



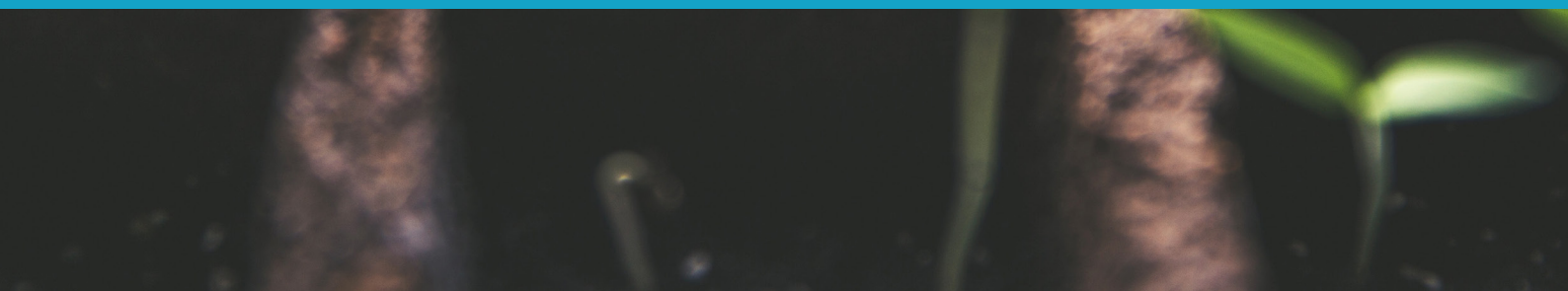
THE  
POLICE  
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The UK's policing think tank

# POLICE WORKFORCE WELLBEING AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KIERAN LEWIS, ANDY HIGGINS AND RICK MUIR

FEBRUARY 2019



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## **About the Police Foundation**

The Police Foundation is the only independent think tank focused exclusively on improving policing and developing knowledge and understanding of policing and crime reduction. Its mission is to generate evidence and develop ideas which deliver better policing and a safer society. It does this by producing trusted, impartial research and by working with the police and their partners to create change.

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# SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings of the Police Foundation's review of Organisational Development (OD) and its implications for police workforce wellbeing. The aims of the research project were to:

- Understand the lessons from the literature on Organisational Development for the wellbeing agenda in UK policing.
- Identify best practice from other sectors that have contextual similarities to policing and have developed successful approaches to Organisational Development.
- Identify current best practice in Organisational Development and wellbeing in UK police forces.
- Draw out the implications from the literature and the case studies for UK policing and develop recommendations aimed at improving police officer and staff wellbeing.

We carried out this research by conducting:

- A review of the literature pertaining to Organisational Development.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with OD researchers and consultants.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with senior leaders, relevant experts from within policing and the wider public sector, particularly the NHS.

The report shows that following a period of substantial change, in particular a major reduction in resource and a shift (and in many areas an intensification) in demand, there are signs of a deterioration in the wellbeing of police officers and staff. For example, there was a 35 per cent increase in police sick-leave for psychological reasons between 2010 and 2015. Police officers themselves identify the way in which change is

managed as one of the main reasons for a deterioration in morale.

The report looks at the potential of the field of research and practice known as Organisational Development to address this problem. Organisational Development (OD) is an applied professional practice that focuses on how organisations can systematically enable good performance through the involvement of the entire workforce – all employees from top to bottom. It encourages organisations to constantly change and evolve and for programmes of change to involve the full and willing engagement of employees.

Employees should be central to OD initiatives. This is different to top-down leadership models in which the workforce is simply told what they must do to change. Suggestions and motivations for change from the frontline should be encouraged wherever possible. All employees should feel some sense of ownership towards the strategy of the entire organisation and this requires the senior staff to forego traditional hierarchies and power structures. OD is fundamentally a long-term and iterative approach that aims to substantially improve communication within the organisation and foster a learning culture among all employees.

Within the UK public sector we found that OD has been applied most extensively in the National Health Service. Here we find a number of new institutions and tools have been developed by practitioners in order to spread this way of thinking throughout the NHS. We also found examples of OD thinking taking root in health and care settings overseas.

Within UK policing OD is much less well developed, but there is a growing interest. We highlight Lancashire Constabulary in particular as a pioneer in deploying an OD approach to change management.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Recommendation 1**

The College of Policing should adopt a set of recommended principles to guide change management across the police service.

## **Recommendation 2**

Chief constables should advocate for OD approaches across the local public service landscape so that the whole system is better equipped to change in order to tackle complex and dynamic problems.

## **Recommendation 3**

A specialist team should be established within the College of Policing to spread knowledge, build a practitioner network, innovate and develop new tools, including:

- a practitioner network of policing professionals who are committed to OD approaches, will learn from one another and spread these approaches through their work and relationships with their peers;
- an online learning platform for police officers to participate in training on OD theory and practice;
- an enhanced online information sharing platform for policing to facilitate the spread and exchange of ideas throughout the service;
- use of social media and events to facilitate the development of the practitioner network.

## **Recommendation 4**

The work that has been under way since the 2015 Leadership Review to review the rank structure is concluded and changes implemented so that forces can experiment with flatter management structures.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICE WORKFORCE WELLBEING

At a time of reduced budgets and changing demand there are clear indications of deteriorating wellbeing among police officers and staff. In that context this report explores what UK policing can learn from the body of evidence and applied research associated with the field of Organisational Development (OD).

An 'OD approach' looks at how organisations can better achieve their objectives and improve staff wellbeing, through workforce engagement during the delivery of change. It is an approach to developing organisations that takes a 'whole systems' perspective and recognises that complex issues in large organisations cannot be addressed by isolated executives, without the involvement of the workforce.

This practically-oriented approach builds on a body of literature which demonstrates that in order for organisational change to be effective, the workforce must be engaged and involved. Top-down, enforced change may produce results in the short term, but for change to be sustained over the long term, employees need to feel that they have a voice and that their leaders are willing to listen to their views and act upon them. OD is therefore motivated by the normative and pragmatic idea that the wellbeing of an organisation's workforce should be central to its goals and that improving employee wellbeing should not be treated as a side issue, but rather as an integral part of any organisation's attempts to achieve positive change and improvement.

Policing presents a unique context for these ideas and practices. It has traditionally been a hierarchically structured, 'command and control'-based endeavour, with officers expected to follow orders and not ask too many questions of senior leaders. Within such a culture, the engagement, agency, ideas and wellbeing of individual employees can too easily be overlooked. Metcalfe (2017) has argued that this form of organisational leadership "*predicated on hierarchy, efficiency and control*" may be suitable, and in fact necessary, for certain elements of police work (for example, public order policing or managing critical

incidents) but it has also "*unintentionally suppressed initiative, creativity and morale*" in more complex areas of business.<sup>1</sup>

The aims of this research project were to:

- Understand the lessons of the literature on Organisational Development for the wellbeing of police officers and staff.
- Identify best practice from other sectors, such as the National Health Service, that have contextual similarities to policing and in which Organisational Development is well developed.
- Identify current best practice in Organisational Development and wellbeing in UK police forces.
- Develop recommendations aimed at improving police officer and staff wellbeing through the use of OD-based approaches that reflect the core findings of the research.

We carried out this research by conducting:

- A review of relevant literature pertaining to Organisational Development.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with OD researchers and consultants.
- A series of semi-structured interviews with senior leaders, relevant experts from within policing and the wider public sector.

During our interviews respondents described a common sequence of events that followed an eruption of crisis in public sector organisations, for example after a sudden reduction in funding. Initially there would be shock and the organisation would shudder to a temporary halt. Then the senior leadership would start taking decisions without consulting the workforce. These 'snap' decisions would then have long-term negative impacts on the frontline, affecting employee engagement and wellbeing and ultimately leading to a decrease in the organisation's effectiveness.

While austerity and other significant changes to the police operating environment have served to increase pressure on the police service, this does not mean that the needs of the workforce should be ignored. An experienced policing OD practitioner commented that the overwhelming

1. Chief Constables Council *Learning the Leaders Report*, 5 April 2017 <https://www.npcc.police.uk/2017%20FOI/CO/078%2017%20CCC%20April%202017%2016%20Learning%20Leaders%20Report%20Cover%20Paper%20and%20Annex%20A.pdf>

impression of frontline and back-office police personnel was that change was simply something that ‘happened to them’ and that they were rarely considered to be a useful part of the process by senior leaders. In his words; “psychological contracts had been torn up” from 2010 onwards and the national police workforce as a whole had suffered. In the long term, this lack of ‘feeling listened to’ can lead to employees ‘experiencing a loss of control’, thus gradually becoming less willing “to engage with future challenges” and becoming more inclined to keep their heads down, leading ultimately to a further breakdown in communication with their leaders.<sup>2</sup>

This report provides an introduction to the field of OD as it applies to policing by setting out the key theories, literature and historical development of the discipline. It then presents a series of case studies from other areas of the public sector, before looking at progress in policing. These examples offer insights into how policing can make better use of OD to improve employee wellbeing, while simultaneously improving effectiveness. All of the case studies are based on interviews with those closely involved in their delivery.

## 1.2 CONTEXT: POLICING UNDER PRESSURE

*“Policing has always adapted to changing demands. But the struggle to meet these demands in recent years has changed the outlook for many officers” – Steve White (2017), then Chair of the Police Federation.<sup>3</sup>*

Since its inception, the police service has required its staff to work in dangerous and stressful environments and today police officers are tasked with dealing with some of the most challenging social problems. It is a line of work in which employees can encounter traumatic situations where their health and wellbeing come under direct threat. The College of Policing has

identified six conditions that the police workforce may suffer as a direct result of their working environment<sup>4</sup>:

1. Anxiety.
2. Depression.
3. Burnout.
4. Compassion fatigue.
5. Primary trauma.
6. Secondary trauma.

In addition to the ‘intrinsic’ pressures of the job however, a clear set of indicators are emerging that suggest the physical and mental wellbeing of the police workforce is currently under particular strain. Specifically:

- There was a 35 per cent increase in police sick-leave for psychological reasons between 2010 and 2015.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2014/15 police forces across England and Wales lost over 600,000 sick days due to stress, anxiety and depression among their workforce. During the same period 78 officers were signed off for an entire year due to problems related to their personal mental health.<sup>6</sup>
- 91 per cent of police officers who responded to a Mind survey indicated they had experienced significant periods of poor mental health while at work.<sup>7</sup>
- 65 per cent of the 17,000 officers who responded to a national Police Federation survey indicated they had continued to go to work “even though they felt they shouldn’t have because of the state of their mental wellbeing”.<sup>8</sup>
- 90 per cent of officers in the same survey indicated low morale among their force colleagues.<sup>9</sup>
- 39 per cent of officers find their job extremely stressful, compared to a national average of 16 per cent in other sectors.<sup>10</sup>

2. Kings Fund *Talking leadership: Sally Hulks on organisational development in the NHS*, Kings Fund <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/sally-hulks-organisational-development-nhs>
3. BBC News ‘Police feel undervalued and underpaid poll suggests’ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41088414>
4. College of Policing *Responding to trauma in policing* <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Health-safety/Documents/Responding-to-trauma-in-policing.pdf>
5. BBC News ‘Police psychological sick leave up 35% in five years’ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35965223>
6. The Mirror ‘Thousands of police miss work every day because they are too stressed or depressed’ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/thousands-police-miss-work-every-5838228>
7. Mind ‘Police – how to manage your mental wellbeing’ <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/police/mental-wellbeing-police/#.XEHF00x2uUI>
8. Police Federation ‘Force treatment of mental illness must change’ <http://www.polfed.org/newsroom/3404.aspx>
9. Police Federation *Pay and morale survey 2017* <http://polfed.org/documents/Pay%20and%20Morale%20Survey%20National%20Report%202017.pdf>
10. Police Federation presentation draft.

