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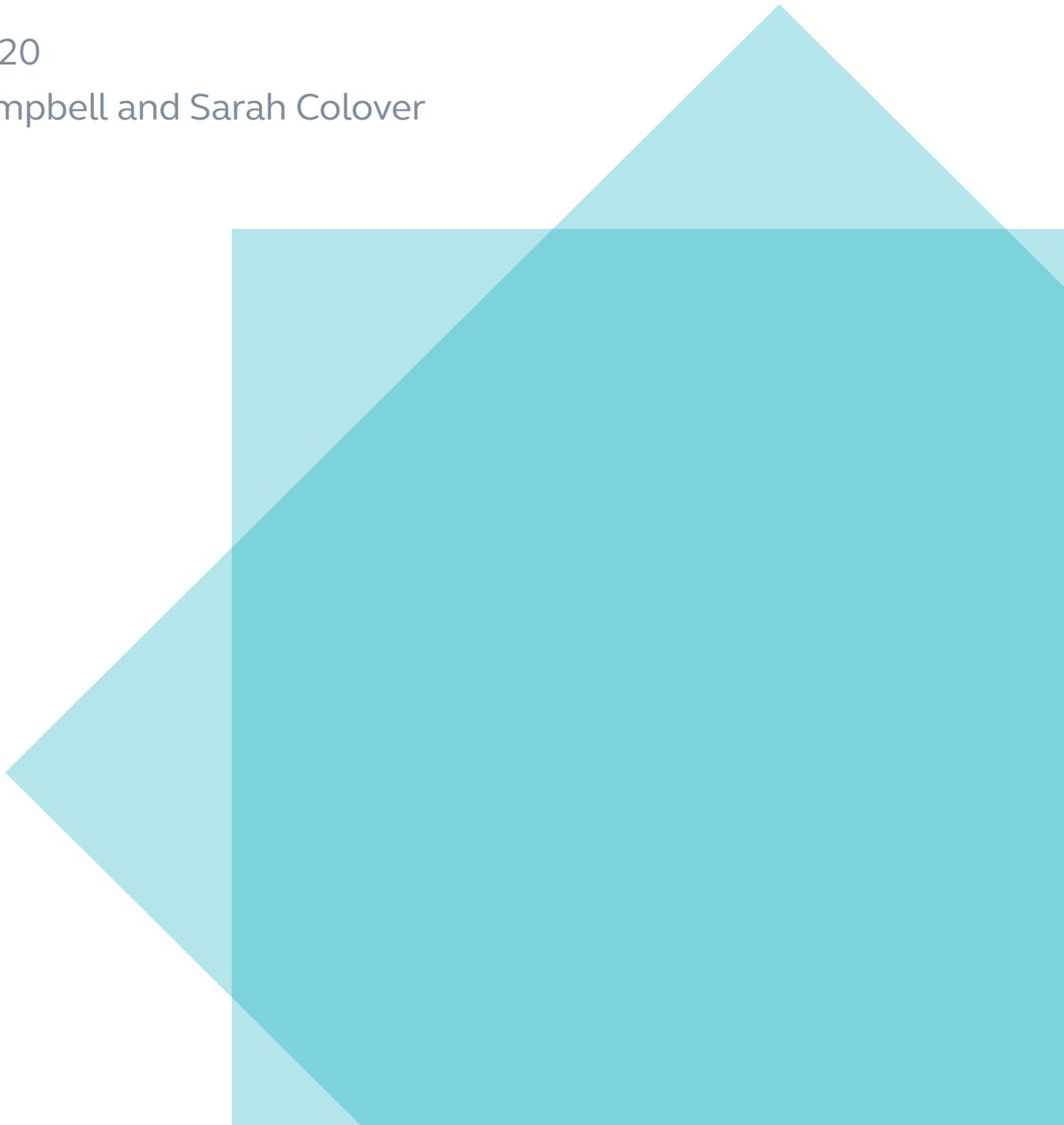
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Direct Entry Superintendent programme

Five-year evaluation report 2014 – 2019

July 2020

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Executive summary

Background and programme overview

In 2014, and following recommendations from the 2011 Winsor Review¹, the College of Policing (hereafter known as the College) launched a programme to recruit and prepare, over an 18-month period, new police entrants for superintendent rank. The programme aims to:

- enable a wider pool of talent to enter and progress within the police service
- attract individuals with new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing
- provide a development programme that would ensure Direct Entry superintendents were competent in their roles and inspire confidence in officers, staff and the public
- create cohorts that had the potential to further develop and acquire the skills and experience to progress to the chief officer ranks.

The programme selection and marketing methods are designed to recruit talented managers from other sectors, with strong leadership potential for chief officer roles. On joining the programme, successful applicants are immediately employed at their target rank by their home force, but are not made substantive at that rank until they have successfully completed the programme. The programme combines College-delivered training and on-the-job learning – with recruits starting as police constables and rotating through the different ranks in eight to 16-week blocks. Members must pass all programme assessments (including the equivalent of national inspector exams and work-based assessments throughout) to graduate and take up substantive superintendent roles within their home force.

As of June 2019, there had been five annual recruitment rounds, which had led to 14 forces taking at least one programme member (three other forces had also taken transferees). In total, 33 individuals had joined the scheme. All had been invited to participate in evaluation fieldwork activity – with a particular emphasis on the first two cohorts, since they had the most time in substantive superintendent positions during the evaluation period.

¹ Winsor, T. 2011, 'Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions – Part II' available online at library.college.police.uk/docs/Winsor-Part2-vol1.pdf

Evaluation overview

The five-year programme evaluation focused on gathering evidence to explore how well the programme had been meeting its overarching aims. In total, 35 interviews were held with cohort 1 and 2 programme members and 18 interviews with a sample of their line managers and workplace coaches. Two focus groups were also held with these cohorts. Surveys were conducted with cohorts 3 to 5, as well as analysis of programme selection and assessment data. Six chief constables and one other chief officer from seven participating forces were also interviewed at fieldwork end, around perceived programme benefits. While it is still too early to assess the full potential of a Direct Entry programme of this nature, the evaluation has allowed important findings and learning to emerge – as highlighted in this summary and explained more fully in the main report.

Along with the publication of the Direct Entry Superintendent programme evaluation, the College has simultaneously published evaluation reports for the Fast Track Inspector and Direct Entry Inspector schemes. Common learning and findings in relation to all of these programmes are highlighted in a separate overview paper.

Fieldwork and analysis for all of the evaluation reports was ongoing from programme launch and completed in June 2019. Data, such as the number of programme members, is correct as of June 2019.

Summary of key findings

Delivering operationally competent superintendents

The evaluation findings support the concept of being able to directly recruit into superintendent rank. The general programme approach can be effective, ie, a rigorous recruitment and selection process, followed by an intensive 18-month period of development and assessment.

