

Education or Indoctrination?

An exploration of the resistance towards making policing a degree-level profession.

In 2018, the first cohort of Police Constable Degree Apprentice (PCDA) student officers embarked on their learning journey to become the first officers within the UK to be required to obtain a degree or have one as part of a condition of joining the police service (University of Derby, 2021). This seismic change to police recruitment had come about as a result of various consultations around police training dating back to the Neyroud (2010) *Review of Police Leadership and Training*; formally proposed in the *Policing Vision 2025* (NPCC, 2015) and ratified through a unanimous vote at a National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) meeting in 2015 (Byrne, 2023). Yet only eight years later, a similarly unanimous vote by the same organisation representing the top table of British policing, overturned the requirement for policing to be a degree-only level profession. The aim of this opinion paper is to offer a theory behind the reasons for this 'U-turn' of an organisation, from one extreme to another, drawing on prior research evidence, leadership and management theory, and ongoing developments within the police training sphere, to inform this. Whilst it will consider the bigger picture incorporating political pressures, it primarily limits the investigation into a solely operational policing perspective. It will argue on this basis, that whilst there has been significant external political pressure regarding higher education approaches for new police officers, the ultimate decision on which pathways to recruit police entrants rests solely with chief constables. It then examines the operational pressures thereon which might impact on that choice, regardless of external political demands; along with the personal responsibility of chief officers in exemplifying behaviours encouraging of enhanced learning for their officers.

This argument is born from what Eric St. Johnston, former Chief Inspector of Constabulary, eloquently described as a chief constable's autonomy that sees them operationally "only answerable to God, the [monarch] and their conscience" (St Johnston, 1978, p. 153); likely based on the judgement of Lord Denning in 1968 that a chief is "not the servant of anyone, save of the law itself [...] He is answerable to the law, and to the law alone." (R v. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner ex parte Blackburn, 1968). This was a view that various observers still felt held true several generations later, despite the

introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), intended to somewhat limit it (Lambert, 1986; Reiner, 1992; NPCC, 2018). This perception has however been severely tested in recent years, but proven when former Home Secretary Suella Braverman was fired by the Prime Minister over a perception that she had delved too far into what firmly fell into operational policing matters within the Metropolis, and compounded this by publicly accusing the police of political bias (Francis, 2023). In this regard, the fragile tripartite power balance between local accountability, national oversight, and operational police autonomy, remains largely unchanged since the *Police Act 1964*, despite the introduction of PCCs in 2012 (Cooper, 2021).

Training of new recruits falls firmly into the operational sphere of policing, and whilst curricula are set nationally by the arms-length government body the College of Policing (CoP), recruitment and subsequent training pathways in theory at least, fall solely under the purview of chief constables. Whilst therefore a unilateral decree by Suella Braverman, mere days into a post to which she brought little-to-no prior knowledge of policing, to reverse a decade-long policy of her own party to require policing to be a degree-level profession is eminently relevant to the topic at hand (Braverman, 2022), the decision to utilise such non-degree pathways rests solely with each individual police force.

Moreover, this decision rests almost solely with the leaders of those police forces – the chief constables, with whom the ultimate buck stops for the strategic vision of their forces. It is indeed to the chief constables that St. Johnston (1978) and the subsequent observers cited above were referring to, as holding the ultimate operational power and independence. This is perfectly evidenced with the differing approaches various chief officers took towards the introduction of the various Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) pathways through which recruits to the police could enter the service.