- In 2017 a charity set up to offer rehabilitation and psychological support to police employees had to temporarily suspend its services because its waiting list had become too long.<sup>11 12</sup>

The backdrop to these developments is well documented. Cuts to police budgets, totalling £2.5 billion between 2011-12 and 2014-15, have resulted in unprecedented reductions in the police workforce (20,592 fewer police officers and 15,533 fewer police staff across England and Wales)<sup>13</sup> along with frozen pay and reductions in overtime budgets. At the same time ‘demand’ has intensified; police recorded crime is up 13 per cent in the last year<sup>14</sup>, complex and resource-intensive crimes like sexual offences and domestic abuse now take up more police resources, and there has been a marked increase in the breadth and complexity of ‘non-crime’ demands, such as dealing with mental health crises and missing people.<sup>15 16 17</sup>

This set of conditions has undoubtedly resulted in increasing workload and extra stresses and pressures on police officers and staff. In addition however it is important to recognise that **the way in which police forces have responded** to this rapidly shifting environment – as they have gone about unprecedented organisational reform and transformation – can also impact on the wellbeing of the workforce.

In their two most recent national workforce surveys, the Police Federation (the staff association for police constables, sergeants and inspectors)<sup>18</sup> has included questions that attempted to unpick precisely *why* such

a sharp decline in police workforce wellbeing has been observed.

Among the reasons given by officers for poor personal and organisational morale, the second most commonly cited was dissatisfaction with “*the management of change within the police*”; (2017: 80 per cent, 2018: 78 per cent – “*How the police as a whole are treated*” was cited most often: 86 per cent).<sup>19 20</sup> Of particular note, the workforce experience of change management came above concerns around pay (77 per cent), work-life balance (65 per cent) and level of workload and responsibility (62 per cent) as a perceived negative influence on morale.<sup>21</sup>

These figures demonstrate that many members of the police workforce feel that they have not been properly engaged in decisions that directly affect them at work. They also demonstrate that the causes of low morale and reduced wellbeing may be more complex than the more obvious issues such as pay, stress and workload.

Significantly however, change management is one of the few reasons for discontent and impaired wellbeing that senior police leaders have some control over. It is therefore the area where there is the potential for developing new and innovative approaches, irrespective of reduced budgets and rising demand. Organisational Development (OD), and the range of approaches, strategies, and initiatives included under its umbrella, offer opportunities for police leaders and policymakers to develop new approaches to the management of change both within individual police forces and within policing as a wider profession.

11. i News ‘Police mental health centre so overrun it has to turn officers away’ <https://inews.co.uk/news/police-mental-health-centre-overrun-applicants-turn-officers-away/>

12. <http://www.flinthouse.co.uk/>

13. Gov.uk *Police workforce statistics, England and Wales* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

14. ONS *Crime in England and Wales: year ending June 2017* <https://cy.ons.gov.uk/releases/crimeinenglandandwalesyearendingjune2017>

15. College of Policing *Demand analysis report* <https://www.college.police.uk/About/Pages/Demand-Analysis-Report.aspx>

16. Gov.uk *Detentions under the Mental Health Act (1983): Police powers and procedures year ending 31 March 2017* [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/654469/detentions-mental-health-act-police-powers-procedures-mar17-hosb2017-tables.ods](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654469/detentions-mental-health-act-police-powers-procedures-mar17-hosb2017-tables.ods)

17. National Crime Agency UK *Missing Persons Bureau – Missing persons Data Report 2015/2016* <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/876-missing-persons-data-report-2015-2016-1/file>

18. <https://polfed.org/aboutus/default.aspx>

19. Police Federation *Pay and morale survey 2018* <http://polfed.org/documents/Pay%20Survey%20Headline%20Statistics%202018.pdf>

20. Police Federation *Pay and morale survey 2017* <http://polfed.org/documents/Pay%20and%20Morale%20Survey%20National%20Report%202017.pdf>

21. Police Federation *Pay and morale survey 2018* <http://polfed.org/documents/Pay%20Survey%20Headline%20Statistics%202018.pdf>



## 2. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section we describe the field of Organisational Development and chart its historical development from a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century reaction to mechanistic ‘Taylorism’, to the latest ‘dynamic’ approaches to the complex multi-agency public service environment. First however it is necessary to consider two related concepts: wellbeing and engagement.

### 2.1 KEY CONCEPT: WELLBEING

Research on ‘wellbeing’, both in general and within a workplace context, has been gaining momentum but it is often descriptive in nature, and thus there is still debate over the definition of the term itself. Wellbeing is “*intangible, difficult to define and even harder to measure*”<sup>22</sup> and thus constitutes a complex construct that has “continued to elude researchers’ attempts to define and measure”.<sup>23</sup> For the purposes of this paper – in which we explore employee wellbeing within specific public sector organisational settings, and its relationship to wider issues of personal and organisational development – the following definition is of most use;

*“In essence, stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge”<sup>24</sup>*

Importantly, this definition recognises the role of wellbeing for performance (the capacity to overcome ‘challenge’) and thus makes it as an essential concern for all organisations that rely on the endeavour of their employees to achieve their goals. Regardless of service or sector, providing the individuals who work for you with the necessary ‘resources’ to work effectively, goes beyond more basic provision of either training and equipment, or pay and remuneration. Rather, it relates to a longer-term investment in capabilities and support structures of employees, and the mechanisms to identify and respond where these are insufficient.

Robertson and Cooper (2010, 2011) have demonstrated the importance of employee wellbeing, its links to ‘engagement’ at work, and the subsequent achievement of long term organisational goals. They have shown how **employees who have high levels of psychological wellbeing are a significantly more valuable resource for the organisations they work for**. They also theorise two distinct elements of wellbeing; *hedonic*, the more well-known and immediate aspects (such as feeling content in the moment) and *eudaimonic*, a more complex long-term attribute that focuses on purpose, achieved, for instance, when an employee feels that their work is genuinely worthwhile (from Aristotle’s conception of eudaimonia – doing something that is *worth* doing). They describe this as “*the purposeful aspect of psychological wellbeing*”.<sup>25 26</sup>

- 22 Thomas, J. (2009) *Working paper: Current measures and the challenges of measuring children’s wellbeing*. Newport: Office for National Statistics.
- 23 Pollard, E., and Lee, P. (2003) Child well-being: a systematic review of the literature, *Social Indicators Research*, 61(1), pp9 – 78.
- 24 Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., and Sanders, L. (2012) The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), pp222-235.
- 25 Robertson, I.T. and Cary L. Cooper, (2010) Full engagement: the integration of employee engagement and psychological well-being. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 31(4), pp.324-336.
- 26 Robertson, I. and Cooper, C. 2011. *Well-Being*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Table 1:** Psychological wellbeing terminology taxonomy<sup>27</sup>

Eudaimonic wellbeing terminology	Hedonic wellbeing terminology
Self-acceptance	Happiness
Environmental mastery	Subjective wellbeing (situational)
Positive relationships	Positive emotions
Personal growth / development	
Purpose in life / work	
Autonomy / independence	

In public service roles, where the social value of work is often more explicit and the motivation to seek personal financial gain arguably less prominent, **the eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing are likely to be particularly relevant.**

*"Of course there is a side of well-being that is just about doing things that make us feel good. However there is another side which is about feeling good about ourselves when we achieve difficult but meaningful goals or objectives."*

Professor Cary Cooper,  
Manchester Business School.<sup>28</sup>

Alimo-Metcalfe and Bradley (2008) carried out a three year study of mental health teams from across the NHS and found that 'engagement' was the strongest predictor of good performance.<sup>29</sup> The study stressed that the findings are applicable to other sectors, such as policing. Throughout their research, 'engaging with others' was consistently found to be the most important factor affecting employee performance, while in interviews, senior leaders consistently expressed the view that "creating an engaging culture must start with them" and that once started, such processes often required little further intervention.<sup>30</sup> These finding echoes many of the points made by those interviewed for this report.

Robertson and Cooper have developed their theory of psychological wellbeing within a workplace context further, and identified six essential components:

1. Well-managed change.
2. Resources and communication.

3. Work relationships.
4. Balanced workload.
5. In control.
6. Sense of purpose.

Their work strongly supports the argument that all organisations, regardless of their sector or function, should put their employees' wellbeing at the core of their activity, in pursuit of the long-term achievement of organisational goals.

## 2.2 KEY CONCEPT: ENGAGEMENT

*"It is hard to ignore the volume of studies which show, to varying degrees, with varying sophistication, a positive relationship between high performance/involvement work practices and outcome measures."*<sup>31</sup>

Following their analysis of wellbeing in the workplace Robertson and Cooper (2010) developed a construct of "full engagement". This gives equal attention to the commitment and citizenship of an employee, and their psychological experience of wellbeing. They suggest that organisations have traditionally approached employee engagement through a relatively narrow lens, focusing on three fixed attributes; attachment, commitment, and citizenship.<sup>32</sup> This approach, which focuses on engagement in behavioural terms, and largely ignores the subjective experience of wellbeing,

27 Ryff, C.D., Singer, B.H. and Love, G.D. (2004) Positive health: connecting wellbeing with biology. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 359, 1383-1394.

28. David McLeod and Nita Clarke *Engaging for success* <https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/file52215.pdf>

29. People Management 'Cast in a new light' <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/cast-new-light>

30. People Management 'Cast in a new light' <https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/cast-new-light>

31. McLeod, D. and Clarke, N. *Engaging for success* <https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/file52215.pdf>

32 Robertson, I.T. and Cary L. Cooper, (2010) Full engagement: the integration of employee engagement and psychological wellbeing. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 31(4), pp.324-336.

may serve organisational purposes but neglect what is most important to employees, and thus more likely to encourage 'full engagement'. The authors have applied this line of thought to public sector workers in the UK and argued that the particular set of circumstances within public services work lends itself to the conclusion **that in order for employees to be engaged they must fully 'buy into' the purpose of their organisation, feel that they have a voice and that they are actually listened to by their senior leaders.**<sup>33</sup>

In earlier approaches to workforce management – in particular those that rested on 'scientific' management foundations and prioritised efficiency and productivity, (often referred to as Taylorism) – the concept of *discretionary effort* was viewed in a negative light, and thus structures were developed to allow as little space as possible for the personal discretion of employees. These concerns are reflected in the command and control structures and hierarchies that have traditionally dominated the organisation of policing. The approach has shifted, to some extent, over recent decades as a growing number of leaders have recognised the need to 'unlock' discretionary effort within their workforce, through a more employee-oriented approach, less focused on strict instructions and hierarchy and more on "*psychological constructs such as identity, commitment, control, and motivation*".<sup>34</sup>

Macleod (2009) describes engagement as primarily being about "*how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential*".<sup>35</sup> Research has demonstrated that **improvements in employee engagement lead directly to positive outcomes for the organisation, as individuals are more willing to fully commit themselves to the organisation's goals**, and thus require significantly

less intervention and instruction from line managers and senior leaders.<sup>36</sup> It has also been demonstrated that individual employee wellbeing is linked to their engagement in the workplace.<sup>37</sup>

Macleod and Clarke's government review of performance and engagement (2009) provides a wealth of evidence to further underline the importance of achieving and maintaining an engaged workforce. They cite dozens of research reports which demonstrate the significant, measurable differences between the outputs of engaged and unengaged workforces; in one instance 78 per cent of highly engaged employees believed they could make a genuine impact on society, whilst among the unengaged only 29 per cent thought this to be the case.<sup>38</sup> This further underlines the central importance of an engaged workforce within a public sector context.

