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Inspecting Policing in the United Kingdom

I gave a presentation at the 2005 CEPOL conference in Lisbon about inspections of police training in England and Wales. This has led a number of people to ask: What is the history of inspection of policing in UK? What is the current system and methodology? Why is it necessary to inspect police training? What does inspection contribute to key policing problems such as racism, homophobia, terrorism, and anti-social behaviour? I will attempt in this article to explain the past, present and future of inspection of policing in UK, and provide illustrations from my own experience and field of special responsibility.

The beginnings of inspection in the 1850s. The Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 introduced the concept of "new police" (full time, professionals, rather than part time, amateurs of the past) into London, and a similar act extended this system to the 178 boroughs of England and Wales in 1835. There was, however, no enforcing surveillance by central government. Over the next 20 years, while policing in London developed well, many boroughs responded hardly or not at all. Thus on 21 July 1856 the County and Borough Police Act passed into law, with four main points:

• every County and Borough must maintain a police force;
• each police force must be "efficient";
• to ensure "efficiency" every force would be inspected annually by a newly created Inspectorate of Constabulary;
• if found "efficient" by Inspectors, each force would receive 25% of its funding from central government.

The Act did not apply in Scotland, which passed its own specific Act to establish an Inspectorate of Constabulary there. The rest of this article will not deal with inspection in Scotland, although practice mirrors that in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Two Inspectors were appointed in 1856, and a third in 1857, and reports covering the period October to September were produced annually until 1959, when they changed to conform with calendar years.

The Act gave the Inspectors powers "to inspect the state of police stations, charge rooms, cells, or other premises occupied for the use of the police", and provided for the issue of a Certificate of Efficiency to every force found to be "in a State of Efficiency in point of Numbers and Discipline". It did not define "efficiency", which was left to the Inspectors to decide! When they started work in early 1857 they asked four questions of every force:

1) what is the absolute strength of the force?
2) what is the ratio of police to population?
3) what is the quality of supervision?

Vocabulary:
borough = Bezirk
surveillance = Überwachung
premises = Grundstück
4) what degree of cooperation is given to neighbouring forces?

The early 20th Century. Over the first 50 years, and a respected early period of work, the Inspectors gradually became dispirited as they considered themselves unwanted and their work vilified. Although their initial aims had all been achieved with the passing of the 1890 Police Act, by the turn of the century all counties and boroughs took care of their own police “efficiency”, leaving the Inspectors little to do, and the annual Certificate of Efficiency became merely routine. In 1907 the number of Inspectors was reduced to two, and the overworked Inspectorate failed completely either to notice, or report on, the stirrings of trouble during the First World War. Police officers were working seven day weeks, with no overtime provided for, forbidden from resigning, demonstrating, striking, or being organised into a union. On top of this pay was less than an unskilled labourer.

In 1918 and 1919, over 2000 police officers in London, Birmingham and Liverpool went on strike, resulting in a major review of police pay and conditions. The resulting report called the Inspectorate of Constabulary “one of the most important bodies connected with the police service”. Actions which were taken by the government included the reinstatement of the third inspector and a formal commitment from the Home Office (the UK’s interior ministry) to provide backing and support to the Inspectorate.

The mid 20th Century. For over 40 years, including the period of the Second World War, the Inspectorate worked alongside a police service, initially reenergised and, to some extent, transformed through the 1919 review. The 1940s were marked by issues of national security and survival, leading to post-conflict reconstruction, with the police, in fewer, but larger forces staffed by highly trained officers, ensuring public safety, and providing an easily recognisable and respected presence in every community.

Actual working conditions and pay were still very poor and morale was low. To prevent a repetition of 1918/9, the Oaksey Committee was formed in 1948 to look at the future of policing and develop structures to improve recruitment, representation and remuneration. The first report made recommendations on pay and conditions, the second on wider issues such as appointment, training, and consultation. A direct result of the Oaksey Committee was an increase in wages for the next seven years, but these increases always fell behind the national average wage increase. The attractiveness of policing as a secure career declined.

