing it; and hard work trying to balance learning the actual job and doing uni work."

"I think both Police Now and the university need to be more flexible with us and more understanding of the pressures we're under. For example, the guidance says we cannot have an extenuating circumstance for having a big load work because "everyone has lots of work", even though some of us have been doing 30 hours overtime in a month."

The challenges of managing operational work with PEQF commitments are not unique to Police Now trainee detectives, with all newly recruited officers across forces in England and Wales having to negotiate these competing responsibilities in the face of the wider professionalisation of the police service, albeit not necessarily with the same levels of intensity as the NDP expects. Despite these issues, participants appear to have enjoyed their response rotation with their respective forces and are clearly dedicated to the detective role, the safeguarding of victims and their professional development.

"I believe working in uniform really prepares you for being a Detective, as you learn so much about how the system works, what can be expected and what is reasonable. This prevents a Detective requesting things that a uniformed Officer would see as inappropriate."

"it is definitely a challenge to try and balance and sort of justify to yourself writing an essay or creating a poster when you know that you have got 20 high risk crimes that you are trying to manage and trying to justify doing a portfolio when you have also got you know vulnerable victims that you need to try and safeguard."

The topic of PEQF commitments also brought to light the feeling among participants that their colleagues, supervisors, and tutors were insufficiently aware of the what the Police Now National Detective Programme entails and the additional demands placed upon participants undertaking it. Some felt that there was a knowledge gap among certain individuals and teams in force due to a lack of communication between the force and Police Now which needed addressing:

"I do feel like there are some gaps, and I'm not sure whether or not that is with the programme or the actual working environment. There needs to be more/ better cohesion between the force and Police Now."

"There is a lot of misunderstanding about the Police Now direct entry route and feel there is some subtle resentment from colleagues who feel they have had to work their way up into CID."

"My force have been supportive insofar as possible, however a lack of communication from Police Now to the force has negatively impacted their ability to provide support. The amount of work we are required by the University and Police Now, I feel has negatively impacted me. My force are not aware of the level of work we are required to do outside of work and they do not have enough knowledge of the programme to provide me with the relevant support training."

¹⁴ Leadership Development Officers are unique to Police Now and come from a variety of backgrounds including policing, teaching, coaching and professional development. LDOs are critical for developing the leadership potential of Police Now participants and coach them to develop evidence-based approaches to tackle crime and ASB in their communities, as well as building their confidence to innovate and influence change. LDOs play an important role in creating a holistic support system for all participants on Police Now programmes, ensuring high levels of career satisfaction and retention.

Nevertheless, participants recognised the support network around them and reflected on the high levels of support they had received from their force colleagues and from Police Now, through their LDOs:

“The combination of all the different tutors, line managers and all colleagues is a great support to enable me to succeed.”

“Everyone has been so supportive and welcoming and you know as much as we are the guinea pigs of this programme and there are teething issues, like everyone that I know has wanted us to succeed and is trying to kind of help us to get on, and for me that has just been brilliant.”

Participants noted that they would have liked ongoing support from their Syndicate Lead post-Academy and enhanced engagement and communication with the wider Police Now HQ, particularly relating to programme developments. However, participants were grateful for the efforts provided by their LDOs in terms of continuous professional development and availability to support on various challenges. At this early stage, the **majority of participants (68%) agreed or strongly agreed that they have received good support from their LDO¹⁵.**

Conclusion

This executive summary has provided an overview of the findings from the interim report of the CCCU independent evaluation of the National Detective Programme pilot (2019-2021). The document is also complemented by evidence of the actions that Police Now have taken based on constructive feedback given by participants at the Police Now Academy and the CCCU interim report [Appendix A]. Following a chronological structure, the findings suggest that many participants have been satisfied with their experience at each stage of the programme – *Application and Assessment, Police Now Academy Training, and Operational Experience* – to date. In particular, the online assessments and assessment centre during recruitment, the innovative learning practices at the Police Now Academy and the varying sources of support provided throughout the programme, including Police Now staff, Syndicate Leads, LDOs and colleagues in force. There are, however, areas for development that have been identified by the research. This includes clarity of the programme structure and content during application, the realism of assessment scenarios during the Police Now Academy and the timing of university deadlines in relation to high volume workloads during the first few months of arriving in force. Based on observation, anecdotal feedback, survey responses and focus group feedback, it is clear that despite these challenges participants in the first cohort of Police Now’s National Detective Programme are talented and motivated trainee detectives who care very much for the detective role, the safeguarding of victims and professional development.

