THE JUBILEE CENTRE
FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

Insight Series

Police History, Police Education in England and Wales, and the Limited Role of Professional Ethics

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Introduction

The aim of this Insight Series paper, which was written as part of the ongoing Virtues in Policing Project, run in the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, is to provide an overview of the history of policing in the U.K. as well as the history of police education in England and Wales.[1] Only by being cognisant of this background information will we begin to understand the limited role that professional ethics, in general, and virtuous moral reflection, in particular, plays so far in the current educational provision for aspiring police officers – as will be briefly explained in the final section of this paper.

As a leader in rigorous academic research into applied virtue ethics, the Jubilee Centre operates on the assumption that good moral character is educable and practicable, and that professionals operate better when practising virtuously. The Jubilee Centre promotes virtue ethics as the theory of choice for professionals, without wanting to underplay the extent to which deontological and utilitarian reasoning also have a role to play in wise professional decision-making. Virtue ethics is gradually becoming the dominant ethical option in various fields of professional ethics, such as business ethics and nursing ethics. However, the complex and somewhat convoluted history of police education in England and Wales – and the recency of the professionalisation agenda in policing[2] – goes some distance towards explaining why virtue ethics may have a way to go before being able to inform police education to any significant degree.

History of Policing in the UK

The police in Britain occupies a unique position; it was the first to be established by a representative government, and, for a large portion of its history, was 'regarded as an exemplar of civility' (Reiner, 1992: 435), successfully role-modelling the ideals of investigation, fighting crime and keeping peace. Like many modern organisations, the origin of policing in Western countries can be traced back to the industrial revolution (Rogers and Frevel, 2018). Policing and the role of the constable in the U.K., going by various names and statutes, is one of the oldest professions, dating back to 1285. In 1829, the Metropolitan Police was established, making it the first full-time formal organisation for policing in London (Emsley, 1996). It was this establishment of the Metropolitan Police by Sir Robert Peel, who at the time was the Home Secretary and later served as the British Prime Minister, that marked the introduction of 'modern' policing in the Western World.

Due to the police's industrial-revolution origin, the organisation adopted a structure suited to the times, which was heavily reliant on hierarchical reporting and supervision structures in which the front-line constables were separated from strategic policy-makers (Hebdon and Kirkpatrick, 2006). Such a para-military structure of policing is not well suited to external demands for change and accountability, often utilising out-dated management and leadership practices (Rogers and Frevel, 2018). In order to be suitably equipped to make a meaningful contribution in modern society, new organisational, management and leadership models are necessary. One of the most important areas identified, through which such change can occur, is the education and training of new recruits.

The training and education of police officers in England and Wales has been described as fragmented and complicated (Bolton, 2005). Until recently, these practices have remained fairly insular, having been run independently of the general education sector, and in what has been described as an almost constant state of flux (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). From 1829 and for a long time thereafter, the training provided to police officers was minimal and consisted primarily of drill-based exercises,

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[1] Law enforcement is organised separately in each of the legal systems of the United Kingdom: England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. To avoid complications, given different educational and practical traditions within those systems, the current study has focussed mostly on policing and police education in England and Wales.

[2] Professional policing in Ireland pre-dates that of the mainland; however, the focus of this paper is on England and Wales.

which responded to the primary needs of the time: namely foot patrol and the occasional controlling of riots (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). As the work of policing became increasingly complex, greater effort and time was spent on the training of new recruits[3]. Specialised departments were established, which included the Criminal Investigation Department in 1878, corresponding with specialised training courses provided in large urban forces. In 1907, the Metropolitan Police Training School was established in London to provide basic police training, in operation until 1974, and was then rebuilt in Hendon.