The English policing image. Whilst great on concepts, Oaksey lacked the influence to resolve low pay disputes and other problems over conditions of service. The police were also finding new demands made by post-war society being placed upon their shoulders and a divide was growing between the police and the public. From the 1950s onward the public were presented with a new image of policing via the media. In combination with team policing methods and national crime prevention schemes, television programmes like Dixon of Dock

Vocabulary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dispirited</td>
<td>mutlos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to vilify</td>
<td>verunglimpfen, schmähen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initial</td>
<td>anfänglich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merely</td>
<td>lediglich, bloß, nur, rein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stirrings</td>
<td>Regungen, Erregungen, Aufwühlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unskilled</td>
<td>ungelernt, ungebildet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to go on strike</td>
<td>streiken, in Streik treten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reinstatement</td>
<td>Wiedereinsetzung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recruitment</td>
<td>Rekrutierung, Personalbeschauffung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td>Belohnung, Bezahlung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wage</td>
<td>Lohn</td>
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Green combined the traditional role of the police officer with modern policing methods. The English policing myth continued to be developed during the 1960s and in fact into the 1990s when it is perhaps more representative of reality than ever before, due to public awareness of the issues. More recently a staple diet of "cop" thrillers and soaps, now largely written to represent correct procedure and practice, continually re-invents the policing image to keep it in touch with current social trends, ultimately reinforcing the image of policing as being "necessary".

The mid-50s crisis in policing. But the new policing image failed to bridge the gap between fantasy and the rotten state of the police forces. Matters came to a head in the 1950s after a series of scandals involving chief constables hit the headlines.

• the chief constable of Cardiganshire was disciplined for not properly administering his force;
• the chief constable of Brighton was charged with corruption, dismissed and two senior officers imprisoned;
• the chief constable of Worcester was imprisoned for fraud;
• the chief constable of Nottingham (Captain Popkess) was suspended on the grounds that he was unfit for office.

The Royal Commission 1960. The incidents led to the appointment of the Royal Commission on Police in 1960. It was the first time that the principles, organisation and constitutional position of the police were examined publicly. It brought many of the existing principles of policing into line with current practice. Its terms of reference were to;
• efficiently control the police,
• make the best use of manpower,
• make the police accountable,
• make arrangements for dealing with complaints.

The Royal Commission reached three fundamental conclusions:
• the office of constable was original, not delegated, and exercised by virtue of that office,
• local forces were a good idea but needed increased central coordination,
• the problem of controlling the police was the problem of controlling the chief constables.

It also commented: "The first requirement is a radical change in the purpose and organisation of the inspectorate... the time has gone when the inspection of police forces should be limited to the state and efficiency of each particular force".

Specific recommendations were:
• a single post of Chief Inspector of Constabulary, to be regarded as the senior professional adviser on police matters, with general oversight over other inspectors;
• the number of inspectors in England and Wales be increased to eight, with an office and administrative support in each police region;
• the inspectors of constabulary to have four duties:
  1) inspecting each force and reporting on its efficiency, as well as how it handles complaints;

Vocabulary:
awareness = Bewusstsein
staple diet = Grundnahrung
soap (soap opera) = Seifenoper
rotten = morsch, verfault, mies, schäulich
fraud = Betrug
accountable = verantwortlich
complaint = Beschwerde, Klage
by virtue of = kraft; vermöge (ppp: +Genetiv) (gehoben)
duty = Pflicht
2) reporting on the adequacy of governance and scrutiny by the police authority;
3) ensuring the results of central research and proven good practice are applied;
4) advising on arrangements for promoting collaboration between forces.

Police Act 1964. The Police Act 1964 implemented (relatively) radical new ideas about controlling the police. The Police Act 1964 faithfully implemented the commission’s recommendations.

- Part 1 of the Act – Replaced the old county and borough police authorities with “police authorities” composed of two-thirds elected representatives and one-third magistrates. These new police authorities had far less power than their predecessors – they had no direct power over the force. But they could appoint chief, deputy and assistant constables from an approved Home Office list. They could require the chief constable to retire in the interests of efficiency but, like the power to appoint, it needed the Home Secretary’s approval. The chief constable effectively became the guardian of the public’s interests over policing matters.