As of June 2019, 33 individuals had started a Direct Entry Superintendent programme, 25 of those (in the first four cohorts) had graduated and were operating as substantive police leaders in 11 forces and four were still in training on the programme (in cohort 5). Twenty-one were in superintendent posts, three had been promoted to chief superintendent and one had already become an assistant chief constable. The combination of on-the-job learning (rotating through the ranks) and centrally delivered learning modules has shown to be effective. The five line managers of cohort 1 members, who were interviewed three years post-graduation, all said their direct entrant was fully effective or exceptional in role. Two had their negative preconceptions of the programme reversed by working with direct entrants (two others were positive to begin with and one remained ambivalent).

At the point of scheme completion, all remaining cohort 1 and 2 programme members (three left the programme before completion) felt ready for their substantive positions and the 13 interviewed line managers/work place coaches largely agreed (six were very positive), with a common proviso that they should initially stay in the superintendent role they had been prepared for and continue to have access to advice. Some line managers/coaches thought capability to make autonomous, quick-time operational decisions required more experience, but it was also said that traditionally promoted superintendents could equally rely on support from colleagues when starting a new role and that drawing on team expertise was an aspect of senior leadership. The interviews drew out a common view that, while the scheme had not fully compensated for years of policing experience, members were highly motivated to continue their development and were capable of quickly filling knowledge and skills gaps. All seven chief constable/officer interviewees thought the programme had brought in very strong candidates. Three particularly praised the calibre of one or more of their programme members. One said their direct entrants had brought more talent into the superintendent rank and had set a higher standard for those aspiring to that level.

Diversity

The programme has successfully recruited new talent into police leadership roles. An aim was to bring in individuals from diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives. Success, in this respect, is indicated by the range of prior occupations of direct entrants (including roles in human resources, education, finance and law) and the fact that all respondents at the start of programme fieldwork² said they would not have applied to be a constable at the stage of their lives that they applied to Direct Entry.

The programme (cohorts 1 to 5) recruited around double the proportion of women (16 out of 33 programme members) and people from a black or minority ethnic background (3 out of 33 programme members) than represented nationally at superintendent rank (28 per cent and four per cent, respectively)³. The proportions of programme members from these demographic groups was lower than in national population figures⁴.

² 23 out of 33 cohort 1 to 5 members took part in fieldwork at the start of their programme. Cohorts 1 and 2 completed one-to-one interviews and cohorts 3 to 5 were sent online surveys.

³ Home Office (National Statistics), July 2019, 'Police Workforce England and Wales, March 2019' available online at: [gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019)

⁴ From the most recent national census figures (2011), 51% of the population of England and Wales was female and 14% were from a BAME background: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011-censuskeystatisticsforenglandandwales/2012-12-11#ethnic-group

Over two thirds of respondents at the start of programme fieldwork had strong prior connections to policing (in terms of work experience, volunteering or through close friends/family) and half had considered joining the police when younger. Almost twice as many members (cohorts 1 to 5) had come from public sector rather than private sector jobs (21 compared with 11). Recruiting more applicants from outside the public sector, as well as those who would not typically consider a police career, could take time and more extensive marketing.

Making a difference:

The evaluation indicates, from fieldwork with early cohorts, that the programme recruits high calibre members, typically with a strong public service motivation and commitment to make a positive difference in forces and to progress to chief officer roles. In fieldwork, the most commonly described difference of programme members was a more open, inclusive and empowering leadership style than typical among other force leaders. Within all evaluation participant groups, there were respondents who described this as impacting positively on morale and motivation among colleagues. Being visible and working across the ranks, while on rotation, contributed to the sense of direct entrants being approachable and familiar with current issues affecting the front line. Some line managers/coaches were less confident of their direct entrant's ability to have a directive style. Only one of the five line managers interviewed three years post-scheme completion raised this issue, suggesting concerns may have reduced. A chief constable interviewee explained they valued a mix of leadership types at the rank and another said the direct entrants' approach was bringing the best out of people.

Members in evaluation fieldwork⁵ were often described as less constrained by hierarchy, more willing to challenge upwards, and more open to change and looking outside of policing for inspiration and learning. Several line managers/coaches were impressed by their direct entrant's analytical approach to problem solving and their partnership working. Strong examples of members making use of prior work skills and knowledge were raised, along with a suggestion from participants that there should be more opportunity for this. Many evaluation participants suggested direct entrants may need to be in chief officer roles to have wider influence, particularly in larger forces. Fieldwork also indicates members could benefit from reassurance (particularly from chief officers) that the differences they bring are valued and that challenging norms will enhance, not hinder, their career prospects.

⁵ As above.

Cost

The cost to the College of designing, marketing, recruiting and delivering the programme has been £3.57m for five years of operation (2014/19). (See **Appendix 2**).

Learning to support future implementation

The programme has been continually developed on the basis of member feedback and this can continue through applying learning from the five-year evaluation findings and ongoing monitoring.

College modules have typically been highly valued by learners, with some of the most positive feedback relating to the range of expert speakers and the opportunity to self-reflect, develop leadership styles and network with peers. More focus on encouraging and supporting members to make a positive difference in force has been raised as an area for development, along with a suggestion that more innovative/modern learning methods be used, as well as more speakers from outside policing and less reliance on former officers.

Adequate force support is crucial and stronger governance may be needed to ensure related programme requirements are met, including help securing suitable development opportunities and mentors. A need for post-programme support has been raised by many respondents to tackle potential barriers to career progression. In the evaluation fieldwork, members have typically benefited from supportive line managers and colleagues. Ensuring the programme purpose is well communicated in force could be beneficial in this respect.

Numbers joining the programme have been low to date and the implications of larger intakes have not been addressed. Among the issues to consider is the fact that a high proportion of joiners have had prior connections to policing. Given the small cohort sizes and low drop-out rate (four out of 33 members had, by June 2019, left the scheme early), it was not possible to explore whether and how this could influence success on the programme.

The evaluation reveals that, as intended, the scheme is challenging. It has also found that it can negatively affect work-life balance and wellbeing. Members can take a significant risk leaving successful careers, something which could, perhaps, be felt keenly by those least familiar with police work. To appeal to more varied audiences, ways to mitigate these issues could be considered – including adequate in-force support, better facilitation of flexible working while completing the programme, allowing a longer time frame for completion and new/more ways to prepare individuals for the nature of police work.

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1 Background

In 2014, and following recommendations from the 2011 **Winsor Review**⁶, the College launched a new programme to recruit and prepare new police entrants for superintendent rank within 18 months. The Direct Entry Superintendent programme aims to:

- enable a wider pool of talent to enter and progress within the police service
- attract individuals with new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing
- provide a development programme that would ensure Direct Entry superintendents were competent in their roles and inspire confidence in officers, staff and the public
- create cohorts that had the potential to further develop and acquire the skills and experience to progress to the chief officer ranks.