Next steps

The next stage of the independent evaluation is planned for early 2021, focusing on feedback from CID line managers and tutors and force implementation leads, through a combination of interviews and focus groups. The final phase of the research is planned for when participants complete the programme at the end of 2021, with feedback being collected via a survey and focus groups. Following this, a final report will be produced providing evidence and findings from the two-year evaluation.

¹⁵ Measured via an online survey 12 months into the National Detective Programme (n=19) – ‘It has been over six months since you left the Academy. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the support you have received since then: I have received good support from my Leadership Development Officer.’

Appendix A

Police Now's response to Canterbury Christ Church University Evaluation

Section 1: Introduction

The 2019 National Detectives' Programme was a pilot designed to recruit and select graduates, with the primary aim of developing them to become substantive Detectives following two years of training and operational experience.

While there were many highlights of the pilot programme, there was also much to learn and so we thank Canterbury Christ Church University for this evaluation and feedback. This work has helped us to shape the direction of the programme for 2021 and beyond.

Many changes have been made to the Police Now National Detectives' Programme since the initial pilot, and this report will deal directly with our response to the findings and recommendations from the evaluation.

Section 2: Response to Findings

Detailed below are each of the findings from the report with notes on actions taken and/or planned in response to this feedback.

Participants, and professionals felt Academy days were too long. Often participants had 11 hours of training and undertook further study later in the evenings. It was felt that this was detrimental to their learning.

Days have now been shortened with more time built in for regular breaks and a longer lunch. Days have also been standardised to create a clearer sense of rhythm, such as starting most days with Recap and Reflect to ensure participants are set up well and ready to learn.

Online content has been utilised to reduce the amount of in-person academy learning, meaning that participants need to spend less time away from home. Although initially a response to COVID-19, this had a significant positive affect on wellbeing during the Neighbourhoods Academy 2020 and we expect to see similar results for the 2021 Detectives' Academy.

Whilst participants were grateful that Police Now considered wellbeing, they felt there was insufficient time given to this issue. They also felt that wellbeing events, whilst welcome after a long training day did not offer variety and good choice for individuals. Participants wanted more to be part of the programme.

In 2021, we worked to improve our wellbeing support for participants such as including a weekly one-hour timetabled slot of personal protected time throughout the digital and physical phases of the academy. This was presented to participants to be used for exercise, participate in community network events and to relax.

We have also developed a wellbeing app to allow participants to access the support of an LDO, engage with information on Police Now's Affinity Networks, arrange social activities and to find places to exercise in the local area.

The Oscar Kilo van visited the academy sites to allow participants to engage with wellbeing in policing beyond their time at the academy.

Of course, many of these activities have been stymied by COVID-19 precautions and so we hope to continue to boost our wellbeing offer to participants in 2022.

It should also be noted that there is an inherently difficult balance to achieve here between ensuring that participants, Syndicate Leads and Police Now staff members have time to recuperate and consolidate learning and recognising the very significant quantity of content to teach and learn, itself the result of the substantial challenge of going from very little policing knowledge to certified detective in two years. Police Now does not claim to have got this balance right at every stage of the programme and finding equilibrium will require constant maintenance and course correction.

Academy training was (overall) seen as valuable, although there were several concerns with both structure and content. Some sessions were considered unnecessary and focussed on theory rather than practical application. The reflections, particularly after response and operational work, suggest more practical sessions and role

plays would be of greater benefit to participants. The Situation Carousels were identified as useful, on reflection.

Our curriculum is based on the national policing curriculum set by the College of Policing and is built to meet and abide by the core requirements of the PEQF. It is, in turn, then validated by our university partner. As such, there are some constraints on the content of lessons and the level of detail needed within an academy setting. In particular, the programme cannot be as easily and unilaterally amended as was possible under, for instance, ILPDP and ICIDP, although it may be that as the PEQF beds in the College will adopt a more fluid approach.

That said, we appreciate that the content design and structure was not optimal during the pilot programme and, as such, a full restructure and re-timetabling has taken place for 2021. All sessions have been re-visited to ensure alignment with the role of a detective constable and to reduce the amount of crossover whilst also maintaining interleaving principles. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has meant further phasing changes to allow a hybrid academy to be delivered in digital, in-person and in-force parts. These are not ideal, but believe that they will still represent an improvement on the 2019 NDP.