The Desborough Committee, founded after the First World War, sought to standardise the conditions of service and to elevate the police's social and economic status, which Martin and Wilson (1969) speculate was 'a conscious attempt to put police work on a more professional footing' (as cited in Tong and Hallenberg, 2018: 18). One of the committee's notable recommendations was the improvement and assimilation of education and training throughout the Police Service. In 1934, the Metropolitan Police College was established at Hendon, a military-style training institution designed to prepare serving officers for senior rank. After the Second World War, the National Police College was established at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, providing both residential and non-residential courses for junior and senior officers, as well as short courses; from 1979 it was known as the Police Staff College. The Metropolitan Police Training School was also established after the Second World War, offering a 17-week foundational training course for recruit constables, run at Hendon until 2007 (Shohel *et al.*, 2018).

In the post-war period, there was an increase in police specialisation and division of labour, with a reoriented focus on 'technology, specialisation and managerial professionalism' (Reiner, 2010: 79, as cited in Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). During this period there was a growing investment in the training of new recruits, which led to the establishment of regional, centralised training in District Training Centres (DTCs) instead of it occurring at local forces, with a committee of Chief Constables responsible for the curriculum design, and modelling teaching methods used in the military (HMIC, 2002). The visible patrolling of the 'bobby on the beat' became less common, as the practice was seen as uneconomical, and instead officers became less engaged with the public, which arguably led to a decrease in public confidence (Bolton, 2005). The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a renewed politicisation of policing; there was also a shift away from drills and legislation towards enhanced public relations and the design and delivery of centralised training (HMIC, 2002), as well as full integration of female officers and active recruitment from minority ethnic groups (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). The inclusion of training in social skills, communication studies, psychology and sociology, among others, heralded official acknowledgment that the role of the police officer required more than implementation and adherence to the law – yet ethics training continued to be scarce.

The 1980s were arguably a defining decade for policing in the UK. Dealing with legacy issues from the 1970s brought further changes, driven largely by uncertainty regarding the role of policing in society. The new Conservative government implemented the full recommendations of the Edmund-Davies review, which saw police pay increase by 48% to bring it in line with other professions, as well as an increase in police numbers (Winsor, 2011). The inquiry into the Brixton Riots of 1981 by Lord Scarman was an important juncture in identifying controversial policies in the policing environment (Constable and Smith, 2015) and emphasised the need for operational effectiveness, political accountability, reconsideration of police priorities and economic viability (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). Increased attention was placed on ethical practice, and the seeds of professionalisation were sown with the introduction of the tutor constable scheme, race relations and workplace training. The mid-1980s saw the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), the procedural changes of which necessitated further training in its application, as well as the use of mentors and the need to take local community views into account when making policing decisions – emphasising

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[3] During the 1860's and 1870's, policing was transitioning towards becoming a trade in many police forces, and during this time training manuals were introduced.

the relevance of 'policing by consent'. Training during this decade was characterised by placing equal emphasis on theory and practical skills, with a student-centred educational philosophy (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). Thus, in many ways, the foundation of the PEQF can be traced back to the 1980s.

In the 1990s, DTCs continued to deliver initial police training, many of which were still run along militaristic lines, with a focus on fitness, discipline, drills, law and procedure. Despite suggestions that the training provided was no longer fit for purpose, and recommendations made for graduate entry into policing, there was little change in the provision (Constable and Smith, 2015). In 2002, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary advised that if policing 'is to be viewed as a profession, the initial training and development provided must be comparable with other professions' (2002: 43). Yet the 31 weeks of training received by a probationer police officer was considered inadequate, and that no other profession would allow a new recruit to undertake professional responsibilities after so little training or without the awarding of a recognised qualification (HMIC, 2002). Indeed, it was considered 'highly unlikely that the current format meets the needs of [policing in] the twenty-first century' (HMIC, 2002: 43).