In 2019, as the initial deadline for non-degree entry loomed, Lincolnshire's Chief Constable Bill Skelly sought to instigate a judicial review of the PEQF, and the PCDA especially. The crux of his argument was the necessity for officers to have to return to higher education institutions in years two and three of their probation, and that this would represent an abstraction to the force equivalent to 40 officers a year (Creaghan, 2019). Scott Chilton of Hampshire Constabulary was also very scathing of the programmes and their abstraction rates from front-line policing, citing "100,000 hours" that could be regained for front-line policing with the abolition of the degree pathways. He was

sufficiently partisan with these opinions that within weeks of Braverman's reneging on the mandatory degree entry, he launched a fully-fledged alternative entry route entirely independent of policing's governing and regulatory body the CoP (Potter, 2023); suggestive that this had been being worked on for some time beforehand. Nick Adderley of Northamptonshire Police too gave scathing public comments about the programmes, specifically surrounding the suitability of recruits and necessity for a degree, before the first cohorts had even graduated (Adderley & Vincent, 2021); although he later retracted this view – far less publicly.

Conversely, in an example of a chief constable with opposing viewpoints, Craig Guildford of Nottinghamshire Police was not only the first to introduce the PCDA nationally, but also pioneered an entirely new and additional degree-entry route to bolt-on to the PCDA, in the guise of the Military Service Leavers' Pathway to Policing (MSLPP) (University of Derby, 2021; University of Derby, 2022). Neyroud too, wrote his *Review* whilst a serving chief constable. The influence therefore of chief constables seems pivotal for the acceptance – or otherwise – of the police entry routes. This individual influence is further exemplified by a desire from some chiefs to have the new non-degree (and non-academically accredited) entry route, actually awarded accreditation in some manner by degree-awarding bodies (outside of CoP intent), identifying the loss of the recognition afforded their student officers.

In further credence to the idea that it is chief constables specifically that set the force agendas, and not even leadership ranks more generally, there are several studies that strongly demonstrate the inability of officers at middle-rank to make, inform or even influence policy and direction. Williams et al. (2019) show how newly educated officers up to the rank of chief inspector were unable to introduce new ways of working into their forces, and Campbell & Colover (2020) demonstrated that even superintending ranks were unable to make significant or meaningful policy change. This is evidenced regarding training specifically, that within Nottinghamshire Police, whilst a superintendent overseeing training and recruitment was publicly speaking out against the PEQF (Verma, n.d.), the chief constable supported it. It therefore seems apparent that policies around training are under the exclusive purview of the chief constables.

Rutherford (1993) shows that the views of police leaders can have significant impact on those who work for them and their organisations overall. This is entirely aligned with

Bandura's (1977) theory of Social Learning, whereby juniors learn traits, behaviours and attitudes from their seniors. Typically this is linked to children learning from adult role models, but applies equally to any junior / senior relationship. Furthermore, Rutherford identified that the views held by chief officers were typically conservative and orthodox in terms of hierarchy. Whilst he was writing thirty years ago, this militaristic, hierarchical nature of policing has been identified repeatedly in research and reports throughout the intervening period to today e.g. (Panzarella, 2003; Neyroud, 2010; Ramshaw, et al., 2019; Tyson & Charman, 2023). Indeed, it was such attitudes that have prompted repeated calls for a move from such transactional leadership approaches, to a far more transformational, flattened command structure (Bass, 1985; Dobby, et al., 2004; Neyroud, 2010; Campbell & Kodz, 2011; Ramshaw, et al., 2019).

Paoline (2003) too adds further evidence that leaders are responsible for creating cultures within policing; offered further credence by the CoP twelve years later (College of Policing, 2015). This can either be through a shared respect or dislike of such leaders by subordinates, or by those chiefs fostering or eradicating mindsets within their organisations through encouragement or punishment – 'carrot' incentives or 'stick punishments' (Cohen, et al., 2019). It is therefore crucial for chief officers to lead by example (Casey & Mitchell, 2007), and if policing's professional body in the CoP, and the top table as the NPCC, are calling for policing to be more transformational, less pyramidal and become a qualified profession, senior officers need to be seen, heard and demonstrate their support thereof. Influential New York Police Commissioner Bill Bratton acknowledged the power of positive PR from chief officers towards new initiatives when he opined:

"Departmental memos can establish formal guidelines, but headlines give cops the feeling," he said. We can issue directives telling them we're changing procedure, and they'll take it as an order; let them see the commissioner on the [TV] ... and they'll get the picture. It will affect their lives." (Bratton & Knobler, 1998, p. xxix)