A study conducted by ORC (a global business intelligence firm)<sup>39</sup> into local authority performance and the satisfaction rates among residents adds further weight to arguments in favour of prioritising employee wellbeing.<sup>40</sup> The report identified six significant associations between positive attitudes among employees (notably including 'awareness of the council's long term goals') and improved satisfaction among residents. This issue came to the fore in several of this study's interviews with police respondents. Frontline officers, interviewees suggested, were often unaware of, and uninvolved in, the long-term strategy of their organisation, and thus could become disengaged and excluded from decision-making processes.

A Kings Fund study, conducted on behalf of the NHS, adds further evidence of the importance of staff engagement and organisational outcomes.<sup>41</sup> It found a clear association between employee engagement and the levels of sickness absence in local trusts; the lower

33 Robertson, I.T. and Cary L. Cooper, (2010) Full engagement: the integration of employee engagement and psychological well-being. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 31(4), pp.324-336.

34 Hesketh, I., Cooper, C.L and Ivy, J. (2016) Wellbeing and Engagement in Policing: The Key to Unlocking Discretionary Effort? *Policing* 11(1) pp62 – 73.

35. Macleod, D. and Clarke, N. *Engaging for success* <https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/file52215.pdf>

36 Donald, I., Taylor, P., Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S. and Robertson, S. (2005) Work environments, stress and productivity: an examination using ASSET. *International Journal of Stress Management* 12(4) pp 409-23.

37 Wright, T.A. and Cropanzano, R. (2000) Psychological well-being and job satisfaction as predictors of job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 5(1) pp 84-94.

38 Towers Perrin (2007) *Executive Briefing: Engagement in the Public Sector*. Towers Perrin.

39 <https://orcinternational.com/>

40. Macleod, D. and Clarke, N. *Engaging for success* <https://engageforsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/file52215.pdf>

41. NHS England *Employee engagement, sickness absence and agency spend in NHS trusts* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/wres-engagement-absence-agency-spend.pdf>

the engagement the higher the spending on external consultants due to repeated absence of internal staff.

The positive outcomes of a fully engaged workforce can be summarised in three key areas:

- Improvements in attitude and wellbeing, (indirectly leading to),
- Increases in employee performance while at work
- Reductions in sick leave and staff turnover.<sup>42</sup>

From the evidence cited by Macleod and Clarke (2009) three clear elements emerge as keys to achieving genuine engagement:

- Communication (in particular from senior management).
- Providing feedback (and listening to concerns of all staff).
- Giving staff the autonomy and independence necessary to do their job (while developing both personally and professionally).

## 2.3 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: IN SEARCH OF A DEFINITION

*"What will be apparent is that there is no single definition of OD – standard practice by one OD practitioner may be outside of the scope of another practitioner's role. The field of OD is broad and complex, principally as OD practitioners work in many different roles."<sup>43</sup>*

Organisational Development is both a professional field of applied action and an area of academic enquiry. A number of different organisational behaviours and strategies can fall under the OD umbrella. Throughout the interviews conducted for this report, a common form of response to the question 'What is OD to you?' kept being offered: to focus less on the definition and more on the practice. In other words **to place more emphasis on the 'how' of OD rather than the 'what'.**

In order to offer an insight into the diversity of views around what OD can mean and how it can be implemented, a selection of definitions and descriptions of OD given by the expert practitioners interviewed for this report are set out below;

*"Its primary aim is to bring strategy closer to practice".*

*"It is about enabling people to transform the systems within which they work".*

*"OD cannot be implanted in one fell swoop – it must be a constant, gradual, and iterative process".*

*"It is not just an academic discipline – for me, it is all about the practice and the measurement of the impact of practice".*

Looking wider, theorists and practitioners have offered a number of their own summaries which illustrate the wide spectrum of organisational activity considered to be 'OD':

*"Organisation development is a system-wide application and transfer of behavioural science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organisation effectiveness".<sup>44</sup>*

*"OD is a whole system approach to developing the health and well-being of an organisation. OD is an art, a science and a practice. Every leader has a role in OD".<sup>45</sup>*

*"Organisational Development (OD) is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organisations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself".<sup>46</sup>*

42 Crawford, E. R., Lepine, J. A. and Rich, B. L. (2010). Linking Job Demands and Resources to Employee Engagement and Burnout: A Theoretical Extension and Meta-Analytic Test. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 95(5): pp.834 – 848.

43. NHS North West Leadership Academy *Developing Together OD Toolkit* <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Developing%20Together%20-%20Organisational%20Development%20Toolkit%203448.pdf>

44 Cummings, T.G. and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing, p. 2.

45. Benfield, S. Chief Executive, Institute for Organisational Development post on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6404218301278408704>

46 Bennis W G. (1969) *Organization Development: Its nature, origins, and perspectives*. Reading, Mass. :Addison-Wesley.

*“Organisational Development is a planned process of change in an organisation’s culture through the utilisation of behavioural science technology, research and theory”.<sup>47</sup>*

*“OD represents a wide spectrum of different tools, techniques, and interventions typically designed to drive a planned improvement in the current state of some aspect of organisational life. Whether these efforts are targeted at enhancing individual, leader, or group effectiveness the fundamental goal is often the same – i.e. enhanced individual and organisational effectiveness”.<sup>48</sup>*

*“Organisational Development (OD) refers to a planned, systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness, health and sustainability”.<sup>49</sup>*

*“An OD approach encourages ownership and responsibility so that people arrive at the point where they can face up to what they, as individuals, need to do to change patterns of working and bring about fresh ways of thinking and new solutions. This is how long-term, sustainable change can be achieved”.<sup>50</sup>*

*“OD is everyone’s business”.<sup>51</sup>*

What can we distil from these myriad descriptions and perspectives? What is OD and how can it be differentiated from the multitude of other approaches to change, development and learning within organisations? A number of key characteristics can be observed:

First, the above definitions emphasise that for an initiative to be considered ‘OD’ it must **encompass the whole of an organisation** rather than just one or some of its constituent parts. In other non-OD cases the focus may be narrowed onto one specific element of an organisation’s practice, for example innovation or recruitment. With OD the change process treats the organisation as one entire system that requires development as a unitary whole with the full engagement of the entire workforce.

Second, OD should not be sidelined as merely another element of HR or seen as yet another element of compulsory ‘personal development’ that employees are contracted to complete. **OD should always take a voluntary, participatory, iterative process-based approach to change management** – where a relationship can gradually develop between the workforce and either externally ‘brought in’ OD consultants and/or practitioners who work within the same organisation. It is therefore **evolutionary and incremental**.

Third, OD **emphasises the ‘human’ aspects** of an organisation. The core practice of OD is centred on the application of behavioural science techniques to organisational problems. Its focus on positive leadership, group dynamics and employee wellbeing and engagement, differentiates OD from other more traditional approaches that tend to favour more mechanistic organisational analogies. However OD does not neglect the significance of the material reality of an organisation; rather it properly *“values human potential, participation, and development **in addition** to performance and competitive advantage”* (emphasis added).<sup>52</sup>

Fourth, in order for OD to be effective **senior leaders and managers must demonstrate a willingness to cede a degree of control and allow space for their workforce to bypass traditional hierarchies**, which can suffocate innovative thought and practice.

In addition, research in the OD field has tended to emphasise the following as key objectives for improving practice:

- Employees should buy into an organisation’s goals and feel motivated by them.
- All employees, regardless of role, should be problem solvers.
- Trust and cooperation are critical building blocks for success.

47. NHS North West Leadership Academy *Developing Together OD Toolkit* <http://www.ewin.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Developing%20Together%20-%20Organisational%20Development%20Toolkit%203448.pdf>

48. Golay, L. M. and Church, A.H. (2013) Mass customization: the bane of OD or the cure to what ails it?. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 34(7), pp.661-679.

49. Staffordshire Police ‘Organisational Development’ <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/article/2092/Organisational-Development>

50. Kings Fund ‘Talking leadership: Sally Hulks on organisational development in the NHS’ <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/sally-hulks-organisational-development-nhs>

51. Do OD post on Twitter.com [https://twitter.com/NHSE\\_DoOD/status/1024551768502485003](https://twitter.com/NHSE_DoOD/status/1024551768502485003)

52. Cummings, T.G. and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing, p. 4.



- Employees should be included in decision making and feel ownership over an organisation's overarching strategy.
- Management and practice should be evidence-based wherever possible.

## 2.4 THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organisational Development initially emerged in the post-war period as a counterpoint to the 'rational' and 'scientific' approaches to organisational management that had dominated in the early twentieth century.

Pioneered by Taylor and made famous by Ford, these early approaches had taken the view that employees within an organisation could be engineered and managed like 'cogs in a machine' and were characterised by:

*"A passion for order and the elaboration of a calculus of incentives which, if administered in exact measures, would stimulate the individual to the correct degree of rectitude and work"<sup>53</sup>*

This clinical and functional approach to developing organisations, and the often overbearing and invasive monitoring of employee activity and performance that came with it, began to dominate under the impact of industrialisation and the spread of mass production. The new generation of employees were expected to be unquestioningly loyal to their organisations and to turn up and complete their work in a straightforward, routine manner, with little concern as to whether they were 'engaged' or invested in the outcomes of their efforts – or, more importantly, whether the newly emerging work structures negatively impacted their mental health and wellbeing.

In this first instance of 20<sup>th</sup> century organisational development, behavioural science was applied rationally; in order to locate, hire and train the ideal employees who could be perfectly moulded to the

needs of the organisation. As the Taylorist approach to management continued to take hold, observers began to express concerns about the potential of an alienated workforce, disconnected from the outcomes of their labour, and the negative outcomes this would have for the overall success of organisations.

From these concerns, the next wave of OD theories began to emerge. These recognised that in order to successfully change, organisations needed to have an understanding of the views and opinions of the entire workforce, not just their behaviour and outputs, and that these needed to be addressed in the process of delivering change. At the heart of this approach, as well as a focus on procedures and ways of working, the "*major targets of change*" now included the "*attitudes, behaviours, and performances*" of the employees.<sup>54</sup>

The primary foundations of this field (group dynamics, action research, and the development of a collaborative ethos) were set out by Kurt Lewin, a psychologist and researcher who contributed to a number of fields and disciplines throughout his academic career. His pioneering use of employee survey feedback and his belief in the potential for applied research to help manage organisational change paved the way for the emergence of OD as a distinct field of practice.<sup>55</sup> He recognised that through proper workforce consultation change could take hold more quickly and could be sustained over the long term.

Lewin began his work by exploring the potential for 'action research' in the late 1940s and early 1950s (a process of inquiry that required the involvement of those being studied, and aimed to assist subjects in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their activities). With his team of social scientists Lewin began to develop a four-step approach, through which an organisation's core functions could be assessed and problems identified. Solutions would then be designed and implemented through a collaborative process, requiring the full and voluntary involvement of the workforce. This new approach, radical for its time, was shown to offer benefits both for the organisation being studied and for the researchers conducting the study; the core tenet of the action research approach. During these early years, a four-part methodology was gradually established,

53 Bell, D. (1988) *The End of Ideology: on the exhaustion of political ideas in the fifties*. Boston MA: Harvard University Press.

