

**The Job's not what it was, is it?**  
**Chief Constable Andy Marsh QPM**

John Harris Memorial Lecture, 28 September 2022

Thank you, Rick, for the introduction, and thank you to the Police Foundation for hosting this lecture. I am extremely honoured to be delivering the John Harris Memorial Lecture – the first in three years, and almost a year after I became Chief Executive of the College of Policing.

I didn't know John Harris, but as well as setting up the Police Foundation, he also played a key role, as Home Office minister, in setting up the then Police Complaints Authority. While that body has changed in time, now operating as the Independent Office for Policing Conduct, at a time of falling trust and confidence in policing, with serious questions being raised about the conduct of some police officers, it's particularly appropriate that today's speech is in Lord Harris' memory.

This has been a big year for the Police Foundation, with the publication of the Strategic Review of Policing. The Review is probably the most thoughtful and comprehensive review of policing in my time in the service, and it is incumbent on all of us to engage with the many ideas contained within it.

Policing too often swings between being inward looking and defensive, not willing to change – or waiting for reform to be done to us. That defensiveness can make us unwilling to take the action needed to change. And when reform is done to us it can, in turn, create a pendulum swing in policy. Are we about protecting the most vulnerable or solving volume crime? Ramping up stop search or dialling it down? The reality is that there are often no eithers and ors in policing, just ands. And we have to find the 'just right' point – the goldilocks point, if you will - on so many issues.

That pendulum swing is a theme I will come back to later, but the Strategic Review offers a challenge: how will we, across policing, step up to the big ideas and reform ourselves to address the capacity, capability and organisational challenges the Review sets out.

I was particularly encouraged to see so much support for the College of Policing in the Review. The College is a vital part of our policing system, which is highly localised, with all the strengths that brings. If we are to optimise its performance and potential, we need system leadership which only the College is in a position to provide.

I came to the College because I believe in its potential to change policing for the better. We have unique powers to set standards, drive the right behaviour in our

workforce and ensure that officers have access to the best operational training and practice to cut crime and keep people safe. But if we are to fulfil our potential, let alone the needs of policing, then the College must change as policing itself must change.

I am pleased to say that we are on that journey of transformation, to become more relevant, dynamic and connected.

**Relevant** to the challenges policing faces and the needs of officers and staff, from improved training, to guidance and advice on the most important issues they deal with.

**Dynamic** in our response to emerging threats, and in our take up of emerging good practice; getting what policing needs, to the people who need it, when they need it.

And **connected** to the service, from the frontline to chiefs, and from PCCs and Government, to you, our partners in the policing mission.

My record is one of delivering change in policing – at Avon and Somerset I was the sixth chief in four turbulent years and inherited a force with issues to address. The force required improvement, notably around protecting the most vulnerable from harm, and under my leadership established a reputation for being one of the most digitally-enabled, data-driven and high-performing police forces in England and Wales. That is a record I am proud of, and one I am bringing to the College.

Now, this isn't a speech where I am going to set out in detail the challenges facing policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These have been comprehensively covered in the well-evidenced Police Foundation report. From the wider societal trends, to the changes in crime types. And from the exploitation by criminals of technology, to the repeated incidents we have seen which have done so much to damage public trust. Not a few bad apples, but a culture of defensiveness and, at times, a reticence to challenge poor behaviour or, at worst, cover-up, and where officers who have let down the service too often don't feel the full force of sanctions for wrong-doing.

I was fortunate in starting at the College when the Fundamental Review into our role and purpose, launched by our Chair, Nick Herbert, was coming to its conclusions.

Like the Strategic Review of Policing, the Fundamental Review drew evidence from a wide range of stakeholders and the feedback was resounding and consistent on the issues we face as a service. The common themes were: an unwillingness or inability to take the evidence of what works and implement it consistently, a weakness in problem-solving and driving improvements in performance, a failure to invest in the professional development of our people, a failure to promote their wellbeing and resilience, and, above all, a failure to invest in leadership at all levels in the service.

That is why the review sets a very clear vision for the College to **boost professionalism, drive consistency and improve leadership**.

That is the mission that I want to talk about today.