At the same time that the Direct Entry Superintendent programme was launched, the College also introduced a Fast Track Inspector programme (also recommended by the Winsor review although called ‘Direct Entry Inspector’ in the report), open to both serving constables and external applicants. Two years later, in 2016, the Fast Track external element closed to new recruits and was, in effect, replaced with a Direct Entry Inspector programme – which focused on recruiting those with management experience, rather than being open to new graduates (as had been the case with Fast Track external).

Both the Direct Entry Superintendent and Inspector programmes represent a major break with tradition for policing in England and Wales. Apart from an inspector level recruitment scheme for the Metropolitan Police in the 1930s⁷, police officers in England and Wales have traditionally been required to start their careers at constable rank. The introduction of the Direct Entry schemes triggered high profile debate, which continued throughout the evaluation period, with frequent articles and discussions on the schemes featuring in both police-specific and mainstream online and print media, as well as on social media platforms.

⁶ Winsor, T. 2011, ‘Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions – Part II’ available online at library.college.police.uk/docs/Winsor-Part2-vol1.pdf

⁷ Ibid, page 104.

The new programmes (Direct Entry and Fast Track) were in accord with an aspiration set out in the College's **'Leadership Review'** (2015)⁸ to enable more flexible exit, entry and re-entry into the service. The review described this as a way for policing to more easily draw in external talent and skills (in tune with Winsor's ambitions for Fast Track and Direct Entry), but also to better enable serving officers to gain outside experience and allow policing to offer greater career flexibility – with potential appeal to members of the existing workforce, as well as new recruits.

In its document 'Policing Vision 2025'⁹, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) supported the implementation of the College Leadership Review – including acknowledgement that changes were needed around the way people entered, left and re-entered the service and noting 'many individuals now have different work and career aspirations and needs'. The document also emphasised the importance of achieving greater diversity within the police workforce, as well as attracting appropriately skilled individuals to meet future requirements. While the document did not explicitly refer to the new Direct Entry and Fast Track schemes, it helped articulate a strategy for workforce reform and one which fits with testing new entry routes.

8 College of Policing, 2015, 'Leadership Review: Recommendations for delivering leadership at all levels', available online at college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/the-leadership-review/Documents/Leadership_Review_Final_June-2015.pdf

9 National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), 2015, 'National Policing Vision 2025', available online at www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Policing%20Vision.pdf

2 Programme overview

The Direct Entry Superintendent scheme is an 18-month development programme designed to recruit and prepare individuals not currently working as police officers to undertake the role of police superintendent. Direct Entry applicants (for both the superintendent and inspector schemes) are selected through a national recruitment process before being employed by a participating force. The programme involves a combination of College-delivered training (focused on developing leadership skills for a policing context, as well as becoming operationally ready), alongside in-force training and on-the-job experience, with participants undertaking rotations through the ranks from constable onwards (for Direct Entry Superintendents, this involved 10 weeks at constable rank, around eight at sergeant and also at inspector rank, followed by 12 weeks at superintendent rank). The ratio between College-delivered and force-led elements is approximately 30:70.

Both Direct Entry programmes aim to recruit successful managers from other sectors, with strong leadership potential to progress to senior roles. Successful applicants to the Direct Entry Superintendent scheme are immediately employed in a force at the rank of superintendent and placed on that salary scale. They are paid by the College while on the programme (and for a further two years, for the first two cohorts) and by their force after completion. The participants do not become substantive in post until successful completion of all programme assessments. Further details of the programme recruitment and selection methods and of the programme (including around delivery methods, content, structure and assessment) are provided in [Appendix 1](#).

A new cohort of Direct Entry superintendents has been recruited every year since programme launch. As of June 2019, five cohorts had joined (comprising 33 people) and four of the five cohorts had completed their training – leading to 25 successful programme graduates taking up substantive superintendent roles, spread across 11 forces.

Table 1: Number of joiners/programme graduates from the Direct Entry Superintendent programme, as of June 2019

Cohort number and year recruited	1 2014	2 2015	3 2016	4 2017	5 2018
How many had joined the programme	9	6	8	6	4
How many members had graduated from their scheme	8	4	7	6	n/a

3 Evaluation overview

3.1 Aims and research questions

An important role for the College is the promotion of ‘evidence-based policing’ – the concept that all decisions, policies and procedures in policing should be based on the best available evidence. In keeping with this, the College was clear from the outset (when the concept of Direct Entry and Fast Track was first raised) that any new routes into policing would need to be evaluated. Hence, in 2014, when the Home Secretary instructed the College to develop and deliver a Direct Entry Superintendent programme and a concurrent Fast Track Inspector scheme, the College also agreed to evaluate the new programmes and produce five-year evaluation reports which would be shared with Parliament. Publication was planned for November 2019, but was delayed due to the December 2019 General Election and associated pre-election publishing restrictions for public bodies.

The evaluation approach for these programmes, as well as for the later Direct Entry Inspector scheme, was designed to address the same research questions and use broadly similar research methods.

Alongside collecting information on the professional and demographic backgrounds of the programme members, in order to understand whether the programme was bringing in applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds, the evaluation sought to explore the following three broad areas: competence for superintendent rank, barriers and facilitators to career progression, and what benefits the programme members may have brought to forces. The original questions are presented below, along with further description (in brackets) of how the evidence gathered for each question supports consideration of the programme aims.

- Operational competence¹⁰ – has the Direct Entry programme attracted, recruited, trained and qualified the target number of people who are operationally competent as superintendents and are they demonstrating effective leadership?¹¹ (Supports assessment of whether the programme is successfully preparing members for substantive roles and by implication, whether directly recruiting into superintendent roles can work.)
- Progression and barriers to progression – what rank and role did those on the Direct Entry programme progress to after the programme was

¹⁰ Operational competence has been defined through the national assessment strategy. Programme members that pass all programme assessments, are deemed to be operationally competent.

¹¹ See **Appendix 1, section A1.5** for a description of programme learning objectives and particularly those relating to ‘attitudes and behaviours’ for an understanding of what was meant by ‘effective leadership’ for the purposes of the programme.

completed and what barriers did the individuals encounter? (Supports assessment of whether direct recruitment into superintendent rank can be an effective way to widen the talent pool for chief officer positions and understand how the scheme should be implemented.)

- Return on Investment – how much has the Direct Entry programme cost at each stage of its implementation (i.e. attraction, assessment, training, and final assessment)? What are the perceived benefits? (Supports assessment around whether Direct Entry at superintendent rank can bring the anticipated benefits, as defined in the programme aims.)

An extra focus for the evaluation has been to draw out learning that may be used both to develop the existing programme and more generally, contribute to the evidence base around how to effectively support external police officer recruits taking up management and leadership positions and help enable them to bring benefits to their forces and policing.

3.2 Fieldwork and analysis

The research was conducted in-house by College researchers¹² – all of whom were members of the Government Social Research (GSR) profession and as such, bound by the **Civil Service Code** (and its core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality)¹³ as well as the professional standards set out in the specific **GSR code**¹⁴, which have been designed to ensure quality, rigorous social research and analysis for government. Further details on research governance are provided in **Appendix 3**.