This mimicry of leaders is further understood in the business world, where there is ample evidence that emulating of bosses by followers is commonplace, often in the

expectation of favourable promotion opportunities or pay rises, under what is referred to as Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This imitation is further explained through the idea that subordinates see those of higher stature as having achieved that position through their traits and styles, and thus seek to replicate those, in the hopes of further advancement themselves (Hunter, et al., 2013; Lian, et al., 2020). However, this emulation plays a significant hand into the concept of 'groupthink', whereby those who hold opinions that run contrary to 'accepted' views are afraid to offer those ideas for fear of ridicule or being outcast (White, 1952; Janis, 1971). In this specific context of policing education, those officers who might suggest that the additional educational opportunities are beneficial, are singled out by a policing culture which is far from tolerant of those who speak out against a perceived prevailing viewpoint or attitude (Savage, 2016). As a compounding problem for those senior officers who may want to bring in changes, "it's difficult to fight for change at the top of a system you've been very successful in" (Charman, 2024).

The intrinsic conservatism of police leaders is additionally problematic when the prevailing consensus around workforce performance almost unanimously concurs that staff who are and feel empowered with additional trust, responsibilities and skills perform significantly better than a limited workforce e.g (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973; Tschohl, 1998), and this specifically includes the British police (Barton & Barton, 2011). This additional empowerment however is not something which is easily quantifiable, especially to a generation of police chiefs where the formative years of their careers were during the target-driven culture of New Labour's period in office at the turn of the millennium (Talbot, 2000; Flannagan, 2008; Sutherland, 2020); when Reiner (1992) convincingly demonstrated that chiefs are unquestionably the product of the environment they came of age during. In the early 2000's arrests and detections quite literally counted; staff development didn't. This was also the time at which police leadership was being identified as being militaristic (Panzarella, 2003) and transactional (Dobby, et al., 2004).

In line with the mimicry idea, this was the leadership culture experienced during the current crop of leaders' formative years, and thus is the management style they had to espouse to achieve promotion themselves. This is a problem exacerbated at the present time by the relatively short tenure of chief constables at just 3.65 years and which is on

ongoing downward trend (NPCC, 2018). The five-year tenure of a PCC and the pressure incumbent on them to manifest visible results in crime reduction and increases in officer visibility to achieve re-election (Quigley & LaFrance, 2017), combines with chief constable brevity to ensure that short-term goals are prioritised over long-term strategy.

Traditionalist views are further evident with the insular nature of policing (Murray, 2002; Casey, 2023); a profession which is notoriously reluctant to seek or welcome support, advice or guidance from people outside of it (Goode & Lumsden, 2018). This is especially true of academic researchers, where forces and officers have been dismissive and even mistrustful of those who have historically criticised police practice (Reiner, 1992; Canter, 2004; Goode & Lumsden, 2018). The operational professionals do not enjoy being told how or what to do by those who have not 'done' (Goode & Lumsden, 2018). "Police culture does not highly value 'book learning' or academic ability as a skill for police officers" (Fielding, 1988, p. 58; Andrews, 2023). Andrews (2023b) opines that this is born out of a strong tribalist or 'in-group / out-group' mentality, which is engendered through the shared uniform wearing of police officers, creating an isolationist culture through the mechanism of 'enclotted cognition' (Tajfel, 1978; Adam & Galinsky, 2012). It also likely stems from Durkheim's (1893) 'structural functionalism', whereby groups perceive themselves as fulfilling a specific role within society. In this instance a succinct summation would be: 'we are police officers and you are not. Do not tell us what to do or how to do it'; even if those giving advice are experts in their relevant fields, including those not necessarily relating to operational policing. This even extends to 'outsiders' who are not only recognised as having significant skills and talent of use to the police service, who become 'insiders' through direct entry at superintendent level, but whose value is still dismissed by chief officers (Campbell & Colover, 2020).