- Part 2 of the Act – increased the responsibilities and powers of the Home Secretary over the police. This included the creation of a Chief Inspector of Constabulary, and further strengthening of the powers of the Inspectorate (previously given royal status in a 1945 Act).

- The reorganisation of policing – One of the more visible effects of the Act was further to reduce the number of independent forces from 119 in 1965 to 46 in 1969. This number was further reduced when the Local Government Act 1972 redefined local authority boundaries. The number fell to 43.

The late 1990s. In 1991, the Citizens Charter was launched by the Prime Minister, Mr John Major. It committed the Government to a programme for improving the standard of public services including, of course, the police service. In this spirit, the Government proposed in 1993 to transfer from local authorities to forces responsibility for management of non-warranted staff, IT, finance, and property. To help the Inspectorate cover these new areas properly two HMIs from non-police backgrounds were appointed, by this stage HMIC consisted of the Chief HMI and five HMIs, all with regional responsibilities.

Purpose and values of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). To promote the efficiency and effectiveness of
The formal inspection process is a core Inspectorate activity, through which HM Inspectors of Constabulary conduct detailed examinations of those areas of policing organisation and practice judged to be central to the efficient and effective discharge of the policing function. HMIs report on the efficiency and effectiveness of each force – and other organisations – which they inspect; that is the extent to which it achieves the best results with the resources available and that those results are the right ones. 

Inspection and advisory functions. The formal inspection process is a core Inspectorate activity, through which HM Inspectors of Constabulary conduct detailed examinations of those areas of policing organisation and practice judged to be central to the efficient and effective discharge of the policing function. HMIs report on the efficiency and effectiveness of each force – and other organisations – which they inspect; that is the extent to which it achieves the best results with the resources available and that those results are the right ones.
Inspection of police forces is still the main activity of HMIC, but the methodology and approach have changed significantly since the 1850s. In common with other Inspectorates, HMIC keeps its inspection methodology under continual review. The last significant change was the move away from annual inspection to a three-year cycle and the introduction of the performance review assessment at the mid-point of the cycle. More recently, HMIC introduced risk assessment to focus the inspection effort and developed systems for inspecting Basic Command Units and Best Value Reviews. In 2002, HMIC identified a need to rethink the conventional "formal" inspection methodology used at force level in the light of changing circumstances, especially the major developments which would flow from the Police Reform Act 2002. The approach has been termed 'baseline assessment' because it seeks to monitor change in each force (improvement or deterioration) against a baseline of performance identified in spring 2004.

The thematic inspection. These inspections examine a key issue across a representative number of forces, and comment solely on the effectiveness of performance in relation to that key issue. This type of inspection identifies deficiencies relevant to the Service as a whole and disseminates good practice regarding a specific aspect of policing. Such inspections have proved key in identifying critical issues and sticking points and offering solutions for moving the Service forward in areas such as race and diversity, efficiency and value for money, crime recording, police integrity, the use of scientific and technological advances to tackle volume crime, rape, child protection, reassurance, training and personnel issues such as recruiting.

The Best Value inspection. This duty of inspection, introduced under the Local

Vocabulary:
underpin = untermauern
to tailor = zuschneiden, schneiden
self-assessment = Selbstbeurteilung
deficiency = Mangel
to tackle = bewältigen, in Angriff nehmen
rape = Vergewaltigung
Government Act 1999, gives HMIC a remit to inspect Best Value in police authorities to ensure that Best Value Reviews have been carried out in accordance with the statutory requirements and that they are likely to bring about the desired improvements.

The basic command unit (BCU) inspection. These inspections focus on the local aspects of policing and are aimed at improving performance and identifying and spreading good practice. Concentrating on leadership and performance, the inspections seek to identify reasons for variations in performance between apparently similar BCUs. HMIC is inspecting every BCU in England and Wales over a five-year period (which began in 2001-02), and has begun to conduct reinspections.