54 Grievs, J. (2000) Introduction: the origins of organizational development., 19(5), pp.345-447.

55 Cummings, T.G, and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing, p. 6.

56 Cummings, T.G, and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing, p. 4.

57 Marrow, A., Bowers, D. and Seashore, S. (1967) *Management by Participation*. New York: Harper & Row.

as studies were conducted in different organisational settings and among varied groups of employees:

1. Entering and contracting.
2. Diagnosing and problem identifying.
3. Planning and implementing.
4. Evaluating and institutionalising.<sup>56</sup>

One of Lewin's most seminal projects, enacting organisational change at the Harwood Manufacturing Company<sup>57</sup>, laid the foundations for a new methodical approach. This approach was 'destination-oriented' (geared towards eventually reaching a state of the 'ideal' organisation) and mapped out a linear and fixed path for how to get from the flawed present to the future ideal. At the core was a firm belief that the subjects of the study (the employees of the organisation being developed) should be invited and encouraged to engage fully in the co-production of the research.

This also helped to distinguish the emerging 'OD' approach from other approaches to change, characterised by detached external consultants, drafted in for short fixed periods to solve a particular problems, who often left a sour taste in the mouths of the workforce they had been tasked with 'developing'.

While Lewin can be said to be the father of the OD field, he was by no means the only theorist exploring the potential for the application of behavioural science to organisational change. Lewin's pioneering case studies were built on by Rensis Likert in his survey-based approach of employee attitudes at Detroit Edison.<sup>58</sup> Likert was an American psychologist (now most widely known for developing the widely used five-point 'Likert' rating scale), whose Participative Management approach, developed during the 1960s, built on the foundations of the action research-based work of Lewin a decade prior.

Likert posited that all organisations operated via one of four possible management systems; exploitive authoritative, benevolent authoritative, consultative, and participative.<sup>59</sup> This 'System 4' management

approach was applied to organisations, via a structured programme of survey feedback. It encouraged participants to identify existing gaps between their current situation and an ideal that could be worked towards. When identifying gaps within the organisation, respondents were encouraged to focus upon the six core features of their organisation; leadership, motivation, communication, decision-making, goals, and control.<sup>60</sup>

This systematic approach was formalised further by Blake and Mouton and their development of a grid-based OD method.<sup>61</sup> Their 'Grid OD' had two key aims; "*to improve planning by developing a strategy for organisational excellence based on clear logic*" and to also "*help managers gain the necessary knowledge to supervise effectively*"<sup>62</sup> through a clear and defined six-step approach:

1. One week Grid Seminar programme of self-analysis.
2. Development of the team.
3. Intergroup development.
4. Ideal model of excellence developed
5. Ideal model is implemented
6. Programme of change across the entire organisation is evaluated.<sup>63</sup>

Their approach was derived from an initial programme of research that included data from nearly 200 organisations located in different countries and private and public industry settings. Analysis of this substantial dataset demonstrated that, regardless of contextual differences, the two largest obstacles to developing an organisation were consistent: planning and communication. Blake and Mouton argued that, in order to overcome these barriers, leaders or managers needed to pay equal attention to production (making decisions, measuring workloads, and accomplishing tasks) and people (valuing employees, good working environment, and a fair salary structure).<sup>64</sup> This represented a significant divergence from previous (Taylorist) principles of 'good leadership' that

58 Mann, F (1962). Studying and Creating Change, in Bennis W., Benne, K., and Chin, R. (eds) *Behavioural Sciences*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, pp. 605-15.

59 Likert, R. (1967) *The Human Organization*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

60 Cummings, T.G, and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing, p. 9.

61 Blake, R. and Mouton, J. (1964) *The Managerial Grid*. Houston: Gulf.

62 Cummings, T.G, and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing.

63 Blake, R. and Mouton, J. (1964) *The Managerial Grid*. Houston: Gulf.

64 Cummings, T.G, and Worley, C.G (2008) *Organization Development and Change*, 9th Edition South Western Publishing.

prioritised the production aspects and saw workforce management as a secondary concern.

As described above, the early foundational work in the OD field tended to be 'rule-bound' and formalised, with little concern for the wider environment in which organisations operated and the significant effect that 'dynamic externalities' – such as a major breakthrough in technology, new senior leadership or changes in the legal structure – could have. While aspects of these early approaches do still influence contemporary OD, more recent versions recognise the significance of individual employee wellbeing and engagement alongside the impact of external factors.

Strategic, change-based OD interventions, which gained prominence during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, differ from previous approaches in that they gave equal priority to the environment, in which an organisation operates, as well as its strategy, design and structure.<sup>65</sup> Interventions of this type are often catalysed by an external rather than internal disruption to everyday operations. The shift towards strategic change-based OD has forced practitioners to widen their knowledge base and become more familiar with the various externalities that could affect the organisation. In a public sector context the common disruptions could be related to cuts to core funding and staffing, or a top-down change to the organisational structure.

## 2.5 DIAGNOSTIC AND DIALOGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The theories and approaches discussed above provide the core foundations of OD. Yet contemporary OD is not a fixed and codified discipline that rejects change, rather it is a constantly evolving practice-centred

approach that has undergone a number of significant transformations over the past half century – it thus remains in a “*seeming state of perpetual flux with new influences impacting practice every day*”.<sup>66</sup> In particular, the field has responded to societal change and shifted away from a view of organisations as standalone entities that can be studied in isolation, to a more dynamic understanding of the hugely significant role that external environmental factors can play.

While the strategic change-focused interventions brought with them an increased awareness of this external environment, a further change to the field and practice of OD came with the shift from a traditional 'diagnostic' to a 'dialogic' approach. Diagnostic OD, building upon the foundational work of Lewin and Likert, took a positivist and classical approach to the challenge of organisational change and development. Its goal was to take academic theory, mostly from the broad umbrella of the behavioural sciences, and apply it to the complex practice of large-scale organisational change. *Dialogic* OD, emerging in recent decades and achieving recognition via a seminal paper published in 2009<sup>67</sup>, is less concerned with the theoretical grounding and much more focused on the reality of change; identifying *what works in practice*.

Dialogic OD thus represents a shift towards a more interpretive and flexible approach, one which rests on more fluid theories of social construction, rather than the more fixed objective foundations of earlier OD research. This updated approach to OD has been pioneered and developed by Canadian academic Gervase Bushe (Professor of Leadership and Organisational Development at Simon Fraser University<sup>68</sup>) and has led to a resurgence in international interest in the OD field, across both private and public sectors.<sup>69</sup> Dialogic OD has emerged in order to offer practitioners “*new ways of improving organisational effectiveness*” in a fast-paced world, whilst also seeking to “*stay true to OD’s humanistic value base*”.<sup>70</sup> The key

65 Worley, C.G., Hitchin, D.E and Ross, W.L (1996) *Integrated Strategic Change*. Hoboken: FT Press; Rajagopalan, N. and Spreitzer, G. (1997) Toward a Theory of Strategic Change: A Multi-Lens Perspective and Integrative Framework, *Academy of Management Review* 22 (1997): pp. 48 – 79.

66 Golay, L. M. and Church, A.H. (2013) Mass customization: the bane of OD or the cure to what ails it?. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 34(7), pp.661-679.

67 Bushe, G.R. and Marshak, R.J. (2016) Revisioning Organization Development: Diagnostic and Dialogic Premises and Patterns of Practice. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 43(3), pp.348-368.

68. Bushe, G. professional biography <http://www.gervasebushe.ca/probio.htm>

69 Bushe, G.R. & Marshak, R.J. (2016) The Dialogic Organization Development Approach to Transformation and Change in Rothwell, W. Stravros, J., and Sullivan R. (eds.) *Practicing Organization Development* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition San Francisco: Wiley, pp.407-418.

70 Bushe, G.R., Marshak, R.J. (2009) Revisioning Organization Development: Diagnostic and Dialogic Premises and Patterns of Practice. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 43(3), pp.348-368.

differences between the two approaches, diagnostic (Lewin and Likert) and dialogic (Bushe), are summarised below:

**Table 2:** The differences between diagnostic and dialogic approaches to organisational development

Diagnostic	Dialogic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective reality – organisations as living systems</li> <li>• Planned/episodic/developmental – change can be planned and managed</li> <li>• Change the core behaviours</li> <li>• Hierarchical/top-down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social reality – organisations as meaning-making systems</li> <li>• Emergent/iterative/transformational – change can only be encouraged</li> <li>• Change the mind-set</li> <li>• Heterarchical/change can come from anywhere</li> </ul>

Foregoing the machinist analogies prevalent within early conception of (diagnostic) OD, dialogic OD views organisations as “*socially constructed meaning making systems*” where change and development are gradual processes that take place through “*self-organised dialogue and action*”.<sup>71</sup> This form of OD recognises that **dialogue and conversations among employees can be more valuable vehicles for change than top-down instruction and advice from external consultants**. Dialogic OD is not as explicit as earlier diagnostic versions in its instructions for *how* to bring about change, rather it aims to “change the frameworks that guide what people think and say”.<sup>72</sup> For dialogic OD practitioners, successful transformation and change relies on convening conversations that “*disrupt the status quo, introduce new images, and change the core narratives*” of a given organisation.<sup>73</sup>

While dialogic OD addresses many of the issues raised by the mechanistic logic-based elements of earlier OD approaches, there has emerged in recent years a third conception of OD that may be the most suitable for the increasingly complex and chaotic environment in which contemporary police organisations now operate, one in which they often have to navigate a host of multi-agency partnerships and cross-organisational working cultures.

## 2.6 DYNAMIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A NEW AND FLEXIBLE APPROACH FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

‘Do OD’, a community of OD practitioners formed across the NHS (discussed in more detail in the case studies that follow), have proposed a new approach which moves beyond both diagnostic and dialogic OD to a new ‘dynamic’ form. Their third approach acknowledges the literature and applied practice that has gone before and admits that both the diagnostic and dialogic approaches still hold value for the modern day OD practitioner. However it also suggests that the current and emerging public sector context, in which practitioners often work between and across multiple organisational boundaries, and in increasingly complex and chaotic environments, warrants a new and more flexible approach.

Dynamic OD can be distinguished from diagnostic/dialogic forms, primarily in terms of its spontaneity and level of improvisation. Whilst pre-21<sup>st</sup> century OD approached organisations as fixed entities that could be studied in isolation, dynamic OD recognises the complexity and ever-changing nature of most

71 Taylor Pitt, P., Billings, S.H., Curran, H., Drewett, S., Gilbert, T., Mabey, C., Morgan, S., Sharples, L., Shore, V., Skeel, J., Stoker, A. and Wrench, T. (2018) A New Architecture of Organization Development in the English National Health Service. OD PRACTITIONER 50(3), p. 35.

72 Taylor Pitt, P., Billings, S.H., Curran, H., Drewett, S., Gilbert, T., Mabey, C., Morgan, S., Sharples, L., Shore, V., Skeel, J., Stoker, A. and Wrench, T. (2018) A New Architecture of Organization Development in the English National Health Service. OD PRACTITIONER 50(3), p. 35.