Situation carousels have been maintained and will continue to be improved in 2022. Where possible, we have increased the emphasis on practical learning and deliberate practise during the in-person academy space, although this has presented some challenges with COVID-19 precautions. This will be an area of focus for our 2022 Detective Academy as we continue to build and develop our product.

Interviewing is a persistent theme in feedback. Participants felt this area was given insufficient time at the Academy, although there are suggestions that some of the other content was dealt with at what was described as a 'surface' level. This may have been due to the programme content and number of subject areas that the curriculum designed by the College of Policing directs.

Our interviewing content has undergone a full evaluation and redesign across both programmes. For the Detectives' Academy, we have introduced a more detailed Investigative Interviewing strand (as opposed to standalone sessions) and increased the number of practise sessions. We have aligned our interview training to Field Training to embed theory in a practical setting and phased the full strand to ensure a steady increase in complexity. This area of the curriculum has also been closely linked to the Evidential Information strand with a single investigation approach to demonstrate the skills used to interview victims, witnesses and suspects.

As always, we will continue to evaluate and develop the NDP, including the Detective Academy, and expect to continue building on our interviewing offer in 2022. This is certainly an area of very close care and scrutiny.

Participants and trainers felt that there should be more focus upon investigations because much of the content in their view related to neighbourhood and/or response policing. A better, more equal balance between these two areas was suggested.

Police Now's mission is community focused and so there will always be an important link between the role of the detective constable and the impact of investigations and safeguarding activity on local neighbourhoods and long-term problem solving. That said, we have revisited all content throughout the programme to ensure greater alignment with the detective role and, where appropriate, replaced areas of content that were too neighbourhood-focused.

Participants and professionals felt the Academy was too soon for leadership training and that there were too many competing issues that the new Police Now participants needed to be trained in immediately. Respondents felt this was an important area for development but later in the programme.

For 2021, most of the leadership training as a standalone offer has been removed from the Detectives' Academy timetable and built into other areas of the programme at a later stage.

For 2022 (2021 in NGLP), we are completely redesigning our leadership offer across both programmes to ensure participants build mission-aligned leadership competencies during their time with Police Now. This is an exceptionally important area of focus for our programmes and we hope to see significant improvements in the leadership capability of our participants going forwards.

It should be noted that the additional content broadly contained under the 'leadership' strand tends to be very closely linked to Police Now's mission, and therefore is of considerable importance to Police Now, partner forces and many key stakeholders.

The feedback regarding the usefulness of the guest speakers was mixed. Some were considered to add value (Covert policing, sudden death, Murder, Rotherham victim, FGM, sexual assault) whilst others were not (i.e., ex prisoner).

The purpose of guest speakers at Academy falls into one of two categories: 1) to offer subject matter expertise on matters related explicitly to the detective role, such as forensic psychologists or experienced senior investigating officers, or 2) people who offer personal accounts, highlighting different perspective on policing and the criminal justice system. We are clear in the second instance that participants may not always agree or like what they hear but open-mindedness is integral to success in their roles.

We carefully evaluated feedback on guest speakers from the first Academy to refine our offer in 2021 and beyond. The most popular speakers have been retained, where their availability allowed. We have also increased the number of subject-matter experts, running a two-day mini-conference focused on serious and complex crimes.

Participants felt that Academy sessions were led too much by PowerPoint and that they were also inflexible. When trainers (SL's) wanted to adapt presentations to make them more relevant to investigations, they were told they could not be changed. This also determined participants' opinions of some sessions being 'surface level' and without depth.

Consistency of delivery is vital within the academy, especially when delivering over a number of streams and locations. This has become even more vital in 2021, where smaller teaching groups have been utilised due to COVID-19 precautions.

During the 2019 pilot academy, key areas for change and personalisation were highlighted on all sessions plans and this was communicated to seconded staff during initial training. In this way, Syndicate Leads were encouraged to make their own additions whilst also being mindful of consistency.

In 2021, we have improved the clarity of this process and allowed additional time for Syndicate Lead input.

As in many areas of the NDP, this is a place where careful balance is required between maximising the knowledge, experience and expertise of individual Syndicate Leads, remaining consistent with the requirements of the PEQF curriculum, and ensuring broad consistency of delivery across multiple streams and sites.