Further changes in initial training and the wider policy environment were driven by the identification of controversial issues in policing, such as the MacPherson Report in 1999 concerning the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the 'Training Matter' report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2002, and the BBC's 'Secret Policeman' documentary in 2003, which highlighted, among many challenging issues, evidence of institutional racism (Constable and Smith, 2015; Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). In 2005, the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) was launched, as a response to the 2002 HMIC report, which led to the decentralising of initial training and a more tailored approach to the contextual needs of officers. The delivery of the 26-week IPLDP training of new recruits comprised four phases: (i) induction, (ii) community placement, (iii) supervised patrol and (iv) independent patrol. Local police forces were responsible for running the training programme, and since 2010 a Diploma in Policing was awarded upon successful completion.

As Ramshaw and Soppitt (2018) note, a wave of modernisation and reform could be witnessed in the structure and nature of policing in England and Wales at the dawn of the new millennium. The community policing model transitioned into neighbourhood policing (Millie and Herrington, 2006), and more attention was paid to leadership and management (Neyroud, 2011). Alongside this, there has also been an increased interest in intelligence-led policing (Ratcliffe, 2016), and a greater focus on evidence-based policing (Goode and Lumsden, 2018), which remains relevant today (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Stanko, 2020), as well as the embedding of ethical codes throughout all areas of policing operations and practice (Millie and Blackler, 2017).

The complexity of modern policing in England and Wales was mirrored in the changes witnessed locally, while also reflecting the challenges of contemporary society that are evidenced globally (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; Wall and Williams, 2013). In order to appropriately deal with these contemporary challenges, and following the cumulative evidence and recommendations that achievement of recognised qualifications be a requirement for recruitment into policing (see e.g. Flanagan, 2008), a watershed review by Neyroud (2011) led to the establishment of a new professional qualification framework for policing (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Hunter *et al.*, 2019). This new academic focus of police training aligns with the need for policing to provide a more effective and knowledge-based response to contemporary issues (Hallenberg *et al.*, 2017). Holdaway (2017) argues that the professionalisation agenda of policing mirrors contemporary ambitions of social and political importance that seek to enhance public confidence in the police and tackle corruption. The rhetoric of professionalisation in policing highlights how academic education is a core characteristic of a profession, and is necessary for work that requires significant responsibility, high levels of complexity and guaranteed competence (Hallenberg *et al.*, 2017). As such, the professionalisation agenda of policing in the U.K. has been a driving force for the overhaul of policing educational requirements and, most notably, replacement of vocational training programmes with higher-level degree offerings across the service (Hunter *et al.*, 2019).

How Police Education is Organised in England and Wales

From the start of the 2020–21 academic year, substantial transformations in the educational requirements for professional police officers in England and Wales officially came into effect. All new entrants into the policing profession must gain acceptance into the police force through one of three available professional routes, two of which are for university graduates (Brown, 2018; College of Policing, 2016). The university entrance routes are either through the completion of an undergraduate pre-join professional policing degree (see Table 1), or a 2-year graduate conversion programme for candidates whose undergraduate degree was not in professional policing (Ramshaw *et al.*, 2018). The third entrance route is through a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), which is run collaboratively between specific police forces and partnering academic institutions (see further below and in Table 1). The standardised national framework embedded within the Police Education Qualification Framework outlines the minimum qualification level acceptable for different rank and level of practice, for both officers and staff within the police force (College of Policing, 2018; Ramshaw *et al.*, 2018). Accordingly, it is proposed that constables should have a minimum qualification level 6 (Bachelor's Degree), progressing to superintendents requiring a minimum qualification level 7 (Master's Degree), and similar requirements for police staff.

These changes fundamentally stem from the origin of two sources, one being the foundation of the College of Policing (CoP), the professional body that is responsible for policing standards in England and Wales, and the second, a mandate from the Coalition Government to the CoP for the radical transformation of how police education, training and development is organised in England and Wales (Hough and Stanko, 2019; Wood, 2018). This transformation of policing in England and Wales into a graduate profession aligns with developments in other countries, such as Australia and the U.S.A., in which a Western-style of policing has been adopted (Rogers and Frevel, 2018). The professionalisation of policing follows similar professional qualifications of allied occupations, such as social work, teaching and nursing (Flanagan, 2008; Simmell-Binning and Towers, 2017); and aligns with greater interagency partnerships, which see police officers interacting with degree-qualified professionals (Rogers and Frevel, 2018). Thus, after over a century of independent training in policing craft and recognition of the increasing complexity of policing since the approach of the new millennium (HMIC, 1999), the requirement for greater professionalism through education and training was recommended by the Neyroud (2011) report, proposing that the police move from 'being a service that acts professionally to becoming a professional service' (p.129).