**Boosting professionalism** means equipping officers and staff with the best possible professional skills needed to do their job, by ensuring that they have access to the best in continuing professional development and that this is properly prioritised. I am not for one minute suggesting that officers and staff are unprofessional, rather that policing has not collectively prioritised their development as professionals. As in medicine, the techniques and threats in policing change. We have to upskill our officers regularly to adapt to these changes. Achieving this will empower officers and staff to use excellent professional judgement across their work to protect the public, which in turn improves the performance of policing as a whole, and will also address the concerns about some of the culture in policing.

In **driving consistency** we seek to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the 43-force model to bring consistency where it matters most for the public and the policing workforce. There is too much unhelpful variation across forces, for example whether officers attend every burglary of someone's home, I happen to think they should. This frustrates the delivery of excellence in the basics and impedes the sharing of good practice and innovation. By driving greater consistency in key areas, the right things should be prioritised and the public will know what they can expect from their police service, as officers and staff focus on the activity that we know works to cut crime and keep people safe.

And, most importantly, **improving leadership** will see us develop the leadership skills of police officers and staff at all levels. All those working in policing are leaders, whether probationers on the front line or those running big teams or whole forces. The service needs to develop inclusive, data-driven and effective leadership.

Excellent leadership is the key to improvement on all fronts, from underpinning a transformation in police culture, to driving performance and ensuring that talent is recognised at whatever level it exists. This is particularly the case if we target our development at the first-line supervisors who are present 24/7 365 days a year. You will be pleased to know we have already started.

There is a lot of talk in policing at the moment about getting the basics right. The new Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, has rightly talked about cutting crime, raising standards and building trust as the core elements of his transformation of the Met. But it is critical for all forces and, if we are all honest, we have become too distracted by the complexity of the world we are policing in; too easily the victim of that pendulum swing. We have, at times, lost sight of the basics.

For me, getting the basics right means delivering what the public expect, and indeed that was there right from the very first days of our mission nearly 200 years ago: The prevention and detection of crime by officers and staff exercising the highest professional standards.

It is about those three things which are central to our mission: boosting professionalism with skilled officers using their judgement, driving consistency in standards and implementing what works, and improving leadership at every level to deliver better performance. When we get these right we will get the basics right and we will deliver for our communities.

But to say that these are the basics is not to say that they are simple. In a world of digital investigation, enhanced disclosure and significant non-crime demand, the basics can sometimes be far from simple. Getting the basics right does not have to be some nostalgic, even retro, return to a fictional golden age of policing. Instead, it means getting the fundamental components of policing right – professionalism, leadership, consistency - focusing on that core mission to prevent and detect crime and keep people safe in a complex and challenging environment.

The improvements we need must be consistent and must be system-wide, and based on the evidence of what works to drive change and improve performance. And we need to be as efficient and effective as possible in driving that change – designing from the centre and delivering improvement once, across all 43 forces. In so many ways, the College is needed more now than ever before.

So, as we implement the findings of the Fundamental Review of the College, we are determined to anticipate and meet the demands that policing has of us. Whether in leading work to reduce homicide and tackle violence against women and girls, overhauling the way officers are trained and promoted or issuing new guidance to toughen the sanctions on officers found guilty of wrongdoing, the College is showing that there is a new show in town capable of meeting these challenges and more.

But before I talk too much about our new mission, I want to talk about how we got here.

Next year will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this lecture, so it has been part of the policing world for a little bit longer than me. I wanted to take a moment to reflect upon how far we have come as we make improvements to resolve today's problems and issues in today's context.

I joined the police in 1987 so have been in policing for 35 years, serving as a chief for coming up to ten years in Hampshire, Avon and Somerset and now the College. The longest serving chief in England and Wales.

In that time, and from the beginning of my service, people have been asking, with great regularity, rhetorically: ‘The Job’s not what it was, is it?’. One wonders what Robert Peel’s first intake of officers in 1829 talked about in the refreshment room.

“The Job’s not what it was, is it?”. The Job – capital T and capital J – because there is no job like it.

“It’s not what it was, is it?” harking back to a utopian period when resources were high, crime was low, the public universally loved us and the press blindly sang our praises. As with all utopias, it has never existed.

So what was The Job when I started in policing?

Well, I want to tell two stories from my early days which I think describe some of what The Job was, and shows that it’s not now what it was is it.