Observation at Academy found that Syndicate Leads were chosen primarily for their operational knowledge and received two weeks training in presentation skills prior to the Academy. Whilst they have a relatively short time at the Academy, their trainer role is important to the success or otherwise of the delivery of programme content. Police Now were already exploring opportunities to gain formal accreditation for the trainers.

We are now in final consideration of two accreditation programmes for the seconded staff team and we expect to be accrediting our Syndicate Leads in 2022.

The two-week Syndicate Lead Course (SLC) is designed to deliver much more than 'presentation skills' At its core, the SLC aims to provide Syndicate Leads with the tools to lead their syndicate of participants through the academy including during operational activities such as field training, to work effectively with each other and Police Now colleagues as one single team during a period of significant intensity, to contribute to creating and maintaining a positive academy culture, and to reflect on and improve their own performance.

Field training was inconsistent with participants reporting mixed experience during their three weeks in force orientation.

Field training has been reduced to create additional face-to-face training whilst reducing the length of Academy days. Field training is in three separate deployments: the first on response, the second on CID, and the third on serious and complex interviewing.

The emphasis of Field Training in 2021 is on spontaneity to depict authentic policing rather than manufactured goals. We hope this experience will give participants an overview of the profession they will be joining and encourage them to apply their learning in real life situations.

In terms of communication, forces received a detailed briefing on what was designed to be included in each element of Field Training, including the purpose, outcomes and placement of the days, whilst also maintaining some creative licence on the details of the experience.

It is worth noting the purpose of Field Training, which is primarily to enable participants to witness positive and less positive policing activities and to make informed decisions about what to incorporate into their own practice and what to decisively reject. We also aim to enable participants to have their first experience of confrontation in an environment where their Syndicate Lead is relatively close at hand and the event can be debriefed carefully in a structured manner. Finally, we have found that it helps to contextualise and substantially advance the classroom learning.

Field Training delivery depends heavily on individual force demand profiles and capacity. It is a very significant undertaking for forces and we contend that they, and particularly for the individual response teams hosting Field Training, deserve considerable recognition for making it happen.

Participants appeared to be unsure of the developments made to the programme moving forward.

We will continue to communicate feedback on the changes made to the programme to the 2019 participants. We will look again at whether this can be done in a more useful and dynamic manner if the information is not getting through to everyone.

Participants and professionals were critical of the nature and timing of University deadlines within the response phase of the programme. Participants noted it was a stressful time for them, learning a new role, sometimes in a new home, without friends, in a new environment. They had high workloads, worked long hours, had further portfolio expectations and then the University commitments on top of that. When some asked for flexibility, they felt both the University and Police Now were unsympathetic to their demanding workloads. In addition, this has created a real sense of negativity toward both the academic part of the programme and Police Now, with participants questioning the applicability of the academic programme to their role and the need for them to undertake it. It was suggested by some professionals that assessment deadlines could be moved, or greater flexibility shown. After March 2020, deadlines for modules are more evenly spaced and more manageable, but the real problem for participants were the ones at the same time as operational immersion on response.

One of the core requirements of the PEQF is that participants complete all of year one before progressing to year two of the DHEP (including Detective DHEP), and all initial content (contained in modules 1 and 2) must be completed before the IPS point. It is primarily these requirements that dictate the timing of the assignments. There is some anecdotal indication from recent QSA validations that this position may change and greater flexibility may be permitted in future so we are watching developments carefully.

In the meantime, we have introduced a bridging assignment for module 1 – the work for which begins during academy – to try to lessen the burden on participants as they land in force.

To support participants with the key academic skills needed on the programme, our university partner is currently building a generic landing page with links to videos and guidance on important skills, such as reflection and essay writing.

We are also currently working on improving the clarity of Protected Learning Time on both programmes and will support forces in ensuring this is granted, giving participants additional time to complete their academic modules.

In addition to this, we are working on a better system of information sharing around participant performance, both before and during the academy. This work will allow us to better match participants with Personal Academic Tutors with relevant experience

Feedback from our 2020 NGLP academy suggested that, although the same tight timelines remained, there was less frustration among participants within this initial time of landing in force.

Some participants felt as though their communication from Police Now in general had become limited to e-mails. They felt there was little engagement. Some professionals felt that Police Now had now moved on and were concentrated upon D2 rather than supporting D1 during their operational phase.

We are sorry that some participants felt this way and, while the restrictions of Covid-19 have limited some of our activity, we are continuing to work hard to offer them the best possible experience during what is a uniquely challenging time in a highly challenging role.