In this specific instance, professional educators are being brought in to train new police officers; moreover they bring an educational philosophy of criticality, reflection and development (Peach & Clare, 2017). This clearly does not make for a good bedfellow with what has been seen to be a transactional, conservative, hierarchical police senior leadership (Casey, 2023; Tyson & Charman, 2023). Therefore, where the foundational intent of the PEQF was to create a new generation of officers empowered to think differently and make better, more informed decisions (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2017), this stands in direct opposition to both existing police leadership and

general cultures. Police 'culture' is a deeply entrenched collection "of norms, beliefs, and values which determines their behaviour, both amongst themselves and operationally out on the streets" (Loftus, 2009, p. 4), and something which is not easily or quickly changed (Cockroft, 2013; Casey, 2023).

Andrews (2023) showed how student officers on the PCDA programme, felt that senior officers both didn't understand the programme and its complex requirements, nor value the research work done by the student officers. There were only marginal improvements for that perception amongst colleagues and supervisors. The new generation of officers armed with critical thinking skills were entering a culture that was already sceptical of internal police training schools (Marenin, 2004), and thus significantly more so for training undertaken by 'outsiders' – and academics at that. Andrews (2023) demonstrates well that the views of the vocally critical chief constables had a significant effect on the popular acceptance of the PEQF pathways. This demonstrates a culture therefore of a protectionist police leadership, who are concerned with maintaining their own position in the hierarchy (Adlam, 2002), having often battled hard and tactically over many years and making several personal sacrifices to get to such a position of power of being answerable only to God and the monarch (Reiner, 1992; St Johnston, 1978).

It appears therefore that the abandonment of the degree entry pathways has come about largely from the argument from tradition, that 'it's always been done this way' and therefore remains a sound approach still. This attitude was perhaps compounded by the demands under 'Operation Uplift' to train unparalleled numbers of new officers, at a time when fully one-third of the police workforce has less than five-years' service (Gov.uk, 2022). This has clearly presented significant operational challenges for chief constables, in managing abstractions from already inexperienced front-line teams. It was not however a problem that could not have been foreseen, with better leadership and workforce succession planning. It could be seen that the desire by Hampshire Chief Constable Scott Chilton to scrap the degree entry routes comes not out of any belief about the efficacy or attractiveness of alternative entry routes, but that 23% of his force are trainees (Potter, 2023). Moreover the force has the second highest resignation rate nationally of recruits taken on in the last two years per capita (Clinton, 2022), and has one-in-eight (12.5%) of its workforce planning to leave (Gibbons, 2023). It therefore seems likely that the rejection of the PEQF routes by Chilton caused significant

disenfranchisement amongst his new recruits on those programmes, in line with the research presented above regarding empowerment of staff, and the findings of Andrews' (2023) study with student officers. Put simply, in the opinions of certain chiefs, current operational demands, aligned with PCC short-termism and limited tenures of chief constables, trump staff development and potential – but more ethereal – future benefits.

In a study examining the record resignation rates currently being experienced in the British police service (Gov.uk, 2023), Charman & Bennett's (2022) conclusion, based on surveys with 46 voluntarily resigned police leavers, identified that leadership issues and specifically the strict hierarchy of the police were a key factor prompting their departure. Indeed, in a follow-up piece with qualitative analysis, the hierarchical and transactional nature of policing, and complaints regarding police leadership specifically were abundantly evident (Tyson & Charman, 2023), demonstrating that leadership styles had not changed in twenty years. Officers complained of not being recognised, and commonly that ideas, initiatives, and suggestions were “lost amongst the bureaucracy and red tape and the need to get promoted” (Tyson & Charman, 2023, p. 7). This is the lived experience of seasoned officers, including up to the rank of chief inspector, offering validity to Williams, et al.'s (2019) study which found similar organisational obstruction of initiatives to officers of similar ranks in a different force. Hallenberg & Cockroft (2017) also found the same in their study, with some of their respondents even experiencing outright hostility from forces towards their academic achievement – as if somehow the additional learning was a *detriment* to their operational abilities. Their conclusion was that there existed a clear dichotomy perceived within the police between higher education 'knowledge' and policing 'skills'; and that furthermore, the officers who obtained in-service degrees actually felt it had an adverse effect on their career prospects, and how they perceived their operational practice. Given the similar results across three independent studies, these conclusions can be deemed to hold significant validity.