Firstly, I want to take you back to my very first days as a new recruit, when we were sat in rows at regional training schools and taught the law. That’s what initial training was then: we were expected to turn up, learn the rules, follow orders, and certainly never ask questions that challenged the status quo. It was a strange form of learning without critical thinking.

I remember being taught about the Sexual Offences Act, specifically the laws which still made it illegal for more than two people of the same sex to have sex unless it was in private, with consent, there were no more than two people and both were over the age of 21. When I queried whether we still enforced this – surely there was a better use of police time – I was ridiculed. Nicknamed from then on as PC221, after the acronym for these rules, I was told in my end of training report that “PC Marsh would do well to follow the advice of his superior officers”. Well, I wonder where I would have got to if I had just followed that advice! In truth it was a dispiriting start to my career which caused me to question whether there was a place in policing for me.

So not only was critical thinking not welcomed as a part of the training, but questioning at all was discouraged. I was to do what I was told – regardless of the merits – and to follow the advice of my ‘superiors’. We learnt the law, and powers by heart - bear in mind the internet was still a twinkle in the eye of Tim Berners-Lee back then - but we learnt nothing of the context in which we would enforce those laws. There was a single way of doing things, nothing could change and, clearly, individual officers were primarily expected to fit in and not bring their experience and insight to work, unless of course it reinforced the existing cultural norms.

Jump forward to my experience policing on the frontline in Bristol – then, as it is now, an incredibly diverse city, with large Black and South Asian communities. Sitting in a van with my other exclusively white, and predominantly male, officer colleagues on the Ashley Road in the heart of one of the city’s most diverse neighbourhoods, we knew nothing of the experience of the people we were being sent in to police.

As I now know we were seen, by some, as an invading army and, frankly, it felt like that at the time. We weren’t doing policing *with* the community, we were doing it *to* them. Relations were appalling, as we saw with the St Paul’s Riots in 1980 and again in 1986. Despite the tensions, community engagement was left to a tiny beat team and encounter after encounter entrenched the hostility to the police, and we weren’t making efforts to change that, even if we cared. I know at times that I felt frightened and intimidated and I now have some insight from working closely with the people and communities that they felt the same, as a result of our presence and the way we policed.

Over the early years of my service the police were criticised.

Criticised as racist – the aftermath of the murder of Stephen Lawrence the most striking example;

Criticised as sexist – the W was only dropped from WPC in 1990 and we still had separate police women’s units. Colleagues could even remember when pregnant officers had to resign;

And criticised as corrupt, most notably in the murder of Daniel Morgan or the Hillsborough tragedy – the shockwaves of both still rippling through policing today.

Those are three complaints and three examples. There are many more. In a pre-internet, pre-camera phone world, with significantly less scrutiny of police activity, the approach to candour and transparency was very different indeed.

And crime seemed more straight-forward. We believed it to be well understood and highly visible. Crime recording data isn’t always reliable, and methodologies change, but as an example, figures show that in 1987 around 20 per cent of crime was burglary, in the last full quarter before the pandemic hit it was just 6 per cent. And compare the two or three calls for service which we would receive in my early years with the huge volume, range and complexity officers face today.

But crime wasn’t straight-forward. There was, in fact, a whole iceberg of hidden crime and harm that we didn’t know about, or didn’t care to know about. Crimes such as domestic abuse, child abuse or even rape were dismissed as ‘family matters’, shockingly exposed in the documentary ‘A Complaint of Rape’ from 1982 which

showed officers dismissing a woman's complaint, laughing about her and exposing her to degrading questions about her sex life. If this is what officers were willing to do in front of television cameras, what was happening behind the scenes and off screen?

So, through scandal after scandal, crisis after crisis, policing exposed its flaws. And changes in the law, and changes in policing, followed.

Nevertheless, the service I joined in 1987, was full of dedicated people - officers and leaders whose selfless service and often lifelong commitment to the vocation of policing made a difference to the communities they policed. These are strengths that we must retain, but with all the flaws I have described, the old ways of policing are simply not fit for purpose to address the issues today.

So, when people say the job's not what it was, is it - I say thank goodness for that.

But I don't want to dwell too much in the past. This isn't a lecture about war stories from a policing career. But there is a point to these stories. Not only do they offer some encouragement on the progress made, they also underscore just how important initial training is as a foundation for any profession, especially policing.