The evaluation was designed to capture evidence from a range of sources to address each research question. The sources included standard management information captured as ‘business as usual’ through College programme monitoring – primarily initial recruitment data and in-programme assessment data. In addition to this, the evaluation gathered a wide range of qualitative data – through surveys, interviews and focus groups, principally with programme members. Table 2 below provides an overview of which methods were used for collecting data from the various cohorts. In all cases, all cohort members that remained on the programme at the point of fieldwork activity were invited to participate. More detail on the evaluation methods is available in **Appendix 3**.

¹² The only exception was the follow-up interviews with five cohort 1 members three years post-graduation and with five of their line managers – these were conducted by a contracted researcher.

¹³ Details available online: [gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code)

¹⁴ Details available online: [gov.uk/government/publications/the-government-social-research-code-people-and-products](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-government-social-research-code-people-and-products)

The qualitative fieldwork gathered views and experiences of early cohort members (and samples of their managers and workplace coaches) in relation to the programme, whether and how they thought they were bringing and making a positive difference, what was thought to be helping and hindering this and finally, their thoughts around career progression. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and (as with the open text survey responses) coded by key themes. The aim was to draw out common views, where perceptions of different individuals were consistent with each other, as well as insightful exceptions.

As set out in the original evaluation specification, the fieldwork focused on the first two cohorts of programme members. This is because they were due to graduate within the evaluation five-year window and by focusing on them, it would be possible to get an in-depth understanding of their full journey from programme start to end, as well as explore post-graduation experiences. For these, a total of 30 one-to-one interviews (all lasting around 40 minutes to an hour each) were conducted with cohort members, during and immediately at the end of their programmes. A sample of 13 of their line managers/workplace coaches were also interviewed at the point of programme completion. Evaluation activity for cohorts 3 to 5 was scaled back and consisted of start and end of programme surveys.

A further five one-to-one interviews were held with a sample of cohort 1 programme members, three years after they graduated. This follow-up research was conducted in spring 2019 by an independent academic, contracted by the College. All eight of the cohort 1 programme graduates were invited to participate and interviews were held with five of the six that agreed (the sixth was not available to undertake the interview during the fieldwork period).

Each of the six willing participants also gave contact details for their line manager (five of these chief superintendents took part in one-to-one interviews – the sixth was unavailable) and also details of two people they line managed (who were sent a survey on their experiences and perceptions of being managed by a direct entrant – eight responded).¹⁵

At fieldwork end, six chief constables and one other chief officer from a seventh participating force were interviewed about their perceptions of the programme and particularly, whether and how they thought it had already benefited their force. Between them, the forces involved in this fieldwork had recruited 23 Direct Entry superintendents (just over two-thirds of all programme members, cohorts 1 to 5).¹⁶

¹⁵ The eight respondents commented on five programme members in total.

¹⁶ The interviews gathered chief constable/officer feedback and views on all of the Fast Track/Direct Entry schemes. Sampling focused on selecting forces with the most programme participants (as the chiefs would be in the strongest position to comment on programme experiences) and ensuring all schemes were well covered.

Table 2: Evaluation fieldwork activity undertaken for each cohort

Research method (sample group – programme members/line managers/ workplace coaches)	1	2	3	4	5
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	Number of respondents/numbers asked to participate.				
Focus group (members at start of programme)	9/9	5/6	-	-	-
First interviews cohort 1 and 2/first surveys cohorts 3–5 (members)	8/8	5/5	3/8	5/6	2/4
Second interviews (members)	-	5/5	-	-	-
End of programme interviews cohorts 1 and 2/surveys cohorts 3–5 (members)	8/8	4/4	1/7	2/6	-
End of programme interviews (line managers/workplace coaches)	6/6	7/7			
3 years post-graduation interviews (members)	5/8	-	-	-	
3 years post-graduation interviews (line managers)	5/6	-	-	-	-
3 years post-graduation survey (individuals directly managed by cohort member)	8/12	-	-	-	-
Interviews with chief constables/ chief officers	6 chief constables and 1 other chief officer from 7 forces.				

Throughout this report, anonymised direct quotes from fieldwork participants are provided to demonstrate views and experiences. To avoid identifying individuals, the pronouns have been changed in the quotations.

In addition to the evaluation fieldwork described above, separate standard ‘business as usual’ programme monitoring was conducted by the College throughout the five-year period. This gathered quick-time feedback (primarily using online surveys with programme members) on the learning programme, including satisfaction with content and delivery style and whether members felt learning objectives were being met. The purpose was to enable continuous improvement of College inputs and of the programme more generally. The survey analysis was made available to the evaluation team and provided an extra source of evidence around perceptions of the programme. Similarly, emerging findings from the evaluation fieldwork were shared with the programme team throughout the evaluation period to inform improvements.

The programme costs have been calculated using the College’s auditable accounts for the three years the programme has been run (since 2016). They include all associated costs of implementing the programme, including: marketing, recruitment, design and delivery, administration and staffing of the programme. The full methodology and breakdown for the programme costs can be found in **Appendix 2**.

3.3 Limitations

The nature of the programme created unavoidable constraints on the type of evaluation that could be undertaken. Key limitations related to the following (and are further explained in **Appendix 3, section A3.3**):

- a) **Limited availability of objective measures** – the nature of the programme and its aims made only a few objective measures possible (primarily demographic/recruitment data).
- b) **Small cohort numbers** – limiting the opportunity to look for common trends in the data and limiting what data could be reported, given the risk of identifying individuals.
- c) **The relatively short timescale of the evaluation** – the commitment to present a report to Parliament five years after programme launch limited the opportunity (during the evaluation period) to learn from members’ post-graduation experiences, including progression to senior roles.
- d) **Lack of comparison group** – comparing with traditionally promoted superintendents, in a comparison group study, was not possible given the broad nature of the programme aims.

Given the limitations described above, it was known from the outset that the evaluation would not enable conclusive answers to all of the research questions – particularly in relation to ‘return on investment’. Stronger evaluation conclusions could, potentially, become more feasible if the programme was rolled out on a larger scale and/or in a more targeted manner (for example, recruiting with more specific, measurable outcomes in mind or recruiting more members into an individual force to have greater likelihood of discernible group impact). Follow-up fieldwork with graduate programme members, for example, in five-year periods, could also enable stronger statements around progression and potential scheme benefits.

4 Findings

The findings are presented in six sections, addressing the following themes:

- Profile of programme members and force participation.
- Operational competence.
- Ongoing career progression.
- Perceptions of members making a positive difference.
- Programme costs.
- Learning to support future programme delivery.

4.1 Profile of programme members and force participation

4.1.1 Overview

This section provides details on the numbers of Direct Entry superintendent members – how many joined, how many had graduated and how many had left prior to graduation by June 2019 (**subsection 4.1.2**). This subsection also addresses force participation (also described in **Appendix 4**). Descriptive data on the demographic characteristics of programme members is provided (**subsection 4.1.3**) and on their professional backgrounds (**subsection 4.1.4**). Evidence around programme members' motivations for applying to the Direct Entry Superintendent programme is described in the final subsection (**4.1.5**).