The implications for the PEQF entry routes therefore are obvious. The programmes were ostensibly introduced as a means of professionalising policing, primarily through introducing academic knowledge. It is thus unfortunately all-too apparent that the culture within policing, that is notoriously reluctant to change anyway (Cordner, 2017), is even more averse to that change coming from an academic setting. Andrews' (2023) PCDA students evidence this well, when he plots their satisfaction rates with the programme in

years one, two and three of their studies. Their enthusiasm initially appears high, but then dips sharply when they enter the second year and only marginally recovering from that trough in year three. The link here is clear – the recruits are sold on the benefits of obtaining a degree, but then experience operational policing, where that enthusiasm is proverbially beaten out of them by extant police culture; which is partly what the external higher education route is seeking to overturn (Cox & Kirby, 2018). This is evident in some of the qualitative responses quoted therein and his thematic analysis also.

Andrews also highlighted the issues that were apparent from the officers in the other studies considered: that new ideas – especially those with an academic basis – are simply not well received or acknowledged in forces. For PCDA students this was represented primarily by their dissertations: specialist small research projects often aligned to force priorities, but which are not then paid any heed after completion. This is hardly surprising if the initiatives sought by officers up to chief inspector or even superintending ranks are not respected either (Hallenberg & Cockroft, 2017; Williams, et al., 2019; Campbell & Colover, 2020; Tyson & Charman, 2023).

The development of a transformational culture, such as that sought by the PEQF (Cox & Kirby, 2018), and identified as desirable for police leadership, is what Grint (2005) would describe as a ‘wicked’ problem: something which takes time, consideration and problem-solving skills to achieve. For the previous half-century however, since the widespread initiation of response policing, British law-enforcement has primarily been a rather more fast-paced ‘critical’, or procedural ‘tame’ problem, focussed on reactively addressing criminality *post-hoc* (Scott, 1998). This is especially evident from Reiner’s (1992) interviews with almost the entire cadre of chief constables at that time, who were overwhelmingly (70%) against the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984* (PACE) seeing it as inhibiting policing practice; and also overwhelmingly against the community policing ‘revolution’ sought by one of their own – John Alderson (Alderson & Stead, 1973). Of key import here is that at the time Reiner was interviewing his chiefs, PACE had been in existence for seven years, and Alderson’s evidence to Scarman’s (1981) Inquiry which was the peak for his trumpeting of community policing, was a decade prior. This offers further support that the views of chief constables are shaped and moulded during their formative years at more operational ranks, and thus become entrenched and maintained to their chiefdoms. It is not difficult to envisage a detective chief inspector or superintendent in

1985 frustrated by the proverbial handcuffs that PACE applied to their investigations. Nor is it unlikely that senior uniformed officers were proud of their quick response times to emergency incidents, in latest high-spec vehicle fleet. These are the cadre from which the chief constables of 1991 were drawn, and from whom Reiner gained his insights. Today's chief constables can thus be seen as products of policing from a decade ago – a time of performance measurement, statistics and 'bean counting' under the New Labour administration (Talbot, 2000; Flannagan, 2008; Sutherland, 2020). In leadership parlance, a time of transactional command. Transactional leadership however does not brook strong feelings of organisational justice (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003; Tyson & Charman, 2023), the problem experienced by all the participants of the above researchers.