I want to turn now to talk about that heart of policing, its people, and the importance of **boosting professionalism** in the service.

I've heard people say that 'policing is an impossible job'. I'm not sure that is true, but very few things in life really worth doing are easy, and that includes policing. I know what sort of people are drawn to such a mission and they are outstanding.

Effective police forces need effective police officers. And that is at the heart of the changes we have made to entry routes into policing. I talked earlier about my entry into the service.

Sitting in rows.

Learning the law.

Told not to question.

That approach just won't cut it in today's world, where officers are expected to make hugely complex decisions on a daily basis and, quite rightly, want to be empowered and equipped to challenge and develop the profession. We want officers who can protect the most vulnerable, can use data effectively, can respond to the most complex crimes and can police *with* our diverse communities.

In a digital world, with knowledge at our fingertips, knowing the sections of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act off by heart is a waste of time, but knowing how best to deal with a distressed victim of domestic abuse, or how to solve complex problems in a community, is essential. The Strategic Review was clear on the challenges: from a criminal justice system struggling to modernise, to a creaking mental health system. Just one stat from that report gives an incredibly stark picture: police devote around three million ‘investigation hours’ per year to missing persons reports, which is the equivalent of 1,562 full time police officers per year or the same number of police officers required to police the whole of North Yorkshire.

We must also set up new officers to succeed, through their training, but also by working in partnership with government and other parts of the public sector to cut the non-crime demand which ties up our officers and reduces their time to prevent and detect crime.

So, we need the very best training for our new recruits, drawn from the widest sections of society. That is what our new entry routes provide, and the skills they now receive are so high that they are awarded a degree as a result of completing it - you don’t need one to sign up. That’s a myth and is an important distinction. In many ways it is not about the degree, but all about giving officers the best possible foundation for their future as a true policing professional.

Really, this is the only way we are going to maximise the benefit of the investment being made in the service through the increase of 20,000 officers.

I am a realist. These officers will take time to bed in and learn the skills they need. We owe a debt of gratitude to their tutors, and it is a huge influx of raw talent which is stretching our capacity to train and develop. Of course their inexperience presents a challenge, but this infusion of new blood also gives the service an opportunity.

An opportunity to bring in new officers with new training and skills to match the challenges of policing in 2022.

An opportunity to change the culture through the highest standards.

An opportunity to bring in a wider array of talent into the service from across the whole of society.

When I hear some of the criticisms of the new entry routes, for example that officers have had to be given protected learning time to complete their development when they should be responding to calls for service, I hear an argument that we are too busy to train people properly. To support this argument is to continue to set the future service up to fail.

So, plenty of people have been keen to sit on the side-lines and criticise these new routes. On the basis of anecdotes, they claim it is doomed to fail, but on the basis of facts I can tell you now why it is succeeding.

New recruits coming through the new entry routes are twenty five per cent better equipped to understand the needs of their communities, twenty five per cent better skilled to do the job, and thirty per cent better prepared for the role. And those aren't my words, they are the views of the new recruits themselves, surveyed about their training last year. The latest survey, out very soon, continues to bear this out, with those coming through the new routes still more satisfied and seeing greater value in the education and training they receive from their force, than those on the old routes.

And for those lamenting that former military personnel will be less inclined to join or are no longer wanted: they can join, they are joining, and we're even trialling new routes specifically for them.

But if anyone thinks that the solution to the challenges we face is reducing training, and going back to the old ways, or indeed if they are happy with the culture that exists in some parts of policing, then I can tell them that approach is not going to work, because the job is not what it was, is it?

I accept we haven't got it all right. When I came into the College I asked us to look again at what support we were giving forces to implement the new routes. For an institution which puts learning at its heart, we need to role model listening and improving.

Where forces have worked closely with their education provider, made sure the academic elements are meaningful for the job, limited abstraction and focused on on-the-job assessment and applied learning, rather than lengthy dissertations, they are making a success of it.

Where forces have implemented it badly, and let their academic partner set the direction unfettered, or even outsourced the relationship altogether, they have struggled. Forces need to create a strong partnership with their selected education providers and we are now redoubling our efforts to support those forces to bring everyone up to the standard of the best.