Advice on policing. During the course of inspection, HMIs also look closely at progress made by police authorities and forces in building effective partnerships with both the local community and other agencies within the criminal justice and emergency systems. The Home Secretary relies on the Inspectorate as the principal source of objective professional advice on all aspects of policing, both operational and managerial. In addition, HMIC advises on the formulation of policy proposals relating to the police, and liaises with the appropriate administrative units in the Home Office.

Leadership and recognition. HMIC also provides advice to the Home Secretary on the suitability of candidates seeking senior appointments within the police service. He provides this advice with the help of the Senior Appointments Panel, whose members are drawn from the Association of Chief Police Officers; the Association of Police Authorities; the Metropolitan Police Service; the Home Office; and the panel also includes two independent members. HMIs are expected to provide advice to police authorities, service authorities and the Board of the Central Police Training and Development Authority during the selection of chief officers and may sit as advisers on interview panels. HMIC also provides advice on chief officers’ nominations for honours and bravery awards.

Personnel, training and diversity inspections. Since 2000 the author has carried out the following inspections:

- Training Matters – a thematic inspection of probationer police constable training in all 43 forces in England and Wales, published in February 2002. This has resulted in a major review of content and delivery, and the change to a whole new programme from 2006.
- Diversity Matters – a comprehensive thematic inspection of the training provided to police officers and police staff in support of race and diversity in England and Wales, published in March 2003. This has resulted in the production of a national strategy, launched in November 2004 by the Home Secretary, and a radically different learning programme now being introduced by all forces.
- Centrex – This initial inspection of Centrex, published in January 2004 was conducted at a time when the organisation was still evolving, having only been formed in April 2002. The report identified key weaknesses in efficiency and effectiveness, which are rapidly being remedied.
significant room for improvement. Its recommendations have been accepted unreservedly by Ministers, and it will form the basis for future change and modernization activity.

• Training of Trainers – a thematic inspection looking at the skills police trainers require effectively to perform their role across all forces. The recommendations have led to the production of a new trainer skills framework, and a new delivery model.

National Recruitment Standards – An inspection conducted between January and June 2004 to establish the current position and any key issues concerning the introduction of National Recruitment Standards. The report has prompted urgent action to ensure both compliance, and removal of discriminatory practices.

Best Value Review of Training of 43 forces. Over the last five years all police forces and police authorities in England and Wales have subjected their training function to a Best Value review, to counter criticism from Ministers about wasted resources, inadequate impact on performance and negligible collaboration. HMIC has completed the cycle of review by inspecting the results of the review in each force, which has involved a major programme lasting 18 months. For each force a report was published, with two key findings: “How good is the training function now?”, and “What are the prospects for improvement?”

An interim report marked the halfway point in the inspection process, and highlighted the emerging findings, and issues.

The final report, Value Matters, published on 12 October 2005, details the outcomes of what has been perhaps the most comprehensive and sustained development activity in relation to police training in the history of the service, showing that much has been achieved but there is still

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Zusammenfassung


Der Artikel setzt fort mit einer Beschreibung der verschiedenen Entwicklungsschritte der Polizeiarbeit und der begleitenden Veränderungen in der Funktion und Organisation des HMIC. In der Folge werden die derzeitige Rolle und Zuständigkeit des HMIC sowie der Aktivitätsbereich, bezogen auf das Hauptaugenmerk der Gewichtung von Effizienz, Effektivität und Verbesserung der Leistung, beleuchtet.

Drei Kernelemente werden zur Gewährleistung der Effizienz und Effektivität der Polizeiarbeit in England und Wales durch das HMIC identifiziert:
1) festgelegte Standards werden erreicht und beibehalten,
2) "Good practices" werden verbreitet und
3) die Leistung wird verbessert.


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Literaturhinweise


5 Letter from Anthony P Williams PhD, consultant and author, 30 March 2004.

6 The Role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, February 2004.

7 Vollzeitbeschäftigte anstatt Amateure, die halbtags arbeiteten, wie es vor Einführung des "Metropolitan Police Act 1829" üblich war.

Weiterführende Literatur und Links:


Methodologies and Processes for Inspections carried out by HMIC http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/.

HMIC Baseline Assessments http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/baseline-introduction/.