4.1.2 Programme members: numbers

As of June 2019, after five rounds of recruitment (one a year since the programme began in 2014), 33 individuals had started a Direct Entry Superintendent programme, 25 had graduated and four remained on the programme in cohort 5 (see **Appendix 4** for further details). Four members had left the scheme prior to graduation, all for personal reasons.¹⁷

¹⁷ The evaluation team was given access to notes from two College-led exit interviews for programme members. Where relevant, views expressed in these documents have been drawn into the evaluation fieldwork findings. To protect the confidentiality of the members that left the scheme early, they are not referred to as exit interview findings in this report.

Table 3: (repeat of Table 1) Numbers of joiners/graduates from the Direct Entry Superintendent programme by year, as of June 2019

Cohort number and year recruited	1 2014	2 2015	3 2016	4 2017	5 2018
How many had joined the programme	9	6	8	6	4
How many members had graduated from their scheme	8	4	7	6	n/a

In the 2011 Winsor Review, which first called for the introduction of a Direct Entry to Superintendent scheme, it was suggested that such a programme could have an annual intake of around 20 new members each year.¹⁸ While this was not based on precise modelling, the College did anticipate annual cohort sizes to be in this region. In reality, a third of the suggested number of programme members joined in the first five cohorts than the Winsor Review had suggested (33 instead of the suggested 100).

Cohort sizes were partly determined by the number of participating forces and the number of spaces they made available each year. For the five-year evaluation period, the average number of spaces made available by forces was 14, with 19 being the highest number of spaces (occurring both in 2014 to 2018) and down to six in 2018.¹⁹

At the time the programmes launched, forces were operating recruitment freezes in response to force budget cuts (and the government-led ‘austerity’ agenda) which may have impacted on their ability and willingness to participate in the scheme. Openings for promotion into senior and chief officer ranks are always scarce, since they comprise a very small proportion of the police officer workforce. Using national police workforce figures, as of 31 March 2019, 93 per cent of officers were in the rank of constable and sergeant. There were only 896 superintendents in total, spread across all of the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, with the average (mode) being seven per force.²⁰ To create

¹⁸ Home Office, October 2013, ‘Direct Entry into the Police, Government Response’ available online at assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/249824/Direct_entry_consultation_-_government_response.pdf

¹⁹ This is based on figures for the 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018 rounds of recruitment – figures for 2015 were not available.

²⁰ The mean average is 15 per force, and is skewed by figures for large forces – particularly the MPS which had a reported 147 superintendents as of 31 March 2019.

openings for direct entrants at superintendent rank, forces must either incur their extra salary costs (once they graduate from their programme)²¹ or existing superintendents need to leave the service (for example, retire) or be promoted. As of March 2019, there were only 312 chief superintendents in the English and Welsh home forces (mode average of four) and only 212 chief officers in total (mode average of three) including assistant, deputy and chief constables and Metropolitan Police Service equivalents.

Table 4: Police officer workforce by rank for all 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, 31 March 2019²²

Rank	Total	% of all officers
Chief officer	212	0.4%
Chief superintendent	312	
Superintendent	896	0.7%
Chief inspector	1,666	1.4%
Inspector	5,555	4.5%
Sergeant	18,460	15%
Constable	96,070	78%

Another factor reducing cohort sizes were instances of forces having spaces they had made available for potential programme members being left unfilled. Across the five years of Direct Entry superintendent recruitment (cohorts 1 to 5) 32 available spaces were not filled. This was mainly due to forces not attracting enough applicants that went on to be successful at the national assessment centre. Another factor was the final stage in the selection process, following the national assessment centre, whereby forces carried out their own selection based on local workforce requirements. There were instances of forces leaving spaces unfilled, despite having at least one successful national assessment centre

²¹ The College paid members' salaries for 3.5 years for cohorts 1 and 2 (ie, during the programme and for two years after) – since then, the College has only covered salaries for the 18-month programme period.

²² Home Office (National Statistics), July 2019, 'Police Workforce England and Wales, March 2019' available online at: [gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019)

applicant being available and having opted for them as their preferred force.²³ Some of the applicants that were rejected by their preferred force were placed in other participating forces in the same year or in the next recruitment round.²⁴ Others withdrew.²⁵

As of June 2019, 14 out of the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales had successfully recruited one or more individuals to undertake the programme in their force (**Appendix 4, table A4.2**). A fifteenth force accepted a Direct Entry transferee from another force while they were still completing their programme.

The number of forces that successfully recruited members varied each year. Year three had the highest number, with seven successfully appointing a Direct Entry Superintendent programme member, and year two had the lowest, where only two forces successfully recruited. All participating forces, except the MPS, typically only recruited one member in a year – two at the most. The MPS recruited five in both the first and second years of the programme.

Table 5: Number of participating forces each year (ie, successfully had a programme member join)

Cohort number and year recruited	1 2014	2 2015	3 2016	4 2017	5 2018
How many forces had a cohort member at programme start date	4	2	7	5	4

As of June 2019, 11 programme members (all programme graduates from cohorts 1 to 3) were serving in the MPS. Other programme members (both successful graduates and those still on the programme in cohort 5) were spread across 13 forces. Leicestershire, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire, Essex and GMP had two programme members each. The following forces had one programme

²³ Following the 2016, 2017 and 2018 rounds of recruitment, 13 spaces were left unfilled due to a lack of successful applicants at the national assessment centre opting for those force spaces and eight other spaces were left unfilled due to forces not selecting the successful assessment centre applicants that had chosen them as their preferred force. This data is not available for the 2014 and 2015 recruitment rounds.

²⁴ The assessment centre pass expired after one year. To protect the identities of individuals, reporting on data that applies to less than five programme members has been restricted – hence data on how many deferred, withdrew or were placed elsewhere has not been provided.

²⁵ There was always an expectation that forces would accept their pre-specified number of candidates, providing they had been successful at the national assessment centre. For the 2019 round of recruitment, forces have become more involved in the first stages of the recruitment process. A greater expectation has also been placed on them to accept those that go on to succeed at the national assessment centre, to fill their available spaces.

member each: North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, City of London, Lancashire, Sussex, Cheshire (which took a programme member transferee) and Wiltshire (which recruited a successful programme graduate from Hampshire Constabulary into a chief officer position).

4.1.3 Programme members and applicants

The programme (cohorts 1 to 5) recruited over double the proportion of people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds than represented nationally at superintendent rank (three out of 33 members, compared with four per cent) and close to twice the proportion of females (16 out of 33 members, compared with 28 per cent).²⁶ The proportion of programme members belonging to these demographic groups has been lower than in national population figures. More details are provided in Table 6 below, along with figures for programme applicants.