Yes, the new entry routes are tough, with exacting standards, but they should be. Those who navigate it are intelligent, resilient, highly motivated officers dedicated to a policing career. Better still they are now equipped with the full range of knowledge and skills to enable them to police within the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century communities. Simply put, their achievement is being undervalued by those voices - within and outside the service - that seek to disparage the new routes because they don't fit

within their often frankly backward cultural view of what initial training should consist of.

So, the tendency by some to characterise new recruits as snowflakes, bringing their teddy bears to work and needing their mum to phone in to tell their sergeants off for working them to hard, is not only a lie, but cruelly undermines people who are joining policing for the same reasons I did – to serve the public and to cut crime. Their motivations haven't changed, and they deserve the best training, our support and world-class leadership.

And the development we offer officers must last for the length of their career. Whether they want to advance rapidly through the ranks or serve their communities as life-long response or neighbourhood officers, they deserve the best in professional development. As crime changes so too must policing, and if we don't provide our people with the development they need to learn new solutions and grow in their careers, as well as giving them the time to do it, then we will be setting them up to fail.

Of course, boosting professionalism is about more than training and development, it is also about living up to the highest professional standards.

As I have said, policing is full of incredible people - people who are dedicated to serving their communities, fighting crime and protecting the most vulnerable. I personally know that none of them want to be serving alongside officers who have let their colleagues down, let the service down and, most importantly, let their communities down. That's why so many cases of wrongdoing come to light from whistleblowing colleagues. The trust and powers we place in our police can only ever be rewarded with hard-work and dedication to doing what is right.

I have seen officers abuse that trust, and I have been frustrated - as chiefs up and down the country have - that independent legally qualified chairs who now make the decisions in most misconduct cases, sometimes fail to impose the toughest sanctions and sack officers. New guidance from the College pushes the existing rules as far as we can to make clear that cases which undermine the confidence of the public must see the toughest sanctions. But, I am concerned that this isn't enough. That's why I want to see the misconduct rules changed so that chiefs have the power to sack people who shouldn't be wearing the uniform, so that they are directly accountable for the standards of those who serve.

The second priority for the College is **driving consistency** across policing where it matters most. Consistency is important not for its own sake, but because it means doing the right things in the right ways - the surest route to improving performance. I want to see consistency in three key areas.

Where victims of crime and the public should expect that they will receive the same service wherever they live.

Where our officers and staff should expect the same treatment in whichever force they serve.

And where the evidence base is so strong and points to a single way of doing things that is much more effective than the rest.

At its heart is building a clarity of purpose for policing.

Now is the time for us, with the help of government, to positively assert the purpose of policing again and the values which we stand by. The public deserve a policing system that works effectively to a clear purpose, not one that tries to be all things to all people or delays common sense responses to repeated problems.

I talked earlier about the pendulum in policing. The way the service can get trapped between binary positions, rather than focusing on what is right, particularly in the wake of scandal. We saw that in response to historic sexual abuse cases. Decades of police failure was replaced with an over-correction which left the public questioning our ability to properly interrogate the supposed evidence of fantasists. People making accusations must be supported; must be treated with respect, kindness and compassion. But, of course, that doesn't mean we should automatically believe everything we are told. Common-sense, combined with critical thinking, good training and the ability to navigate complex issues confidently, must prevail.

Similarly, in the name of community engagement we risk missing the common-sense approach.

Community engagement matters. Public confidence is essential. That is one of the reasons why I was the first chief in the UK to introduce body worn video to all my officers when I was leading Hampshire Police. And if it hadn't been for the work of the College, evaluating it and showing the benefits, then it wouldn't have been rolled out as quickly, consistently or effectively across the country. In an age of citizen journalism, and when transparency is the essential antidote to mistrust, all frontline officers should be wearing body worn video, and it should be available to Police and Crime Commissioners and independent groups who want to scrutinise the use of police powers.

But community engagement is hard work. Getting the confidence of communities requires a concerted effort – to paraphrase, it arrives on foot and leaves on a tweet.

Take the LGBT community. I started by talking about my questioning the ethics of using police resources to police the actions of consenting adults. And that police

response, and others like it, had left a legacy of mistrust between the police and the community. And so, when LGBT police officers were permitted by forces to march in uniform in Pride it was a huge moment. A clear demonstration of how far we had come in our relations with that community. And this is needed more now than it has in recent years, following the concerns about the handling of the Stephen Port murders, which have done so much damage to the confidence of the gay community.