Since receiving the mandate, the professionalisation agenda of policing in England and Wales has been driven forwards through implementation of the Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) by the CoP (Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019). The PEQF was published in 2016, and while it accounts for the wide-ranging educational needs across the service, a key element is that new police recruits require a Level 6 entry point qualification, namely a university degree. This degree level requirement for all new recruits thus means that a degree level qualification in policing must be acquired prior to recruitment, upon entry into the force, or within the first three years of service (Hough and Stanko, 2019). According to the PEQF, police constables may gain entrance into the police force through three permitted routes:

- An accredited pre-join university degree in professional policing, which was introduced from the 2019-20 academic year, requiring prospective police recruits to complete a degree in policing prior to joining the police force;

- A Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), which was introduced in 2018, and involves a three-year programme in which operational policing work is undertaken in

parallel with academic studies.[4] These PCDAs involve partnerships between different forces and accredited universityies (see list below); and

- The Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), which was introduced from the 2020–21 academic year, and which involves two years' work at an accredited police force for recruits that have already graduated with an undergraduate degree that may be unrelated to policing.

The CoP has discretionary power in the accreditation of pre-professional police degree university programmes and PCDAs. Yet, despite the professionalisation and legitimisation of policing being driven through the route of academic qualifications, understanding of how police education can be applied in practice remains limited. Further limitations in understanding these recent changes include challenges and concerns regarding how organisations can interpret this knowledge and best utilise their new recruits (Williams *et al.*, 2019).

The proposed benefits of police professionalisation via academic education appear to be numerous and of both intrinsic and extrinsic value. Organisational culture within the police force is a topic that has received much negative press attention, and academic research in this area foregrounds the negative influence the culture has on the individuals within the force and how they fulfil their occupational duties/roles (Constable and Smith, 2015). Orchestrating cultural change and the eradication of improper practices appears necessary, with enhanced ethical awareness and greater respect for adherence to rules and regulations recommended as tools to remedy inefficient and corrupt practices. Education, it is suggested, may play an important role in mitigating some of these negative influences, particularly the widespread concern regarding policing's discretionary nature (Heslop, 2011).[5] Higher educational attainment is also associated with decreased use of physical and verbal force in interactions between police and the public, fewer complaints, less disciplinary action within forces, higher levels of satisfaction among the public, greater knowledge, recognition and appreciation of differences in values and lifestyles among people from different cultural, minority and ethnic groups (e.g. Brown, 2018; Paoline and Terrill, 2007; Paterson, 2011; Wimshurst and Ransley, 2007).

The rationale for academic entrance requirements into policing, driven by the increasing rhetoric of police professionalisation (Cockcroft, 2015), also includes the more familiar benefits associated with university level education (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). Indeed, the graduate value in policing also rests on the university experience itself, which is considered to stimulate the imagination and curiosity of its students, to broaden their horizons, improve verbal and written communication skills, provide self-directed learning opportunities and foster intellectual confidence (Brown, 2018; Glover *et al.*, 2002; Nellis, 2001). Applied to policing specifically, the more 'generic' skills that may be inculcated during one's university experience include critical thinking skills, as well as ability to conduct research and undertake analysis (Green and Linsdell, 2010; Brown, 2018).