Table 6: Proportion of Direct Entry superintendent applicants/ programme members from a black or minority ethnic background/ female and national figures

Demographic category	Proportion and/or number of:			
	Programme applicants (cohorts 1 to 5)	Programme members (cohorts 1 to 5)	All super-intendents, England and Wales	National Population (Census data 2011)
Black and Minority Ethnic background	20% (506/2,536)	3 out of 33	4% (37/896)	14%
Female	28% (717/2,536)	16 out of 33	28% (247/896)	51%

The lower success rate of applicants from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background to the Direct Entry Superintendent programme (and also the later Direct Entry Inspector programme) was monitored throughout the evaluation period. Methods to attract and support applicants from under-represented groups (including at ‘meet the police’ events, held around the country during recruiting periods) were in place and have been developed since programme launch. The recruitment and selection process has also

²⁶ Home Office (National Statistics), July 2019, ‘Police Workforce England and Wales, March 2019’ available online at: [gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2019)

been continually monitored and adjusted based on best practice and learning from experience (as explained in **Appendix 1, section A1.3**), but differentials in pass rates have continued.

All of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees (at fieldwork end) indicated that they had been interested in the programme as a way to improve diversity in senior leadership ranks. Five indicated that they were interested in improving visible diversity and three of these said they had wanted to increase the representation of people from BME backgrounds at superintendent level. The resulting figures around BME recruitment had been a disappointment for these interviewees. One explained that they had wanted higher BME recruitment through the scheme to make the force workforce (at a senior officer level) better reflect the local community – to increase local confidence and to encourage more individuals from under-represented groups to join the service. They also wanted more BME leaders in force, to act as role models for more junior colleagues.

Most chiefs also explained that they were interested in the schemes supporting diversity and inclusion in a wider sense, beyond visible diversity, and more around different perspectives and backgrounds generally.

A majority of programme members were aged 30–40 (19 out of 33 members) at the time of joining the programme and 13 were aged 41 or over. Two thirds of programme members (22 out of 33) had a postgraduate degree/masters or PhD level qualification.

To protect the identities of individuals, reporting on demographic data that applies to less than five programme members has been restricted. For this reason, data is not being reported on sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, other categories of highest level of academic attainment and English not a first language.

4.1.4 Previous employment

Almost two thirds of programme members came from a public sector background (21 out of 33) and a third (11) came from the private sector (one preferred not to say in their application form).

The 33 programme members previously worked in a range of different areas. A third (11 members) worked for the government or a local authority. At least one programme member described themselves as working in the following areas at the time they applied to the Direct Entry scheme: armed forces, communications, human resources, education, emergency services, law, health and finance.

4.1.5 Motivations for joining the programme

Nearly all members that participated in evaluation fieldwork at the start of their programme (cohorts 1 to 5) described a strong public service motivation as being a main driver for their application. Some specifically said they had been happy with their previous careers and had been confident that it offered them good prospects for the future – indicating they had not been looking for a career change when they found out about the Direct Entry programme. Respondents often described wanting to move into a role which had more obvious social value or direct public benefit than their previous jobs – which, for example, could have been in the public sector, but more removed from the front line. It was a strong pull for many to join at a senior level, where they felt they could have more influence and opportunities to use their existing work skills and knowledge to benefit policing.

‘It’s always been important to me to have an impact on society, so it was perfect. That was why I joined. It was ideal really. It was like a second chance.’

‘I worked with a number of senior police and ex-police colleagues who strongly encouraged me to consider it.’

‘Opportunity to bring a different perspective to policing...Chance to make local and national impact.’

Programme members

Some specifically said they were interested in engaging with strategic force level and national work and other attractions included having a varied, interesting and exciting career. A perceived strong sense of team working in policing was also often mentioned.

All five cohorts comprise individuals from a wide variety of previous job roles, who reported that they would not have considered joining at constable rank as an alternative to the scheme at the stage in their careers and lives when they applied. This view was expressed by all cohort 1 and 2 members (who were all interviewed at the point of starting their scheme) and by all respondents to the first surveys sent to cohorts 3, 4 and 5 (response rate, 10 out of 20 programme members).

In the initial focus groups and interviews with cohort 1 and 2 members, it was apparent that many had taken a pay cut to join the programme on a superintendent level salary. Many also said they would not have considered the scheme if it had meant starting on a police constable salary – given their existing financial commitments. They were also interested in bringing their management level experience into policing and maintaining that level of seniority. One specifically described how, while they were attracted to PC roles, given their leadership experience they would feel an ‘odd fit’ at that rank.

'I think the PC job is kind of where it's at in the Police, it's where the vast majority of Policing gets done, but there is no way I could have afforded salary wise to do it, and I think I would have been quite an odd fit, although I got on with everybody on the PC rotation, I think to have joined at any other level probably wouldn't have been quite right, so that was the motivation for joining the scheme, it was the sort of perfect opportunity at the time where I was looking, or beginning to think about doing something a bit more altruistic.'

Programme member

First interviews (cohorts 1 and 2; all 13 members responded) and surveys (cohorts 3 to 5; 10 out of 18 members responded) revealed that at least 17 out of 23 respondents (almost three quarters of respondents) had prior connections to policing, in terms of having either close friends/family in the service or having worked or volunteered (for example, as special constables) for a force before or in a police-related field. The proportions could be higher, since cohort 1 and 2 members were not explicitly asked about family/friend connections.²⁷ Out of the 10 cohort 3 to 5 respondents to first surveys, two reported no prior connections to policing.

Around half of first fieldwork respondents (cohorts 1 to 5) had considered applying to be a police constable at an earlier stage (12 out of 23 respondents). When discussed at interview with cohort 1 and 2 members, reasons for not pursuing a police officer career earlier on mainly related to choosing other career options. One interviewee consciously wanted to get more work experience, based on advice that this could put them in a stronger position for later developing a leadership career in the service. Another interviewee had not been able to meet an essential requirement of potential recruits that has since been removed. One had been deterred by their perception of the force culture – when they had explored a police career at a younger age, they had been advised, by a serving officer, that it was not a job for someone with their particular background characteristics. Another described that, while they had always been interested in police careers, it was a deterrent that none of their friends and family ever had been.

Some described in interview how working closely with the police (for example, as staff, or as a volunteer or in a closely connected field) had been an important factor in their decision to apply. These respondents felt this experience had made them more interested in policing as a career and made them more aware of how their skills and knowledge could contribute within forces.

Cohort 1 and 2 member interviews revealed that, for some, the scheme offered an opportunity to pursue a long-held dream. It was recognised as a rare opportunity, with one member describing how they had supported Winsor's recommendation to introduce the scheme, but never thought it would actually happen in their lifetime.

²⁷ A decision to include these questions in surveys with later cohorts was taken after it became apparent, through fieldwork with the first two cohorts, that many had strong prior police connections.