But there is more to community engagement than marching, and there are many communities to engage with in an even-handed way. Real engagement is hard work and takes dedication, attention to detail and follow up every single day. To simplify it with a mathematical analogy, there is an equation. In my book, performance plus trust equals confidence.

It is not enough simply to show that we care about diverse communities if we are not dealing with the most basic requirements they have of us, namely to prevent and detect crime. Engagement, in a policing model built on consent, is the route to effective performance and keeping people safe, and should not be a distraction from it. At the moment we are simply not effective enough; performance is not good enough.

Again, just one striking stat from the Strategic Review paints the picture: Detection rates have almost halved in the last seven years: in the year to March 2021 only 9.3 per cent of all recorded police crime resulted in a charge or summons, compared to 17 per cent in 2014. The public just don't think that is good enough. Neither should we.

And let me tell you, police officers across the country are as frustrated with these results as the public. There is nothing officers want more than to be locking up criminals; to be keeping communities safe.

What so irritates the public when they see videos of officers on duty dancing is that they don't see an expression of inclusion, they see an officer who has closed their burglary case with no further action - without even visiting the scene - stepping over the line from respectful and polite policing of an event, into frivolity. Policing is a serious business – we need to roll up our sleeves and focus on cutting crime and building confidence. When certain behaviours become distractions from this mission it is time to think again.

And when citizens find themselves having to do the job of the police – whether that is tracking down their own stolen tech using find my phone, only for the police to refuse to investigate, or when mothers patrol the streets because they are concerned about the safety of their children, their patience with us is going to be pretty thin. It is the job of all in policing, not least of all in the College, to equip our officers with the

skills and knowledge, that I have talked about, that they need to prevent crime and catch criminals.

The public, and politicians who represent them, have a right to expect the very highest levels of performance, with integrity, and are right to hold us to account for delivering it. Policing spends billions of pounds of public money every year; we cannot baulk at scrutiny and oversight, which is a fundamentally important part of any recipe for success.

And the second part of the equation matters too – trust: Performance plus trust equals confidence. On the one hand we need to build trust with groups that we have previously neglected, particularly the black community who have experienced oppressive, even racist, policing in the past. And on the other we have to avoid delegitimising the police by clumsily wading into social or political issues which are not criminal.

Our new guidance on managing non-crime hate incidents, for example, is further evidence of the new approach we want to take in the College, and is very clear: the police should not be involving themselves in spats on Twitter. It is not where the public want them to be, and it is not their role. We cannot pick sides on contested social issues. We have a job to do: to police without fear or favour; to prevent and detect crime.

We know what works to cut crime and build confidence. The College's evidence-based, what works toolkits are full of practical guidance for officers. And our standards and authorised professional practice provide detail on the best ways of tackling some of the most complex issues. We just have to get better, across policing, at implementing this.

There is still too much parochialism in the service, with forces wanting to invent their own approaches. Innovation matters, and when we see good emerging practice we will be better at disseminating it across the 43 forces. But we cannot have a 'not invented here' attitude. When we know what works to cut crime we owe it to the public to do it.

The College is committed to making sure our guidance is as practical and useful to the officers on the frontline as possible, and deals with the most relevant issues they are facing.

Take our work on violence against women and girls. I am proud that, along with Maggie Blyth in the National Police Chiefs' Council, the College is leading transformation in policing's response to the appalling harassment, abuse and violence that can be aimed at women in our society.

Our approach is truly comprehensive.

From a toolkit for officers investigating these crimes to ensure robust and consistent enforcement against offenders, to new high-quality training for those investigating rape and sexual offences under the Operation Soteria banner, addressing the shocking fact that many officers investigating these offences have had no specific training.

I want to see this approach replicated across crime types so that we have a consistent approach to officers being supported by the College with skills, training, techniques and tools to tackle the crimes that matter most to the public.

Giving officers these tools is only part of the equation. If we are truly to change behaviours and improve outcomes we also need to focus on how people are overseen, supported and encouraged in their work. That means **improving leadership**.

I have mentioned leadership a number of times today. It is, for me, the most important element of policing. No officer or member of staff can meet their potential, have their talent identified and managed, or be challenged when their performance falls short without excellent leadership.