73. Dialogic Organization Development website <http://www.dialogicod.net/>

modern organisations, in particular large public sector organisations, such as the NHS and the police service, that deal with “*highly complex issues that span multiple interdependent complex adaptive systems*”.<sup>74</sup>

A dynamic approach requires the practitioner, confronting an organisational issue, to first complete two key tasks of identification; *defining the issue* and *specifying the level of the system* at which it is taking place. They offer a seven-step approach (with clear echoes of Lewin and Likert):

1. Understand the key objective.
2. Explore the capability needed to deliver the objective.
3. Explain the root factors that contribute to success.
4. Clarify the issue at the heart of the root factors.
5. Classify the capability, root factors, and issues.
6. Chart the nature of the issue and level of system.
7. Identify appropriate interventions.<sup>75</sup>

Following the above seven steps, the Do OD team have utilised the work of Stacey (2012) around complexity, to develop three distinct categories of ‘issue’; simple, complicated, and complex,<sup>76</sup> which can be further categorised on a separate dimension as relating to; 1. individuals, people and teams, 2. an entire organisation, or 3. multiple organisations at

once. Having completed these assessments the OD practitioner can then use a blueprint to identify which type of OD approach is most suitable in any particular case.

The three forms of organisational development described above demonstrate a clear evolution of the field, as it has kept pace with the rapid changes occurring across modern society. Yet in many respects the structures and habits of policing still reflect Taylorist organisational management; a machine that “*emphasises neat structures, assumes linear causal relationships and places a high value on management controls*”.<sup>77</sup> Metcalfe (2017) has argued that the longevity of this mindset can be traced back to a Home Office Circular from 1983, which introduced a raft of private-sector leadership models into the policing landscape. Many of these models had been derived from manufacturing organisations and, he argues, were wholly unsuitable to the demands of policing at the time – and have become even more unsuitable as the demands on the police have become more complex and interrelated.

Contemporary police work is certainly ‘dynamic’, and regularly requires officers to navigate the space across and between public sector organisations, from healthcare to social care to education and housing services. As such the approach put forward by the NHS Do OD community appears to be particularly relevant.

74 Taylor Pitt, P., Billings, S.H., Curran, H., Drewett, S., Gilbert, T., Mabey, C., Morgan, S., Sharples, L., Shore, V., Skeel, J., Stoker, A. and Wrench, T. (2018) A New Architecture of Organization Development in the English National Health Service. OD PRACTITIONER 50(3), p. 37.

75 Taylor Pitt, P., Billings, S.H., Curran, H., Drewett, S., Gilbert, T., Mabey, C., Morgan, S., Sharples, L., Shore, V., Skeel, J., Stoker, A. and Wrench, T. (2018) A New Architecture of Organization Development in the English National Health Service. OD PRACTITIONER 50(3), p. 35.

76 Stacey, R. (2012) *Tools and techniques of leadership and management: Meeting the challenge of complexity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

77. Chief Constables Council *Learning the Leaders Report*, 5 April 2017 <https://www.npcc.police.uk/2017%20FOI/CO/078%2017%20CCCC%20April%202017%2016%20Learning%20Leaders%20Report%20Cover%20Paper%20and%20Annex%20A.pdf>



# 3. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE: LEARNING FROM OTHER SECTORS

OD is as much about practice as theory. In this section we consider some examples of OD initiatives that have potential to inform practice in policing. All are informed by interviews with those directly involved with their delivery.

## 3.1 NHS HORIZONS

*“The people who do the work, do the change – we help people, staff and patients to build their power to make a difference”<sup>78</sup>*

‘Horizons’ is a specialist team of organisational change expert practitioners that is located within the Strategy and Innovation Directorate of NHS England. Its primary aim is to provide support to those seeking to bring about change within their particular organisational setting. As well as working with a number of NHS partners, they offer services to the wider UK public sector and to other healthcare systems and organisations across the world. Their ‘School for Change Agents’ online learning platform attracts police officers in significant numbers and a number of their approaches have, in recent months, inspired or directly contributed to initiatives within policing.

Over the past year the Horizons team has operated in a number of different areas and provided training and strategy assistance to a wide variety of bodies, including:

- Helping NHS trusts in special measures to transform culture.
- Supporting Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) to build shared purpose and strategies for action.

- Supporting a 30 year forward look at primary care for NHS England.
- Helping the NHS Leadership Academy to identify future leadership development directions.
- Aiding the Personalised Care team to establish demonstrator sites.
- Facilitating a thriving virtual community for STP Finance Leads on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement.<sup>79</sup>

The team has also advised the Cabinet Office, supported the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and contributed to the development of the Police Frontline Review recently launched by the Home Office.

At the heart of the Horizons approach is continuing experimentation with new and diverse methods of engagement. A whole raft of tools, developed by a core team with diverse skill sets, ensures that the net is cast as far as possible to encourage the maximum number of employees to voluntarily engage with change processes.

The NHS Horizons ‘School for Change Agents’ team estimates that around ten per cent of its students are serving police officers. This demonstrates that the desire within the police service to engage in new ways of working exists, but that at present, both frontline officers and senior leaders have to look outside of policing, in order to satisfy it. A senior police representative reflecting on this issue commented; *“this shows us two things; there is the appetite, and when we step back and allow our people to choose rather than direct, then we see **true engagement**”*.

The Horizons team recognise that in order to achieve the best results in terms of employee engagement and

78. NHS Horizons website <http://horizonsnhs.com/about/>

79. NHS Horizons website <http://horizonsnhs.com/about/>

staff wellbeing, organisations must pursue a variety of strategies and interventions to ensure they reach as much of the workforce as possible. These approaches are varied but have a united focus; empowering staff to change and develop their own organisations. Several of the tools employed by NHS Horizons are described below.

### The Edge social platform

The Edge was an online social platform that acted as a central resource for innovative ideas from across the healthcare sector. It took the form of an “explorable library of content” that sought to inspire fresh and innovative solutions to dynamic and emerging problems facing the health service by collecting and collating *“new ways of solving old problems; new ways of realising potential; new ways of making change happen”*.<sup>80</sup>

The digital library covered topics from career progression in the ambulance service to public perceptions of midwifery. It was open to all staff regardless of their job function or seniority and significantly, encouraged contributions from those working in other public sector organisations or even those who had experience in healthcare from outside the UK.

In terms of its relevance to policing there are both similarities and differences between The Edge and POLKA (the Police OnLine Knowledge Area), the online policing community maintained by the College of Policing. POLKA is a digital collaboration tool within which police staff can *“seek advice, share knowledge and ideas, and develop a network of people across policing”*.<sup>81</sup> However it is also a private secured space open only to the police and relevant government officials. Recent research conducted by the Police ICT Company uncovered *“an overwhelming demand”* for a national information-sharing platform within policing, but stressed that it should be one that *“allowed access to non-policing emergency services”*.<sup>82</sup>

### School for Change Agents

The School for Change Agents is a learning platform and online community that uses a series of modules and digital education tools to empower staff from all levels to push for change within their workplace. It offers employees an opportunity to navigate the “stifling

hierarchies” that often prevent suggestions for change and improvement being communicated from the frontline to senior leadership.

The School takes the form of an e-learning platform containing five distinct modules:

- Change starts with me.
- The power to make a difference.
- Being resilient and dealing with resistance to change.
- From Me to We – mobilising and organising.
- The change agent of the future.

As with The Edge, the School is open to anyone. While the majority of its students will come from within the NHS, the number of non-healthcare participants has been growing steadily in recent years. Those running of the School estimate that around 10 per cent of students now come from a policing background. They observed an increased interest in the core themes of the School from serving police officers and been approached by several forces to take on large groups of officers as part of more formal development programmes.

It is particularly telling that police officers currently need to look outside policing for tools designed to give them control and ownership over their own professional development and to effect change and promote engagement and wellbeing in their own organisations.

### Convening online conversations

The Horizons team also employ innovative internet-based tools to address specific issues within the healthcare sector. They act as conversation conveners and provide an online space for challenges to be discussed in an open and constructive manner, for example through their ‘tweet chat’ series. These aim to identify major ideas for change within the NHS that can subsequently be *“developed, prototyped and implemented by frontline staff”*.<sup>83</sup> The success of the approach led the Chief Executive of NHS England to call for an equivalent process focused specifically on the ambulance service and its staff. Dubbed #ProjectA, these conversations have generated contributions from frontline ambulance staff and the general public and

80. The Edge NHS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/theedgenhs>

81. College of Policing POLKA website <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Research/polka/Pages/POLKA.aspx>

82. Policing Insight ‘Information exchange: Police ICT is set to revamp its Knowledge Hub’ <https://ict.police.uk/information-exchange-police-ict-is-set-to-revamp-its-knowledge-hub/>

83. NHS Horizons ‘Hundreds join first #ProjectA tweet chat’ <https://nhshorizons.passle.net/post/102ezf0/hundreds-join-first-projecta-tweet-chat>

“77 unique ideas for improving ambulance services” including in relation to staff wellbeing.<sup>84 85</sup>

While similar online forums, such as the WeCops twitter community, have developed in policing, these tend not to be backed up with the structures and resources to ensure that online discussions feed into senior leaders’ decision making or have tangible outcomes. Demonstrating that positive and constructive contributions are heard and, most importantly, lead to action, appears to be critical for maintaining the participation levels and enthusiasm that have characterised the Horizons experience.

### ‘Unconferences’ – convening offline conversations

The Horizons team recognises that in addition to ‘new’ communication channels there is immense value in convening ‘real world’ conversations. In recent years it has facilitated a series of ‘Unconferences’ that aim to disrupt the conventional approach to conferences and workshops, which are often ‘one way’ learning experiences – heavy on expert presentations and light on audience engagement.<sup>86</sup>

‘Unconferences’ have been used in a variety of organisational settings and embody many of the core tenets of an OD approach by encouraging diversity of active participation in terms of the professional background, experience, and (most importantly) seniority of those involved. Its proponents claim that “*diversity leads to more disruptive thinking, faster change and better outcomes*”<sup>87</sup>, by closing the gaps between the ‘explicit’ knowledge of experts and senior leaders and the ‘tacit’ knowledge embodied in everyday practice. For the Horizons team these events offer an opportunity to level the hierarchies often prevalent within large public

sector organisations and enable the better flow of ideas “*that might otherwise get stuck in the system*”.<sup>88</sup>

## 3.2 NHS DO OD

NHS Do OD – with its tagline ‘putting theory into practice’ – is an expert resource hub for Organisational Development practitioners working across the health service.<sup>89</sup> Launched in 2013, to provide national coordination and encouragement to emerging pockets of good OD practice, it is delivered as part of the NHS Employers national structure and operates in partnership with the NHS Leadership Academy. Its primary aim is to enable the entire NHS workforce to transform the systems in which they work.

Do OD aims to ensure that all voices and ideas are heard, whether they come from a newly joined nurse, a senior surgeon or a Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Executive. It encourages a shift away from the traditional hierarchies, working towards an ideal in which every employee feels that they can influence thinking at local and national level. Its methods include regular on and offline meetings of engaged practitioners, ‘monthly community conversations’, think clubs, social media groups and networks and a calendar of well-attended annual conferences. They have also designed a mobile app which features a ‘culture change tool’, “*designed to stimulate conversations with people in and outside your organisation*”, while providing “support and advice on culture change through the sharing of good practice”.<sup>90</sup> The emphasis again, is on offering multiple angles, channels and opportunities for engagement.