The LDO team are focusing on the six PDP meetings throughout the programme to ensure they are engaging, supportive and developmental. Between these meetings, we encourage participants to maintain contact with their LDO as much as possible and to utilise them for support and to aid ongoing development.

A new initiative for group coaching is being trialled in our Neighbourhoods Programme, and if successful will be introduced into NDP2. This will increase the touch points participants have with their LDOs, but also with their peers in their cohort.

We have also been focusing on improving the content and delivery of our Skills Sessions and Impact Events, all of which have been delivered digitally, and we have worked to ensure participants hear from some incredible guest speakers during their time on the programme.

Participants felt there was a missed opportunity with Syndicate Leads. They had provided a key link to the participants' home forces and there was an expectation that they would be part of ongoing support, post Academy. This has not occurred, and participants feel that this would have been useful as they had already established professional relationships with their Syndicate Leads.

The very first independent evaluation of Police Now identified the value placed on Syndicate Leads by participants and the strong connections formed between syndicate members, including the Syndicate Lead. Every subsequent evaluation, internal and external, has reaffirmed this finding. Syndicate leads can be particularly effective at helping participants navigate their first weeks and months in force, and to overcome some of the early practical challenges of getting to grips with their new role.

Police Now would like very much for Syndicate Leads to remain involved in programme delivery and participant support, in a formal or informal manner, and ranging from a few months after participant arrival in force to programme completion and beyond. Police Now believes that such involvement represents best practice and encourages partner forces to adopt this approach wherever possible.

Unfortunately, forces are not always able to release a Syndicate Lead beyond the initial academy period. This is usually due to operational demand (for example, they are required in their substantive role), prior commitments (such as awaiting formal posting), because a force wishes to undertake a competitive process to identify who will work on the in-force components of the Police Now programme, or because remaining involved in the programme does not match with the Syndicate Lead's own career pathway (for instance, they are about to be posted to a new rotation as part of a fast track or similar scheme). This is especially the case with Syndicate Leads who are also substantive detectives; the shortage of investigators in many forces means that most must return to frontline roles immediately on completion of the academy.

One of the ways we are encouraging the continuation of the relationship between the Syndicate Lead and participant is by offering an accreditation for our Syndicate Lead Course and subsequent academy activity. This can then be built upon with the proposed mentoring programme, meaning that the qualification can be progressed from level three to level four if the relationship between Syndicate Lead and participant remains past IPS. There is also the opportunity to study towards levels five or six if the relationship is maintained to FOC and beyond.

Participants felt that many peers, supervisors, mentors, and coaches did not know anything about the Police Now National Detective Programme, nor the demands placed upon participants undertaking it. Some described how senior officers had been briefed but they were aloof and had minimal contact with staff on a daily basis. Some therefore felt there was a knowledge gap about the programme that required filling.

Whilst we make very considerable efforts to identify, reach, brief and engage all in-force colleagues engaged in participant contact and programme delivery, we know that coverage is incomplete and there is more that we, and forces, can do in this area. Reaching frontline operational officers such as tutors and line managers can be very tricky due to varying rosters, aid and demand patterns. This often leaves a representative to attend the Police Now briefing and then to cascade information to others; often this proves hard for them to do, especially in terms of the detailed technical aspects of the programme such as how to use the Operational Competence Portfolio.

We have acknowledged this as a gap and are working hard to ensure clear and consistent communication with numerous stakeholders within forces, especially in terms of the details and asks of the programme. This is a key objective of every Police Now Force Partnership Manager.

A new, simplified briefing deck and resources is currently being prepared for use with our 2021 cohort and we will also be producing a full Participant Journey Overview for our 2022 participants.

Some professionals questioned what defined 'success' in relation to the National Detective Programme and what impact meant for the detective officers.

The core aims of the Police Now National Detective Programme are to:

- Work with partner forces to create efficient, effective detectives worthy of the badge and title;
- Help to raise the status of a detective career as a huge opportunity to make a positive difference to the most vulnerable in our society, encouraging existing officers and staff members to move into investigative roles;
- Increase the diversity of the police workforce by encouraging those who would not otherwise have considered a police career to join the service; and
- Contribute sustainably to improving the investigative resilience of partner forces against a background of persistent local and national investigator deficits.