The more general benefits of degree-level education and university experience also raise critical questions about the value and purpose of degree apprenticeships. General criticism about the apprentice degree route is targeted at the required learning hours in comparison to a full-time undergraduate degree. According to Lambert (2016), a minimum of 900 hours' worth of learning is required for an apprenticeship, compared to 3,600 hours for a university degree. While this might be the case more generally for apprenticeships in the U.K., the picture is somewhat different for policing. Student officers recruited through the PCDA and DHEP routes are given full-time, salaried contracts. Within the 40 hours they are contracted to work per week, 20% of their time is allocated for engaging with academic content and 'off-the job learning', which is provided through a partner university (CoP, 2018, 2019; Shohel *et al.*, 2020). Thus, for these apprenticeship routes, only 720

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[4] This is the most complex route and there have been delays to setting it up in some constabularies.
[5] Notably, the 'discretionary nature' of policing is rarely, if ever, analysed in the relevant literature in terms of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) – and there is conspicuous absence of references to virtue ethical or, indeed, any moral theoretical sources.

hours of allocated learning time is provided. In practice, students and academics may consider 20% of working hours an insufficient amount of time spent on the academic element of the degree, especially when compared to full-time university students. While the PCDA and DHEP are intended to be blended learning experiences, in the syllabus provided by the CoP, as detailed in the National Policing Curriculum, the required coursework is vast (Shohel *et al.*, 2020). In addition, higher education advocates commend the value of the liberalising environment and the diversity of people and ideas that are nourished on university campuses, which can promote greater interpersonal relationships, enhanced tolerance of interpersonal differences and an enriched understanding and appreciation for multi-cultural societies. These findings are in contrast to the often-limiting occupational cultures that are existent in some police forces (Brown, 2018; Williams *et al.*, 2019).

Yet, ultimately, the intention of the PEQF is to provide consistency in terms of design, delivery and assessment of initial police training across England and Wales by accredited providers, delivering on the need to bring the profession of policing in line with other graduate entrance professional programmes. Through implementation of the PEQF it is intended that 'by 2025 policing will be a profession with a more representative workforce that will align the right skills, powers and experience to meet challenging requirements' of contemporary professional policing in England and Wales (Brown, 2021; CoP, 2019).

Table 1: Police Forces Offering Entrance via PCDA (https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/whos-recruiting/apprenticeship)

Police Forces currently recruiting via the apprenticeship route	Police Forces that will soon be recruiting via the apprenticeship route
Devon and Cornwall Police	Gloucestershire Constabulary
Dorset Police	Wiltshire Police
Hertfordshire Constabulary	Avon and Somerset Constabulary
Suffolk Constabulary	Hampshire Constabulary
Norfolk Constabulary	Northamptonshire Police
Dyfed-Powys Police	Nottinghamshire Police
West Midlands Police	Derbyshire Constabulary
Staffordshire Police	Lincolnshire Police
Cumbria Constabulary	Sussex Police
Metropolitan Police Service	Surrey Police
	Kent Police
	Essex Police
	Thames Valley Police
	Northumbria Police
	Cleveland Police
	Durham Constabulary
	Gwent Police
	South Wales Police
	North Wales Police

	Warwickshire Police
	West Mercia Police
	Bedfordshire Police
	Cambridge Constabulary
	Cheshire Constabulary
	Merseyside Police
	Greater Manchester Police
	Lancashire Constabulary
	West Yorkshire Police
	North Yorkshire Police
	South Yorkshire Police
	Humberside Police
	City of London Police

Table 2: List of CoP Accredited Pre-Join-Degree-in-Professional-Policing Providers
(https://www.college.police.uk/career-learning/joining-new-pc/universities-offering-professional-policing-degree)

Accredited Providers
Anglia Ruskin University
Bangor University
Birmingham City University
Canterbury Christ Church University
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Coventry University
De Montford University
Edge Hill University
Lancaster University with Blackpool & the Fylde College
Liverpool John Moores University
Newcastle College University Centre
Nottingham Trent University
Sheffield Hallam University
Staffordshire University
Teesside University
University College London
University of Bedfordshire