The Do OD staff aim to connect local suggestions for improvements with national goals, and thus ensure that the service as a whole is responsive to diverse

84. NHS Horizons ‘Hundreds join first #ProjectA tweet chat’ <https://nhshorizons.passle.net/post/102ezf0/hundreds-join-first-projecta-tweet-chat>

85. NHS ‘Horizons Improving Wellbeing and Career Progression for Ambulance Staff: the third #ProjectA tweet chat’ <https://nhshorizons.passle.net/post/102f0g2/improving-wellbeing-and-career-progression-for-ambulance-staff-the-third-project>

86. Bevan, H. ‘Guest Spot: The unconference - a method to unleash the collective brilliance of people in public service’ <https://medium.com/oneteamgov/guest-spot-the-unconference-a-method-to-unleash-the-collective-brilliance-of-people-in-public-1a1f1731f92>

87. Bevan, H. ‘Guest Spot: The unconference - a method to unleash the collective brilliance of people in public service’ <https://medium.com/oneteamgov/guest-spot-the-unconference-a-method-to-unleash-the-collective-brilliance-of-people-in-public-1a1f1731f92>

88. Bevan, H. ‘Guest Spot: The unconference - a method to unleash the collective brilliance of people in public service’ <https://medium.com/oneteamgov/guest-spot-the-unconference-a-method-to-unleash-the-collective-brilliance-of-people-in-public-1a1f1731f92>

89. NHS Employers ‘Do OD: Organisational development’ <https://www.nhsemployers.org/campaigns/organisational-development>; LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.64.

90. NHS Employers ‘Do OD Organisational Development: Putting Theory into Practice’ <https://www.nhsemployers.org/-/media/Employers/Documents/Campaigns/DoOD-App-Culture-Change-Tool-Guide.pdf>

local needs. They stress that OD should not be viewed as an arm of HR or yet another compulsory area of professional development. Rather participation should be voluntary and the emphasis should be on clearly demonstrating that, if they wish, practitioners can have a direct impact on strategy. The core values that drive Do OD are “*curiosity, creativity, courage and co-production*” and it emphasises the importance of a whole-systems perspective to ensure change is lasting.

Do OD staff encourage autonomy and devolved decision-making across the service and make a clear link between autonomy and wellbeing, with ownership of change leading to deeper engagement and solutions that – because they are designed by employees – are more likely to suit their needs. The role of OD practitioners is to provide employees with opportunities to propose their own wellbeing initiatives and strategies and to ensure that suggestions are fed directly into the strategy of senior leadership; encouraging practice to inform strategy, and then allowing new strategies to be quickly put into practice.

Such an approach requires flexibility both from the workforce and leaders in terms of willingness to forego the traditional hierarchies that dominate large organisations. Ideally, OD practitioners should look for opportunities where the desires of the workforce match the long-term goals of the senior leadership, as these moments of overlap are likely to encourage increased engagement.

### 3.3 BUURTZORG COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

*“In good faith, managers at each level are trying to do their job-supervising their direct reports, paying close attention to budget variances, double-checking each request for resources, ensuring that all the bases are covered by all relevant superiors before approving a change in course. In the process, motivation and initiative are choked out.” – Frederic LaLoux.*

In *Reinventing Organizations* (2014) LaLoux describes the case of a community healthcare organisation in the Netherlands that took a radical approach to organisational structure and development, and as a result, achieved remarkable results. He outlines how the neighbourhood nursing system in use across the Netherlands began to gradually shift towards a more Taylorist approach to management, as it grew in size and scale; one that treated the organisation as a ‘machine’ that needed hands-on employee-management and ever stricter time constraints. A move towards strict scheduling and ‘optimisation’ led to fixed time slots being allocated for specific nursing tasks; “*bathing 15 minutes, wound dressing 10 minutes, and changing a compression stocking 2.5 minutes*”.<sup>91</sup>

While this business-minded approach may have achieved goals in terms of the pursuit of economies of scale and keeping overtime and costs down, it also had a range of negative outcomes for both staff and patients. Personal relationships were lost as nurses rushed from one patient to the next, patients became anonymous subjects, treated like ‘products’; even given bar codes that needed to be scanned by their carers. All of the nurses’ activities were closely monitored by line managers and the data gathered was subsequently analysed in a distant centralised system. As this top-down approach took hold nationwide, the individual nurse’s ability to notice subtle cues in the health of their patients was threatened – each day a different nurse would visit and the ‘human’ element of the work that had attracted many nurses to the profession began to erode. As the ‘frozen layers’ of middle management expanded, the motivation and initiative of nurses, and their pride in doing their job well, evaporated – until one long-frustrated nurse stepped out of the formal hierarchical system and found a non-profit alternative; Buurtzorg (literally ‘neighbourhood care’).<sup>92</sup>

Jos de Blok had worked in nursing positions across the Netherlands for a decade before deciding to leave the profession and launch his alternative. In the seven years immediately after its launch the Buurtzorg workforce grew from 10 to 7,000, whilst simultaneously maintaining “*outstanding levels of care*” and unparalleled reports of employee satisfaction.<sup>93</sup> Many

91 LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.64.

92 LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.63.

93 LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker.



of the nurses who switched observed that the change in organisational setting was life-changing, as they felt “*freed from management control*” and had unleashed their previously untapped “*entrepreneurial creativity*”.<sup>94</sup>

The core features of de Blok’s alternative approach can be summarised as:

- **Self-managing teams:** Buurtzorg nurses work in small teams of ten to 12, with each team serving a small cohort of patients, limited to 50 total. The teams of nurses are responsible for both the delivery of the care *and* for the various tasks that were previously distributed across the bureaucracy of the mainstream system; the nurses thus “*do the intake, the planning, the vacation and holiday scheduling, and the administration*”.<sup>95</sup> This ownership over the entire spectrum of organisational tasks has allowed Buurtzorg nurses to reorient themselves around the patients that they first joined up to help. Their new-found control over daily routines has allowed them to redevelop the relationships they had lost – “*care is no longer reduced to a shot or bandage – patients can be seen and honoured in their wholeness*”<sup>96</sup>, with benefits for both nurses and patients.
- **No boss:** Perhaps the feature that seems at first the most unlikely to successfully traverse the journey from ideology into practice, Buurtzorg teams stress that they no longer have a need for hierarchies or any form of ‘boss’ at all. The teams of nurses all receive training to improve their ability to problem-solve and learn a “*coherent set of skills and techniques for healthy and efficient group decision-making*”.<sup>97</sup> In cases of discord external ‘facilitators’ are drafted in to help work through problems. While some elements of hierarchy remain (there will of course still be nurses with more expertise and experience than others) these are no longer fixed structures that place rank and title above all else but “*fluid hierarchies of recognition, influence, and skill*”.<sup>98</sup>
- **No middle management:** Within the Buurtzorg structure there is no middle management at all. Managers are replaced by ‘coaches’, who forego most of the power and responsibility normally associated with supervisory positions. The primary role of the ‘coach’ is to help the teams navigate the inter-personal dynamics that can cause disagreements. De Blok stresses the importance of not allowing the coaches to become too deeply involved in any one team, they are there to provide assistance from a safe distance and are thus support 40 to 50 teams at once. Their approach is inquisitive; to ask questions that help the teams come to their own conclusions – they are there primarily to frame the issue, not to try and offer a solution. They maintain a limited list of ground rules (for example teams no bigger than 12 nurses, regular meetings and appraisals to be held within each team, annual targets for quality and development must be set regularly) but are not mandated to give any actual instructions or orders from the top down.
- **Limited support staff:** De Blok also stressed the importance of limiting the number of ‘staff-support positions’. In the Buurtzorg model these are there to provide assistance where necessary, but can only intervene when requested by the nurse teams and do not have any overarching powers. This has led to an extremely small central workforce of around 30 individuals providing support to a total of 7000 nurses. This removal of oversight required a substantial shift in mind-sets but gradually, once the nurses recognised the value of their new found independence, led to improved motivation and a culture of personal responsibility – (in line with the Robertson and Cooper discussion of ‘discretionary effort’).

While the Buurtzorg approach may be radical, it has achieved huge cost savings and is attracting widespread international attention from policy makers.

94. The Guardian ‘Buurtzorg: the Dutch model of neighbourhood care that is going global’ <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2017/may/09/buurtzorg-dutch-model-neighbourhood-care>

95. LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.65.

96. LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.65.

97. LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.67.

98. LaLoux, F. (2014) *Reinventing organizations :A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*. Oxford: Nelson Parker, p.68.



### 3.4. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MULTI-AGENCY, PLACE-BASED PRACTICE

On 3 November 2014 a devolution agreement was signed between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the leaders of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) handing a set of decision-making powers from central government to the newly elected Mayor and the ten local authorities that came together to form the GMCA.<sup>99</sup> In the years since, further powers and budgets, including in relation to criminal justice and the adult education have also been devolved. The GMCA serves a total population of more than 2.7m people, and presides over a multi-billion pound budget. Its 'Our People, Our Place' strategy aims to make the region one of the best places in the UK to grow up.

As the devolution process unfolded, a group of OD practitioners working in public sector bodies across Greater Manchester seized the opportunity to establish an OD-focused practitioner network for the region. The network includes representatives from across the public sector; including fire service, the police, NHS, local authority and voluntary sector organisations. In a similar 'dynamic' vein to the Do OD community, the GMCA OD network recognises the complexity of

contemporary public services and, in the months since its launch, has shifted focus, becoming "*less and less about organisations and increasingly about places and systems*".<sup>100</sup>

The emphasis on 'place-based delivery', centred on hyper-local community needs, has led to a mainstreaming of OD as 'everyone's business'. Specialists still play a central role but there is more space now for "*interested partners who are working in the field without necessarily knowing it*".<sup>101</sup> The approach has influenced the introduction of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams such as that piloted in Platt Bridge Wigan, where, as Greater Manchester Police describe "*police officers and staff [are] working alongside other agencies like social services, health workers etc. They will share information and resources to tackle the issues that matter to the local area. It will mean we can work together to identify the root causes of problems in communities and find solutions.*"<sup>102</sup>

This 'place-based' approach to OD, has echoes of the self-management approach explored by de Blok, recognising the expertise that lies at the frontline and the importance of the tacit knowledge of those who have lived experience of local public service delivery. It requires senior leadership to recognise that their employees can be trusted to work effectively and 'dynamically' across public sector boundaries.

99. Gov.uk 'Corporate report: Devolution to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and transition to a directly elected mayor' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devolution-to-the-greater-manchester-combined-authority-and-transition-to-a-directly-elected-mayor>

100. NHS Leadership Academy North West 'Greater Manchester - Systems, Places and Organisational Development in the Public Sector' <https://www.nwacademy.nhs.uk/discover/news-blogs/2018/greater-manchester-systems-places-and-organisational-development-public>

101. NHS Leadership Academy North West 'Greater Manchester - Systems, Places and Organisational Development in the Public Sector' <https://www.nwacademy.nhs.uk/discover/news-blogs/2018/greater-manchester-systems-places-and-organisational-development-public>

# 4. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLICING: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

There is an emerging recognition that more needs to be done to address the issue of wellbeing within the police workforce. Senior police leaders and government ministers have written articles<sup>103</sup>, ordered reviews<sup>104</sup>, and launched a host of initiatives that aim to provide officers and staff with more places to turn when their wellbeing is suffering. There has also been a marked increase in the number of conferences and events within the service centred on the wellbeing agenda. In this section we examine the extent to which these developments are being informed by the ‘organisational development’ approach.

## 4.1 TONE FROM THE TOP

A number of senior policing leaders have stepped into the debate around officer wellbeing and staff engagement. A recent blog from National Police Chiefs’ Council Chair, Sara Thornton, highlighted three key changes that could have a positive effect on wellbeing and engagement across the police workforce.<sup>105</sup>

- First, she identifies the importance of good leadership, specifically that which “*values the people element of policing*”. It is vital, she argues, that all chiefs and managers recognise the impact that recent cuts and wholesale change have had on the frontline. She recognises the potential for working practices to “*result in officers feeling that nobody is taking an interest in their work*”. The point echoes much of the OD literature which stresses the importance of maintaining a focus on the ‘humanity’ of all organisations.