We are planning to add further clarity to the role over 2021 and 2022, with a finalised launch of triangulated and measurable impact metrics for the 2022 programme. This will include measures relating to diversity and inclusion, participants' leadership development and impact in communities and policing (e.g. victim satisfaction and public confidence). The key areas of this focus will be around the university assignments, leadership and evidence based policing competency frameworks and formalised PDP sessions.

Section 3: Actions and Progress from Recommendations

The following grid details the actions taken in response to the report's recommendations.

Item	Progress	Notes
Review course content and include more practical scenarios/sessions where possible. Continue using Situation Carousels in training. Ensure practical sessions and/or role play scenarios are realistic.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sessions reviewed for 2021. • Increased practical content where possible (in-line with COVID-19 safety). • Situation Carousels maintained, to be increased in 2022.
Review content and consider expanding key sessions (e.g. interviewing).	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sessions reviewed for 2021. • Interviewing content significantly increased in 2021 with clearer structuring. • Further evaluation and improvements planned for 2022.
Increase content focused on the investigative role, thereby achieving more of a balance between general police response and investigative focus.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sessions reviewed for 2021. • Session content rewritten to ensure greater alignment with the Detective Constable role.
Consider whether leadership aspects could be moved from the Academy and factored into participant development later in the programme.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most leadership content placed at a later stage of the programme. • Full redesign of the leadership element of the course planned for 2022.
Review length of days at the Academy and establish optimum time periods to maximise learning.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days shortened and additional reflection time added.
Increase focus on wellbeing, including wider variety of wellbeing events at the Academy.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing app available to participants. • Oscar Kilo van visits to site. • Affinity network events added.
Carefully consider feedback on guest speakers used in D1 and	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All guest speakers evaluated and maintained/removed based on feedback.

develop this aspect accordingly for D2.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-conference of subject matter experts added for 2021.
Develop Academy training sessions utilising multiple teaching strategies.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional practical training added where possible due to COVID-19. • Further improvements planned for 2022.
Consider developing training skills of Syndicate Leads and link, if possible, to accreditation.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation planning underway and expected to be in place for 2022.
Develop communication with forces prior to field training and develop minimum standards of treatment and development of participants whilst in force for the weeks they are there.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidance for Field Training given to forces. • Briefing packs updated and improved.
Ensure participants know what has been developed based upon their feedback. Some institutions promote changes made on the basis of feedback (e.g. a "you said, we did" campaign to demonstrate listening and action).	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on changes has been, and will continue to be, communicated to 2019 participants.
Consider other ways for Police Now to engage/re-engage participants other than via e-mail. The recommendations above regarding involvement in recruitment and development are two ways. Additionally, consider utilising participants' assistance for future mentoring programmes.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with 2019 participants is being fully evaluated. • Content and delivery of Skills Sessions and Impact Events has been redesigned. • Evaluate the effectiveness of group coaching to develop stronger peer to peer learning and increased contact with the LDO
Consider ways to ensure there is joined up working in relation to continued support of participants from Police Now post-Academy.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing to improve implementation of the programme through a revised force governance process. This is to ensure that Police Now are working effectively with each partner force to create the right operational environment to support participant progress. Frequent meetings between Police Now and force SPOCs will provide the opportunity to raise evident issues and jointly agree on solutions. • Briefing packs and communication channels have been redesigned.
Consider developing the role of Syndicate Leads to include formal support of participants in force after the Academy.	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing work aligned with accreditation of the Syndicate Lead role.
Together with the University, consider the timings of the module assessments within the first three months of operational duties and/or consider greater flexibility with deadlines.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some constraints due to PEQF delivery, which have been fed back to the College of Policing. • Bridging module introduced to allow participants to complete some of the assignment work while at Academy. • Additional support offered on key academic skills.
Consider how the academic programme can be more tailored to the operational environment so that participants see greater benefit to engagement (i.e. impacting investigations).	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full module rewrite underway to improve the alignment between the academic and operational elements of the programme.
Develop clear definitions of success in relation to programme outcomes and professional	Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to ensure key areas of success are defined through assignments, PDP sessions and competency frameworks.

<p>impact. Further research to identify appropriate criteria for effective detective practice.</p>		
<p>Develop a briefing document to be provided to participants, mentors, coaches, supervisors, managers and peers, setting out the programme, key dates and competing demands. This could be developed from the existing materials such as the Force Partner National Detective Programme Implementation Guide.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All briefing documents improved and updated for 2021. • Full Participant Journey Overview to be introduced for 2022.