These leaders also came of age through the period of austerity, spawned by the financial crisis of 2008, and the watchword of the Conservative-led administration from 2012. Smith (2016, p. 177) articulates this requirement well, observing that police management of this time was seeking “ “quick wins” at the expense of long-term organisational development”. This again plays into the performance culture, where cuts and savings could be measured in pounds slashed from budgets, when actual efficiency in terms of long-term outcomes is far more difficult to quantify. There is too much time and too many variables involved to be able to conduct meaningful research (Smith, 1993). This further supports the short-termism engendered by PCCs seeking re-election and the chief constables they are responsible for hiring and firing. This is particularly true for the police education initiative, especially if it is held that only chief constables can make meaningful policy change. Whilst the political pressures of a PCC could very well influence the decision-making of chief constables, in respect of 'boots on the ground', the evidence considered suggests there is ample opportunity and ability for chiefs to overcome this when desirable.

There is of course not inconsiderable pressure on contemporary chief constables from myriad other sources also, including his Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), police officer representative bodies, and most notably political and media pressure. None has better personified the operational independence of police chiefs to refute the latter pairing in recent times however than Commissioner of the Metropolis, Sir Mark Rowley, in a press release-cum-blog post dismissing the external pressures on his officers surrounding the policing of protests particularly

(Rowley, 2024). This offers yet more evidence that whilst the words of prominent politicians – in no less a personage than the Home Secretary, ostensibly with oversight of the police (Francis, 2023) – and reported and commented on in the media, senior officers still retain operational independence.

Further evidence of the transactional ‘do as we say, not do as we do’ approach of police leadership was the abdication of themselves from the intended requirement to introduce educational qualifications across all ranks in the police service, as part of continuous professional development. After the requirement for new entrants to have qualifications, the second proposal of the PEQF was for “developing opportunities for existing officers and staff to gain accredited and publicly recognised qualifications equivalent to their level of practice or rank” (College of Policing, 2016, p. 17). This intention is what meant the qualifications constituted a framework, rather than simply an entry requirement. Indeed the CoP further highlight that “this proposal received the most positive reception from respondents to the public consultation [about the implementation of a qualification framework]”, but that “it is likely that individuals will need to complete further work in order to achieve a qualification” (College of Policing, 2016, p. 17). This proved the stumbling block. Having developed the initial entry routes, the CoP went back to the NPCC and Superintendents’ Association, and began talks around the development of in-service qualifications. They were informed that the “further work” required could not be achieved owing to how busy senior officers were stated to be (Byrne, 2023).

The demands of the various entry routes are indeed onerous for those on them (Watkinson-Miley, et al., 2022; Andrews, 2023), but a supportive employer enables its workforce time for development and education, in return gaining better loyalty and job satisfaction (Latif, et al., 2013), including in policing (Chan & Doran, 2009). This was a significant factor in Andrews’ (2023) findings – that those student officers who were afforded more protected learning time demonstrated higher satisfaction with the programme. A comparison of that data shows that student officers in Portsmouth University (who deliver to Hampshire Constabulary) have a mean rating to the question ‘do you feel senior management understand the PCDA?’ (on a scale of 1 – 5, with 1 being ‘not at all’, and 5 being ‘completely’) of just 1 – the lowest possible answer. Their overall satisfaction with their probationary journey was also only 21%, compared to a national

average of 39%. Derby University, who deliver to Nottinghamshire Police whose chief constable has been evidenced to have been supportive of the PCDA programmes, have an even higher satisfaction rate at 53%. The latter also indicated they had more study time and this was better protected than their Hampshire colleagues. They also averaged at 2.64 (out of 5) for how well they felt senior management understood the PCDA programme. Whilst these figures do not account for all variables, such as teaching quality at respective universities, the differences between a force where the chief constable has been vocally critical of the PEQF versus a force where the chief has supported it, are stark.