All of you will have experienced, in your chosen profession, the best and worst times. In policing the best times are associated with teamwork, a sense of purpose and knowing that you are making a difference - that you are being valued, challenged and developed.

At the heart of it, the thing that enables all of these factors is a leader. You can probably name the leader who has had the greatest impact on you right now. Someone who shaped you and inspired you, and without whom you wouldn't have achieved your greatest professional moments – I know who they were for me.

We need to support and develop this at all levels of policing. From peers who will welcome new recruits, to sergeants and other front-line supervisors, to Chief Constables setting the direction and modelling the values of the whole force. Leadership is the single most important success factor of a high-performing police force.

That is why I am so ambitious for the work of the College in this area. The new National Centre for Police Leadership which is being established is going to drive world-class leadership at every level.

This Centre will act as the heart of our leadership work, setting standards for all levels of leadership and providing a host of guidance, tools and resources to support development for everyone in policing. It will also redefine professional development

in policing, supporting it as an essential element of progression and promotion by police officers, and provide specific development to under-represented and undiscovered talent at all levels.

We have already started this important work and focused our early efforts on sergeants, who represent the backbone of policing leadership and set the tone and expectations for the frontline, particularly those new in service. Even with better new initial training, if we just bring in officers without improving the supervision they receive when they join, we will set them up to fail, and fail ourselves to deliver the cultural changes we need to see.

And we are now developing a new focus on senior leadership. The College has just completed a review of the way chief officers are identified, assessed, developed and recruited to drive comprehensive and significant reform in this vital area.

The new route will seek to ensure that the brightest and the best are identified, incentivised, developed and supported to become the chief officers that the service needs.

Taken together, our three key objectives, to **boost professionalism, drive consistency** and **improve leadership**, should ensure that The Job is so much more than it was.

Now, I am not some blind optimist. I know that we won't reach perfection. We won't reach the end of the mission to reform policing. But we must strive for it and improve policing ourselves, as far and as fast as possible: We have to, because that is what our communities want and what they deserve.

Policing is full of challenges – they come thick and fast, and when we least expect them. So, the challenge is to lift our heads to the horizon; look forward in the hope, indeed expectation, of making things better. This isn't naïve optimism, but without a sense of purpose about where we are going we will be marooned. Making a difference is a cornerstone of motivation in policing and if we can help our people do that then they will always come into work with a spring in their step.

I am full of hope for the future of the service and confident that, with the support of the College that I lead, the whole service can improve.

I'm optimistic because while we should reflect and be glad that The Job is not what it was in my early years, we can also be confident about where we are going.

Creating critical thinkers and problem solvers at every rank.

Leaders who care, who are prepared to listen, and are equipped with the evidence to do the right thing.

A focus on those crimes that harm the most vulnerable in our society with new tools and tactics.

And also focusing on crimes that matter most to the public – getting the basics right.

Better use of data to get smart about what we do, what we don't do and, of course, doing the right things in the most efficient and effective way.

Effective scrutiny on behalf of the public through Police and Crime Commissioners.

A strong inspectorate, led by Andy Cooke, a successful and experienced Chief Constable, working with the College to use a smarter approach to improving performance in the areas that the public care about.

Chiefs, through the National Police Chiefs' Council taking the lead on big issues like race and violence against women and girls.

And a College, the glue in the disparate policing sector with a relentless focus on supporting the fight against crime through professionalism, consistency and leadership.

So, The Job is not what it once was. And it cannot be. Crime has changed, the expectations of the public have changed and the domestic, and even global, environment has changed. While we must respect the experiences and lessons of the past, and preserve those elements which are worth preserving, the mission to improve has to be redoubled.

I haven't been shy of laying out what the issues we face in policing are, and where standards and practice are falling short. We should never be shy of saying it, or be defensive of calling it out and being clear about where we must improve.

And how could we possibly fail to improve when we are surrounded by officers, staff and volunteers who would walk through walls to achieve the mission of protecting the public. I have had the privilege of a lifetime of service alongside these colleagues, the vast majority of whom have a vocational commitment which goes beyond any reasonable expectation that the remuneration could match.

So, call me optimistic, but by being honest about where we need to improve – through professionalism, consistency and leadership – and relying on our extraordinary colleagues - who knows, officers of the future might just say 'The Job's a lot better now, isn't it?