University of Central Lancashire
University of Chester
University of Cumbria
University of Derby
University of East London
University of Gloucestershire
University of Hull
University of Law
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
University of South Wales
University of Suffolk
University of Sunderland
University of Wales Trinity St David
University of West London
University of Winchester
University of Wolverhampton
Wrexham Glyndwr University
York St. John University

The Role of Reflection and Professional Ethics in Police Education in England and Wales

The National Police Curriculum (NPC) is set out by the CoP for the three new entrance routes in order to become a police constable, and is briefly outlined in the PEQF (CoP, 2020). Through collaboration and consultation exercises, police forces and accredited universities are required to develop their degree programme and modules in accordance with the NPC requirements for the pre-join degree, PCDA and DHEP (Shohel *et al.*, 2020). The NPC and PEQF were designed to enhance police officers' adaptability throughout their service, and thus sought to develop individuals' skills in critical thinking and analysis, problem solving, reflection, implementation of evidence-based practice, and independent decision making (CoP, 2020).

The PEQF emphasises the importance of policing as an informed and learned profession. One avenue in which to achieve this is through the inclusion of conscious critical reflection, which is essential for police officers to respond to and better understand the contextual nuances of their local environment and community needs. The curriculum also emphasises the *Code of Ethics* and the importance of diversity and inclusion. Other topics, aimed to equip officers with the ability to tackle the challenges of contemporary policing, include criminology, crime-prevention, counter-terrorism, vulnerability and digital policing. Practical support and development are provided to promote leadership potential among new recruits and support the wellbeing and resilience of newly recruited police constables (CoP, 2020).

While there is a standardised curriculum, there are no standardised learning materials, and the modules that the universities develop may have different nomenclature. Rather, the overall programme offering and modules must fulfil the requirements outlined by the NPC (Shohel *et al*., 2020). Williams, Norman and Rowe (2019) argue that there is 'a risk of limiting opportunities

provided by the PEQF to deliver a real change to current police training unless the curriculum includes wider forms of knowledge, from the historical research on policing to the evaluative research tantamount to the 'what works' agenda' (2019: 260). Their research highlights that social science theory can empower policing students in their skill and ability to undertake the challenging decision-making situations they will face in the role, and that this will ultimately enhance their professionalism (Norman and Williams, 2017; Williams *et al*., 2019). There is hope that inclusion of other theoretical knowledge might be introduced into the PEQF and associated curriculum in a way that will serve to enhance the PEQF's educational offering, as well as the broader aims of a better equipped police service that is able to deliver the calibre of policing required by contemporary society.

Within the PEQF (CoP, 2020), apart from the explicit indication that the *Code of Ethics* for policing is a core to the curriculum for all three entrance routes, there is no mention of the role that general professional ethics or virtue ethics, in particular, plays in the curriculum. Other elements in which ethics and virtue ethics feature in the CoP have to do with the National Decision Model (NDM) and Competency Values Framework (CVF). While these are not mentioned explicitly in the PEQF, there is little doubt that they would be an important feature in each of the three entrance routes. The *Code of Ethics* is a well-developed document, promoting the qualities and virtues that are traditionally ascribed to the professions. However, what does feature far more explicitly is that the new entry routes 'are rooted in an evidence-based approach' (CoP, 2020: 8). Indeed, Williams and colleagues (2019) comment that 'the PEQF as articulated by the CoP, has seemingly become synonymous with a narrow EBP mantra' (2020: 260). These findings suggest that universities and other delivery partners need to be able to monitor, evaluate and develop the NPC so that necessary ethical theory, and other educational practices such as critical *phronetic* reflection, can be included as core elements of the PEQF.

To exclude this process and these elements of the curriculum runs the risk of reducing the PEQF to one more substitute training tool instead of the educational enhancement of policing knowledge that it was designed to be (Williams *et al.*, 2019). A narrow instrumentalist understanding of the PEQF stands in sharp contrast to the explicit moral mission of policing and reduces, in the view of current author, the value of the new professionalisation agenda.

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