It is evident therefore that if chief constables wish to provide the time for staff development, it can be found. It seems though that the leadership were not willing to provide this time for themselves, again through a perception of operational 'need' over personal development. The veracity of this need however can be challenged through an examination of the number of Master's degrees offered by British universities aimed solely at police leadership, of which there exists at least seven offerings nationally.¹ In addition to this are a wealth of other post-graduate courses aimed at different branches of police work from organised crime, through to criminal investigation; not to mention the non-policing post-graduate qualifications such as the Master's in Business Administration (MBA) that is often attained by chief constables. These can also be funded by a bursary from the CoP (College of Policing, n.d). It seems therefore that there is an ability for senior officers to undertake post-graduate study, but only if it is not mandated and perhaps not in work time. However this raises concerns around nepotism or cronyism, in which chosen individuals are granted the time for study (Astley, 2019), where others may not be. This is supported by Reiner's (1992) findings, which although they hark from a generation previously, identified that promotion was strongly predicated on patronage, especially into chief officer ranks.

The inevitable conclusion must be that resistance to the professionalisation of British policing stems from its most senior leadership. Whilst this elite cadre were ostensibly unanimous in support of developing an entry (and mid-career) qualifications framework

¹ University of Leicester - MSc in Police Leadership and Management by Distance Learning; University of Sunderland - Leadership in Criminal Justice and Policing – MSc; University of Wales (Trinity St David) - Policing (Operational and Strategic Leadership) MSc; University of Derby – MSc in Police Leadership, Strategy and Organisation; Staffordshire University – MSc Leadership of Policing; LJMU - MSc Policing and Law Enforcement (PALE) Leadership; University of Cambridge - MSt in Applied Criminology and Police Management (Senior Leaders' Master's Degree Apprenticeship)

in 2015, when the details thereof began to emerge, it rapidly brought about hostility based on the abstraction rates from front-line duties after the initial (read: traditional) training period; even when the new approaches are identified as essential training for modern officers, not simply a 'nice to have' addition (Honest & Clarke, 2023). The decision to either not implement or ultimately to withdraw from the entry qualifications framework therefore represents a short-sighted approach to professionalisation and staff development, and a very transactional style of leadership (Bass, 1985). This stands in stark opposition to the wider prevailing consensus of best practice in leadership (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003). This specifically includes in policing, wherein research shows that transformational leadership is both far more effective and favoured (Dobby, et al., 2004; Panzarella, 2003; Neyroud, 2010; Campbell & Kodz, 2011). This is best exemplified by Skelly and Chilton who focus entirely on *quantity* of staff hours 'saved' by abandoning degree entry, rather than the more ethereal concept of *quality* delivered by better educated officers, which may well reduce future demand (Creaghan, 2019; Potter, 2023). It is quite apparent therefore that if education is required as a pillar of professionalisation as *Policing Vision 2025* suggests (NPCC, 2015), supported by definitions from Heslop (2011) and Neyroud (2010), police leaders need to loudly and proudly stand up and endorse this. If instead they continue, as some have done, to criticise it, or merely offer no position, this stands in contrast to the transformational leadership that is so vaunted. If police chiefs want cultural change towards increased professionalism, the evidence suggests they need to demonstrate this themselves to inspire their followers to either actively, or at least outwardly, support the initiative.

The transactional or authoritarian nature of policing with its pyramidal rank structure has been seen to inspire mimicry and followership of leaders by subordinates, most notably within policing, of the chief constable. It has been seen that the chief constable is ultimately the example through which force culture is established. It has been shown that it is this inherently linear command structure, headed by a chief shaped by their own cultural upbringing throughout their service, as well as external pressures from the societal zeitgeist, that either represents the barrier, or indeed the enabler, for change. When the cadre of chief officers are fundamentally stating that they need quantity over quality, staff development opportunities are amongst the first things to go, and this has unfortunately led to the perhaps unintended or unforeseen consequence of a loss of

retention and loyalty within the police by longer-serving officers too. Ultimately however, the impact of the loss of this enhanced professionalisation through higher educational learning on the quality, efficiency and abilities of the next generation of officers may be impossible to measure and thus never be known. It seems that chiefs, in the name of staff hours, would rather indoctrinate recruits than educate them. That way their authority remains absolute.

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