The significance of previous familiarity with policing and interest in police careers has not been explored as part of the evaluation and it could be a topic for future research. Whether, and the degree it could diverge with the programme aims to bring in people from diverse backgrounds and with new perspectives is unknown, but evidence presented in **section 4.4** of this report reveals the two are not inherently in opposition (since the common view of fieldwork participants is that programme members have been bringing and making a positive difference). All programme members, even those with strong previous links to policing, bring management-level experience from non-police officer roles. Also unknown is how helpful prior experience of policing or police-related work might be, in terms of successfully completing the programme – although **section 4.5.3** touches on some of the extra pressures for those that had none.

4.2 Operational competence and effective leadership

4.2.1 Overview

Passing programme assessments was considered the measure of operational competence for superintendent rank, for the programme. In addition to this, the following section presents perception evidence that, on balance, the programme succeeds in getting members to a point where they can take on substantive roles. While they need to keep learning on the job, they can quickly be considered just as competent as other superintendents or even excelling in the role. This section provides details on the number of recruits, graduates and resignations from the Direct Entry Superintendent programme, cohorts 1 to 5 (**section 4.2.2**); members' own perceptions of their readiness for superintendent rank (**section 4.2.3**); line manager/workplace coach perceptions of their programme members' readiness for superintendent rank, cohorts 1 and 2 (**section 4.2.4**); and perceptions around members' effectiveness as superintendent level leaders (**section 4.2.5**).

4.2.2 Successful completion of programme assessments

Cohorts 1 to 4 had completed the programme by the end of the fieldwork period (June 2019) and 25 out of the 29 members had graduated and taken up substantive superintendent roles. All were deemed operationally competent, having passed all programme assessments and having been signed off by their chief constables (or force commissioner) as ready for superintendent rank. The other four members left prior to scheme completion – all due to personal reasons²⁸.

²⁸ Given the low numbers of individuals involved and the risk of comments being linked with them, it is not possible in this report to share further details around reasons for resigning from the programme. Views expressed in two exit interviews with the College are included in findings (but not sign-posted as coming from exit interviews).

‘When you reflect on it they did a really good job of getting us to a place where we had enough of a foundation to be credible in our forces on day one.’

‘A year into the programme... I was ready to fly at that point and ... it was just holding me back and potentially damaging my credibility rather than enhancing it... on the basis that I wasn’t doing the job in a substantive role.’

‘I feel fine, I think there are still unfilled gaps, I think that would be the case with any new role... if you ask for support from others then you can overcome that.’

‘It would be incredibly arrogant to think that you could do a job that people tend to spend ages to do and be as good as they are and hopefully we’re not that arrogant. We...put ourselves forward and say we can do that but not arrogant enough to say we can already do that. I think there’s a subtle difference there.’

‘There’s a big chunk of what we do at superintendent level which I think we should be relatively comfortable about. It’s the policing specific stuff that is where our area for development will be.’

‘It’s a bit like learning to drive isn’t it, you pass your test and then people say that’s when you really start learning how to drive.’

‘I think that having the recent experience of working on the frontline, in the PC and sergeant rotations, had and still has a massive impact on how I lead, support and focus myself and others as a superintendent. It has been commented upon positively by others at my rank and above in that they can see the recent experience I have has given me insight and that I reflect upon this in my leadership and decision making.’

Programme members

4.2.3 Programme member perceptions of their operational readiness for superintendent rank

At the point of scheme completion, successful programme graduates from cohorts 1 and 2 unanimously described the Direct Entry programme as good preparation for the superintendent rank, and all said they felt ready for their substantive superintendent positions. A few said they had felt ready to take on the challenge of the superintendent role earlier in the programme.

Interviews with cohort 1 and 2 members provided a more detailed insight into their perceptions of readiness – with members typically explaining that, while they felt ready for their substantive superintendent positions at the end of the programme, continuing to learn and develop on the job was important (as, some said, this would be required of any new superintendent or person taking up a new role). They all acknowledged that, at the time of graduating, they still had gaps in terms of practical policing skills and knowledge and there was a view that they needed to be proactive around identifying and addressing them, as well as remain open to learning from others.

While most expressed confidence around taking up their substantive superintendent positions, one member expressed feeling less confident around assessing risk and prioritising tasks as they felt they lacked operational policing experience. Another suggested the programme should ensure direct entrants had around a two-month period shadowing the role they would be moved into, at the point of scheme completion, to ensure they were well prepared. Similarly, one interviewee said they only felt ready to take on the superintendent role they had been doing at the point of scheme completion – they did not feel they would be ready to step into any superintendent role.

In end of programme fieldwork with cohort 1 to 4 members, the following were raised as examples of where individuals would have liked more experience: accredited command training, neighbourhood policing, and public order training.

Several of the Direct Entry superintendents, as well as their interviewed line managers and coaches, said the recent frontline experience at different ranks, provided by the

'I think in many forces it is a real challenge when people are progressing through the familiar route up to superintendent to both gain and maintain the operational competencies that we receive in a compressed period of time over 18 months.'

Programme member

'Unlike anybody else on the senior leadership team, [s/he] has an absolute positional fix on how morale is on the ground floor, [s/he]'s built relationships in all ranks, [s/he] absolutely understands the culture of the [force].'

Line manager

'They're really good in terms of their knowledge and the things that they have to do as a superintendent, command, control and making authorisations. I'm very confident in their operational ability. I don't think they have gaps.'

Line manager

programme in-force 'rotations', was beneficial to their superintendent role. They said it made them more aware of current issues affecting the front line (than if they hadn't recently completed the programme) and gave them good networks among constable and sergeant ranks. Some also said that the intensity of the programme and their recent completion of College-delivered training and programme assessments was an advantage. Similar feedback was shared in evaluation survey responses from later cohorts.

4.2.4 Line manager and workplace coach perception evidence on operational competence

a) Three years post-scheme completion: In the three-year post-graduation interviews with five cohort 1 line managers²⁹ all viewed the direct entrant in their team as operationally competent as any other superintendent and several were considered exceptional (for example, because of a perceived impressive ability and approach around learning quickly, responding to complex problems and projects and leading high quality work). All of the line managers said the direct entrants had not required (and had not been given) any additional support to compensate for their limited years in the police service.

Few potential operational limitations were raised by line managers at this stage: one suggested their direct entrant was not as experienced at understanding political nuances when working at a strategic level with external agencies and another raised a limitation in connection with them not having had the opportunity to develop expertise in a specialist police role.

b) At the point of scheme completion: Interviewed cohort 1 and 2 line managers and workplace coaches (n=13), at the point of programme completion, were also generally positive about the operational readiness of their direct entrant. All responded positively when directly asked if their direct entrant was competent for superintendent rank when the programme ended – but with varying caveats. Six expressed very positive views – for example one said, in relation to their direct entrant, that 's/he is already a good superintendent. I think s/he'll be a very good one'. One line manager thought their direct entrant was 'way better than the vast majority of superintendents' they dealt with (in terms of their strategic grasp,

²⁹ Six out of eight cohort 1 members agreed to participate in the research and each nominated a line manager to also be interviewed – only five of these were then available for interview during the fieldwork period.