- Second, she addresses the importance of staff engagement taking place at all levels of the organisation – in her words, “*bosses don’t always know best*”. This point is primarily about recognising the potential of every employee within a police organisation. In order to “*harness the contribution of every member of staff*”, she says, senior leadership and middle management must be willing to step away from the strict hierarchical structures and culture that traditionally dominate across the police service.
- Third, she refers to the need to find a balance between accountability and learning. Too often in policing, the culture of blame leaves little space for discussion and reflection within the wider workforce. She stressed the importance of building organisations that are “*open and learn*” rather resort to “*blame and keep failing*”.<sup>106</sup>

These points echo a number of those put forward by the OD practitioners interviewed for this report, and their significance – coming from one of the most senior police officers in the country – cannot be under-estimated.

Senior colleagues have also expressed similar concerns. Andy Rhodes, Chief Constable at Lancashire and the College of Policing’s Professional Community Chair for its Organisational Development and International department, has been a particularly vocal advocate for an OD-centred approach and has been actively engaged in developing the national wellbeing agenda for a number of years<sup>107</sup> and his initiatives at Lancashire are discussed in detail within the case study section.

102. Greater Manchester Police ‘Place based working’ <http://www.gmp.police.uk/live/Nhoodv3.nsf/section.html?readform&s=50428663D6BE57A98025807C002A0E71>

103. National Police Chiefs’ Council ‘Police Chief’s Blog’ <https://www.npcc.police.uk/ThePoliceChiefsBlog/PoliceChiefsBlogCCSaraThorntonWeneedtotalkaboutwel.aspx>

104. Gov.uk *Policing frontline review* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/front-line-policing-review>

105. National Police Chiefs’ Council ‘Police Chief’s Blog’ <https://www.npcc.police.uk/ThePoliceChiefsBlog/PoliceChiefsBlogCCSaraThorntonWeneedtotalkaboutwel.aspx>

106. National Police Chiefs’ Council ‘Police Chief’s Blog’ <https://www.npcc.police.uk/ThePoliceChiefsBlog/PoliceChiefsBlogCCSaraThorntonWeneedtotalkaboutwel.aspx>

107. College of Policing *Organisational Development and International* <https://www.college.police.uk/Membership/Professional-Community-Chairs/Pages/Organisational-Development-and-International.aspx>

In a recent blog for the Oscar Kilo website, Chief Constable Rhodes asserted that after the more immediate issue of workload and resources, the most significant driver of positive wellbeing among the police workforce is that they believe that they are treated fairly and that their work is valued.<sup>108</sup> This feeds directly into how he has approached his stewardship of Lancashire Constabulary and resonates strongly with the key principles of OD.

## 4.2 NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The Blue Light Programme is an emergency services-focused wellbeing initiative led by the mental health charity Mind, in conjunction with a variety of policing partners.<sup>109</sup> The Blue Light Wellbeing Framework has been introduced to help police managers assess how their organisations are performing on staff wellbeing. It recognises that every employer depends on a workforce that is healthy and both physically and mentally able to perform their duties. In the two years since the programme was launched 312 ‘champions’ have started working across the police service and over 2,500 line managers have received mental health training in order to offer better support to their staff. The framework provides emergency service employers with a step-by-step guide as to how to improve wellbeing within their organisation; *“build the case for support internally, benefit from our tested approach (and) work together with local Minds and other local services”*<sup>110</sup>

It was developed by serving officers and research staff at the College of Policing faculty for Organisational Development and International, in conjunction with Public Health England and academic partners.<sup>111 112</sup> It encourages policing organisations to adhere to a national benchmark of OD and wellbeing capacity and helps senior leaders and line managers to identify *“what gaps there may be in providing the best wellbeing provision you can for your employees”*.<sup>113</sup>

The framework is hosted by a newly formed initiative entitled Oscar Kilo, which has the mission of becoming the *“home of the evidence base and best practice for emergency services wellbeing”*.<sup>114</sup> It will act as a central hub where emergency service employees can share best practice and help their organisations to best invest in their personal wellbeing and development. Oscar Kilo embodies many of the key tenets of an Organisational Development approach, stating for instance:

*“We want to cut across traditional organisational boundaries and empower us all to collaborate and improve our most valued asset – our people”*

Oscar Kilo website<sup>115</sup>

This particular initiative builds upon the foundational work of the Police Mutual ‘wellbeing toolkit’, developed in conjunction with Lancashire Constabulary from 2011 onwards. The toolkit is *“designed to promote best practice in the management of wellbeing within the Police Service”*<sup>116</sup> and includes 22 distinct tools to address poor wellbeing within an organisation.<sup>117</sup>

## 4.3 EVENTS

There is also an emerging calendar of events that focus on the issue of employee wellbeing and engagement and demonstrate an increasing appetite for discussion and debate. These include:

- **UpBeat! Conference; ‘Raising the game in police wellbeing’** – The Upbeat conference, launched in 2017, is a collaboration between the Police Dependents’ Trust (an independent charity that provides support for serving and former officers)<sup>118</sup>, Oscar Kilo, and the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC). The inaugural conference in 2017 focused on the issue of post-traumatic stress in frontline

108. Oscar Kilo website ‘BLOG: Oscar Kilo – One Year On – By CC Andy Rhodes’ <https://oscarkilo.org.uk/oscar-kilo-one-year-cc-andy-rhodes/>

109. Mind ‘Blue Light Programme – support for emergency services’ <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/>

110. Mind ‘Blue Light Programme – support for emergency services’ <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/>

111. College of Policing *Blue Light Wellbeing Framework Organisational Development and International faculty* <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Health-safety/Documents/Blue-Light-Wellbeing-Framework.pdf>

112. College of Policing ‘Wellbeing’ <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Health-safety/Pages/Wellbeing.aspx>

113. College of Policing ‘Wellbeing’ <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Health-safety/Pages/Wellbeing.aspx>

114. Oscar Kilo website <https://oscarkilo.org.uk/about/>

115. Oscar Kilo website <https://oscarkilo.org.uk/about/>

116. Police Mutual Foundation *Wellbeing Toolkit* <https://www.policemutual.co.uk/wellbeing/wellbeing-toolkit/>

117. Police Mutual Foundation *Wellbeing Toolkit* <https://www.policemutual.co.uk/wellbeing/wellbeing-toolkit/>

118 <https://www.pdtrust.org/>

policing, and the second, in March 2018 looked at developing practical solutions to improve frontline morale and engagement. The events “*bring together subject matter experts*” across various wellbeing areas and feature a number of case study examples from across the national policing landscape.<sup>119</sup>

- **College of Policing events** – The College of Policing has launched a series of events that “*will cover the top five themes asked for*” by their membership. Each of the chosen subjects will be delivered by expert practitioners at two venues; one for the north and another for the south. Further demonstrating the current appeal of the wellbeing agenda, the first of these events, held in June and July 2018, focused on ‘Your Health and Wellbeing’.<sup>120</sup> This consensus-driven approach is evidence of a shift towards encouraging employees to develop ‘ownership’ over their personal wellbeing.
- **Force events** – A number of police forces across the country have been holding conferences and events that focus on wellbeing. Lancashire Constabulary have held a series of ‘Wellbeing away days’, while the Metropolitan Police recently launched a one-day course, with support from Blue Light Mental Health, that looks at the ‘management of poor mental health’ within the police service. The course is “*designed to equip managers with the tools to actively support their staff to stay well and prevent any problems from getting worse*”.<sup>121</sup>

## 4.4 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

In July 2018, the Home Office published a declaration to work towards a ‘common goal for police wellbeing’, to be achieved by 2021. The goal was agreed by the National Police Chiefs’ Council, the Police Federation, the College of Policing and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and wider government and public sector partners (including HMICFRS, Public Health England and the Home Office).<sup>122</sup> It is the result of a six-month programme of engagement and

consultation spearheaded by the Minister for Policing. It is a shared vision that provides the foundation for continued partnership across the public sector, while also involving a number of charities who focus on the issue of emergency service wellbeing (including the Police Dependants’ Trust and Flint House rehabilitation centre).

It sets out the goal that, by 2021, every police service employee (both frontline officers and police staff) “*feels confident that their welfare and wellbeing is actively supported by their police force*”.<sup>123</sup> This will be achieved by:

- Achieving an organisational culture which focuses on prevention, early intervention and support for individuals.
- Embedding clear, consistent, evidence-based standards throughout policing in welfare and wellbeing support provided to police and staff, including through occupational health and effective line management; and signposting to relevant police charities and other providers who deliver treatment and support when requested.
- Effective sharing of innovation and best practice.<sup>124</sup>

The Home Office has also announced £7.5m funding for the College of Policing to develop a dedicated national welfare service (further developing the ongoing work at Oscar Kilo) and a further £7m of funding for the Blue Light Wellbeing programme.

While it remains less developed than in the NHS, these developments show that OD thinking has gained some recent traction in policing (also reflected in the emergence of police management with job titles such as ‘Director of People and Organisational Development’ or ‘Head of Organisational Development’ and ‘Head of Thinking and Analysis’ a role which includes “*organisational development, performance management, and the delivery of culture change*”.<sup>125</sup>) Below we consider a case study from one police force which shows how aspects of OD practice are being implemented within a policing context.

119. Upbeat! conference website <https://www.pdtrust.org/get-informed/upbeat-2019/>

120. College of Policing Membership page <https://www.college.police.uk/Membership/Pages/default.aspx>

121. London Blue Light Mental Health and Wellbeing Network event ‘Managing Mental Health in the Metropolitan Police Service’ <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/managing-mental-health-in-the-metropolitan-police-service-tickets-44458591845#>

122. Gov.uk ‘Partners sign up to wellbeing goal’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/policing-partners-sign-up-to-wellbeing-goal>

123. Gov.uk *A common goal for police wellbeing to be achieved by 2021* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721646/common-goal-for-wellbeing-version-3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721646/common-goal-for-wellbeing-version-3.pdf)

124. Gov.uk *A common goal for police wellbeing to be achieved by 2021* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721646/common-goal-for-wellbeing-version-3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721646/common-goal-for-wellbeing-version-3.pdf)

125. Hertfordshire Constabulary ‘Head of thinking and analysis’ vacancy advertisement [https://tri-force.tal.net/vx/mobile-0/appcentre-herts\\_ext/brand-5/candidate/so/pm/6/pl/20/opp/6394-PS-804-H-Head-of-Thinking-and-Analysis](https://tri-force.tal.net/vx/mobile-0/appcentre-herts_ext/brand-5/candidate/so/pm/6/pl/20/opp/6394-PS-804-H-Head-of-Thinking-and-Analysis)

## 4.5 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes has begun a radical OD-based change programme within the Lancashire force that places officer and staff wellbeing at its centre. Echoing the NHS Horizons approach he emphasises the importance of senior leaders relinquishing control and allowing the workforce to drive the direction change.

‘Wellbeing’, he insists is about much more than making the resources available for therapy and recovery, and demanding that all employees take compulsory courses. Instead, OD shifts the focus to harnessing existing social networks and ‘the human potential’ of the organisation; the role of the leader is to provide the space and help convene the conversation, so that staff can help themselves and one another. He stresses the importance of ensuring that employees, regardless of their role or rank, feel that senior leaders both care about their wellbeing and that their voice matters. Staff engagement within Lancashire takes a number of forms:

**‘The Buzz’:** is an internal online engagement forum specifically for use within Lancashire constabulary, developed to give employees a place to air concern, which can be addressed by managers. HMICFRS found examples of cases where the forum had democratised decision making within the force, for example noting that posts about the type and cost of vehicles being used by chief officers had led to “all vehicles [being] changed to reflect the more modest budgets available to the constabulary”.<sup>126</sup> The Buzz platform also features the ‘Buzz-o-meter’, a quarterly staff survey, conducted via a range of new media tools, that encourages staff who would otherwise be unlikely to contribute to get their voices and opinions heard.<sup>127</sup>

**Contemplation rooms:** Triggered by the experiences of a constable within the force<sup>128</sup>, a request was made to senior management to provide spaces where officers could ‘decompress’ following particularly difficult or traumatic incidents. Bypassing bureaucratic and time-consuming processes, funds were provided directly to the officer and colleagues to buy materials and install the room themselves, allowing them to be directly involved and engaged in the process.

**Recharge days:** In May 2018, Lancashire police announced a 12-month programme of ‘recharge days’ to be made available to all police officers and staff. The one day events offer participants a courses and educational programmes around issues such as developing coping strategies, identifying the signs of stress and the importance of sleeping and eating well. Pre and post event feedback questionnaires are used to ensure the impact of the days are measured and content can be improved over time.

*“Never has it been more important to support people in their work and sometimes that means taking them away from the daily grind to give them some breathing space and reflection time.”*

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes – Oscar Kilo website.<sup>129</sup>

**Social media engagement:** As in the NHS social media plays an important role in Lancashire’s OD approach. The force has also developed a number of dedicated Twitter accounts, for issues such as mental health, employee wellbeing and the organisational development agenda.<sup>130 131</sup> But also, more broadly as a tool for senior leaders to discuss wellbeing and workforce issues openly and support and engage the workforce.<sup>132</sup>

*“These are your police officers and they are here to keep you safe. They do not come to work to be assaulted and **they have my full support**”*

Andy Rhodes statement, posted on Twitter (emphasis added)<sup>133</sup>

126. HMIC *Police integrity and corruption: Lancashire Constabulary* <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/lancashire-crime-and-integrity.pdf>

127. *Lancashire Constabulary Draft Annual Governance Statement 2015 - 16* <http://lancashire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Item-9-Appx-A-AGS-CC-1516.pdf>

128. Police Dependents’ Trust ‘Lancashire police contemplation room opens for stressed officers’ <https://www.pdtrust.org/lancashire-police-contemplation-room-opens-stressed-officers/>

129. Oscar Kilo ‘Lancashire Police Launch ‘Recharge Days’ <https://oscar kilo.org.uk/lancashire-police-launch-recharge-days/>

130. Lancashire Police Mental Health Twitter account <https://twitter.com/LancsPoliceMH>

131. Lancashire Police OD Twitter account <https://twitter.com/LancPolOD>

132. Chief Constable Andy Rhodes statement about an assault on a police officer via Twitter <https://twitter.com/CCARhodes/status/1031853206723325952>

133. Chief Constable Andy Rhodes on dealing with vulnerable members of the public via Twitter <https://twitter.com/CCARhodes/status/1029599419916857344>



# 5. LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT STEPS FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICE WORKFORCE WELLBEING

Policing has been through a period of radical change, marked by unprecedented cuts to budgets and to the size of the workforce. In many ways the police service has managed this process well: notably levels of public satisfaction with policing remaining largely unchanged.<sup>134</sup> However one consequence has been signs of significant stress and deteriorating mental health among police officers and staff.

The service has responded to these signs of stress, most notably with the development of the Blue Light Programme and the investment in the new Police Welfare Service. The Policing Minister Nick Hurd MP has also recently initiated a Frontline Review to gather feedback from the workforce to help direct future change.

However, it is clear from the Police Federation annual staff survey that the management of change itself is a significant driver of poor morale. Police leaders are not insensitive to this charge. Most recently the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Cressida Dick, told the Police Superintendents' Association that the use of the term 'reform' should be avoided, because it implies change that is imposed externally rather than driven from within.<sup>135</sup>

More formally the College of Policing published a Leadership Review in 2015 which recognised that 'the overuse of command as a leadership style risks disempowering those who are commanded'. Among other things, such as improved training for senior leaders and new recruitment channels, the review recommended a rationalisation of the police rank structure, which has remained largely unchanged since 1829. The aim is to reduce management layers

so that communication between senior leaders and the frontline is not impeded. This recommendation was based on research from other sectors showing that flatter structures can make organisations more agile in response to external change and can facilitate a more inclusive mode of decision-making which is good for morale and ultimately performance. This recommendation is still in the process of implementation under the leadership of the National Police Chiefs' Council.<sup>136</sup>

However, it is clear that much more needs to be done. We undertook this short research project so to understand what the OD literature and emerging practice, particularly within the public sector, could tell us that would be relevant to these issues of police workforce wellbeing. Below we set out what we see as the main implications of OD theory and practice for policing.

## 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: The principles of OD are readily applicable to policing and based on these we recommend that the College of Policing adopts a set of recommended principles to guide change management across the police service.**

Although this is far from exhaustive, we would highlight the following basic principles:

- The whole workforce should be involved decision-making and in the development of goals and mission.

134. Ipsos MORI *Public perceptions of Policing in England and Wales 2017* <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2017-12/public-perceptions-of-policing-in-england-and-wales-2017.pdf>

135. BBC.co.uk 'Police 2% pay rise 'a punch on the nose', Cressida Dick says' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45487244>

136. College of Policing 'Leadership Review' <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/the-leadership-review/Pages/Leadership-Review.aspx>

- Change should be participatory and iterative rather than sudden and externally imposed.
- Every person working in policing should be a problem solver.
- Leaders should cede control and open up ways of disrupting the traditional hierarchy.
- There should be equal attention paid to the wellbeing of the people who work in an organisation as to its non human resources (budgets, technology etc).
- Management and practice should be evidence-based.

**Recommendation 2: We recommend that local chief constables advocate for OD approaches across the local public service landscape so that the whole system is better equipped to change in order to tackle complex and dynamic problems.**

In terms of scope these principles for managing change can be adopted at any level: individual and team, force level and system level. The need to apply OD principles and methods at this last level (the whole system) recognises how policing must now work collaboratively with other local partners in particular in order to keep vulnerable people safe. Indeed, as we found in the case of Greater Manchester, what we might call ‘place based organisational development’ is a particularly promising area for a police service which must now coordinate its activities with a number of other local agencies in order to, for example, help those who have mental health problems or who are in abusive family relationships. Police officers routinely work collaboratively with other local professionals and groups and must engage in problem solving with those partners as well as internally.

**Recommendation 3: We recommend that a specialist team is established within the College of Policing to spread knowledge, build a practitioner network, innovate and develop new tools.**

One of the main things we have learned from the experience of OD in the NHS is that in order for these approaches to spread there needs to be some institutional basis for promoting them. This could be modeled on the NHS Horizons team and could be funded by a bid to the Police Transformation Fund.

This central team could then be responsible for developing some of the following enablers:

- **A practitioner network** throughout policing of professionals who are committed to OD approaches, will learn from one another and spread these approaches through their work and relationships with their peers;
- Developing **an online learning platform** for police officers to participate in training on OD theory and practice;
- Developing **an enhanced online information sharing platform for policing** to facilitate the spread and exchange of ideas throughout the service. This could be based on POLKA, but ought to be open to external stakeholders and adjacent professions, for example in other emergency services;
- **Use of social media and events** to facilitate the development of the practitioner network.

OD is a broad approach and there are **a variety of tools** available that could be adopted at force level. Indeed the specialist OD team we are recommending would be responsible for developing new tools with the practitioner network. However, some examples from the literature and our case studies would include:

- Online forums for sharing ideas so to open up communication outside the traditional hierarchy.
- 360 degree appraisals so to include all who work with a person in their performance appraisal and to ensure leaders can learn from what their colleagues report to them.
- Regular staff surveys.
- Events aimed at discussing problems that involve and include people at all levels and disrupt the rank structure.
- Less use of external consultants and more use of participative methods to include staff and officers in steering change.
- Applied research carried out by practitioners themselves to understand problems, develop solutions and evaluate projects after implementation.
- Creating more space and time for reflection.

## Challenges

There are challenges facing the more widespread adoption of OD approaches within policing. None of these is insurmountable but they will need to be addressed at a policy level by the main policing bodies (the College of Policing, the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office) if this agenda is to have traction. We would highlight two challenges in particular:

First, part of the aim of OD is to develop 'organisational learning' so that the whole of an organisation can improve based on strong communication between all stakeholders, internally and externally. There is a tension here with the equally important need for police officers, on account of their powers, to be accountable to the public in particular via the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). As we documented in a recent publication<sup>137</sup> on promoting a 'learning culture' in policing, accountability rubs up against external scrutiny because if officers are fearful of reprisals they will be less likely to be open about mistakes. The communication flows in policing are disrupted by a tendency to 'hunker down' in the face of external criticism and in fear of misconduct proceedings.

Although there is an inherent tension here between the need to be open about error and the need to be held to account when things go wrong, there are ways to find a better balance. For example, the legislation around

conduct is currently under review by the Home Office with the aim of focusing the misconduct process on bad behaviour rather than error in the performance of a difficult role. In another example, there are times when senior leaders could take organisational responsibility for a mistake rather than all the blame landing on an officer under IOPC investigation.

Second, the rank structure is deeply embedded in policing and as we argued above still acts as an impediment to internal communication, innovation and agility in the face of external challenge. This military style command structure may be well suited to some policing tasks, such as managing critical incidents for example, but it is not well suited to a world in which police officers need the autonomy to solve problems themselves working closely with professionals in adjacent areas of work. Clearly some of the OD tools suggested above provide ways of 'circumventing' or 'disrupting' the traditional hierarchy. However, the rank structure itself remains.

**Recommendation 4: We recommend that the work that has been under way since the 2015 Leadership Review to review the rank structure is concluded and changes implemented so that forces can experiment with flatter management structures.**

137. The Police Foundation *How do we move from a blame culture to a learning culture in policing?* [http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/from\\_blame\\_to\\_learning\\_policy\\_dinner.pdf](http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/from_blame_to_learning_policy_dinner.pdf)

## 6. CONCLUSION

The police service has been through a period of significant change: losing 20 per cent of its money and 20 per cent of its workforce at a time when the demands upon it have changed radically and in many areas intensified. In many ways the service has coped well, with crime until recently having remained flat (it has now started to rise again) and public satisfaction with local policing remaining relatively high and stable.<sup>138</sup>

However, there are clear signs of stress within the police workforce itself, which reports low morale and increased mental health problems. While clearly austerity and changes to pay and pensions are a significant factor in explaining this, there is also evidence that the way in which change is managed in the service is partly responsible.

The good news is that how change is managed is, unlike austerity, something the police service itself can change. Even better news is that there is a rich and longstanding body of research and practice

showing how change can be brought about in a way that involves the workforce and which has improving workforce wellbeing as one of its core goals.

This report has done three things. First, it has reviewed the literature on Organisational Development and sought to draw out relevant findings. Second, it has reviewed case studies where OD has been deployed in both policing and the wider public sector. Third, it has drawn out the lessons from OD theory and practice which are most pertinent to the workforce wellbeing challenge facing policing.

We have made a number of specific recommendations with the aim of encouraging the adoption of OD approaches more widely in UK policing. Our main finding is that there are well evidenced ways for policing to change and improve while enhancing the wellbeing of its people and including them in decision-making. Working in this way should become an overarching goal for the whole police service.

138. Ipsos MORI *Public perceptions of Policing in England and Wales 2017* <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2017-12/public-perceptions-of-policing-in-england-and-wales-2017.pdf>





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