‘I had the feedback from that probationer, I had other constables and indeed a very long in-service inspector who said things along the lines, in terms of her/his operational competence, that they had total faith in her/his decision-making, that...they forgot that s/he was any different from somebody who had been in twenty years, they forgot that s/he was so new because they felt they trusted her/his decision-making and s/he thought about things in a way that they were comfortable with.’

Line manager

‘I thought [s/he] was operationally competent. But you know, it’s like when you pass your driving test. It doesn’t mean you can drive.’

‘... despite it not being [her/his] fault, what [s/he]’s not very good at is dissecting a problem and identifying what are the important bits and what are less important. In other words, stuff that... you really do on the basis of experience.’

‘When people voice concerns about competence, they are being a little unfair in that policing is complex; really complex and when you start reaching high levels of management within policing, you simply cannot know everything and therefore you ask questions, you build a team around you with the right experience, you have tactical advisers and we’re very comfortable with that.’

Line managers/workplace coaches

leadership approach and positive manner with people) and while they had always been positive about the scheme, they had been impressed by how operationally effective the direct entrant was so quickly. They also said others had commented very positively on the direct entrant’s operational competence:

Even line managers/workplace coaches who expressed very positive views about the readiness of their programme member at the point of scheme completion could still be of the view that it could take time for the direct entrants to become confident and able to operate fully independently in the role. Eight of the 13 interviewed line managers/workplace coaches were of the view that their programme member would need some form of ongoing support after they graduated (for example, for around six months and it could be from experienced colleagues in their team, through drawing on their networks for advice or some form of ongoing mentoring). Several interviewed line managers/workplace coaches said other superintendents could face similar challenges to direct entrants when taking up a new role – for example, if they moved from one specialist area to another – and would also need to draw on advice when needed. The line manager that had been most effusive about the competence of their programme member also questioned how autonomous and omniscient superintendents had to be, suggesting that senior leadership should be about team work and being adept at drawing on the knowledge and skills of others.

There were some specific reservations about the readiness of programme members, at the point of scheme completion, related to the relative lack of policing experience. Four line managers/workplace coaches felt (and in some cases strongly) that their direct entrant had been prepared for a particular role in their force (through their latest rotation experience) and they were less confident that the direct entrant would be ready for a very different superintendent level posting. In one case, a programme member was changing role and by consequence, the line manager suggested that the direct entrant’s probation period should be extended (to ensure they would still be supported and monitored in role). Some thought, similar to one direct entrant, that the limited operational experience of the programme members could make them slower and less effective at prioritising tasks and assessing risk – which, it was suggested, could have a detrimental impact on their confidence and credibility with peers.

‘You’ve not brought me over completely. But having said that if the selection process brings in candidates of [her/his] calibre then I think that actually, my kind of suspicion is slightly unfounded.’

Workplace coach

‘I’ve had such a great experience with [name removed] because s/he’s such an impressive cop and I’ve said this, s/he’s one of the best cops I have ever worked with because s/he is measured, s/he thinks, s/he’s supportive, s/he’s challenging, challenges me.’

‘Harking back to the other [talent management] programmes, I’ve not worked with all of them but I don’t see this as any different. There will be some absolute superstars, some are good, some indifferent and some not so good.’

‘That individual found themselves in probably one of the toughest jobs in the force and actually did exceptionally well in my opinion. And it was through watching them and seeing their very rapid development ... that I became a bit of an advocate of them as an individual and became much more open-minded about the programme.’

Line managers

‘It has brought some people in who are talented who wouldn’t have been in policing and it has helped recalibrate expectations for others who want to get to superintendent and what they might need to demonstrate to get there.’

Chief constable

c) Personal qualities/perceived calibre of programme members:

Evaluation feedback on the personal qualities and calibre of cohort 1 and 2 Direct Entry superintendents was typically very positive. Line managers and workplace coaches often reported positively on members’ quickness to learn, and intelligence and ability to get on well with colleagues. There were also comments on the energy and high levels of motivation the individual direct entrants brought to their role – sometimes, it was suggested, related to having undertaken a career change and being fresh to the police profession. No strongly negative feedback on the calibre of successful programme graduates was gathered through the evaluation fieldwork – at worst, a few coaches/line managers could describe them, essentially, as satisfactory. For example, one line manager did not think their programme member stood out from the ‘masses’ of other force leaders and another said there were plenty of bright, intelligent people in the police and their direct entrant was not unique in this respect.

Feedback in evaluation interviews included first and many second-hand accounts of individual officers and staff having their negative preconceptions of the programme overturned by meeting or working with a Direct Entry superintendent and seeing how competent and effective they were in role. This was, for example, the case for two out of the five line managers interviewed in the three-year post-graduation research (two were already positive and one remained ambivalent).

All seven chief constable/officer interviewees (at fieldwork end) thought the programmes had brought in very strong candidates. Three particularly praised the calibre of one or more of their programme members and acknowledged the scheme had proved capable of recruiting exceptional individuals. One chief officer, for example, described a scheme member from their force as having a vocation for policing. The individual had impressed colleagues and external partners with their pace, rigour and high-level understanding of issues. A second chief officer described their Direct Entry superintendents as bringing ‘serious skills’ from their previous careers. A third interviewee more generally described their Direct Entry superintendents as having brought more talent into that rank and role-modelling higher standards for more junior officers to aspire to.

Expectations around the calibre of recruits appear to have largely been met for the chief constable/officer interviewees – though one chief constable interviewee said that a direct entrant had been having difficulty adjusting to the operational nature of the superintendent

role. Three others indicated that they had expected more applicants and recruits to stand out as exceptional.

4.2.5 Perceptions of leadership/management approach and effectiveness

Programme members did not typically express any doubts around their leadership approach and skills. Many expressed a view, during the programme, that developing operational competence was where they needed to focus their efforts and that leadership and management skills were mostly transferable from their previous careers. There was a suggestion from more programme members that additional time with chief inspectors before completing the scheme would have been helpful, since this was the rank they would be directly managing as superintendents.

Direct Entry superintendents were frequently described in evaluation research (with programme members, line managers and workplace coaches) as having a noticeably different leadership style, compared to typical superintendents and other senior leaders in their force. The words that were used to describe it included consultative, collaborative, considered, less hierarchical and transformational in style.

All eight individuals (mostly chief inspectors) who responded to the three-year post-graduation survey on experiences of being managed by a direct entrant also described their direct entrant as leading in this way. Six out of the eight respondents had worked with the direct entrant for over two years, and the other two had been line managed by their direct entrant for over six months. All except one of the eight were entirely positive when asked to describe the direct entrant's leadership style and abilities. The views of other individuals managed by direct entrants (cohort 1 or other cohorts) have not been collected.

The less-hierarchical, collaborative approach to leadership was also typically described positively by line managers/workplace coaches. The style was said to make the direct entrants appear approachable and engaging and could also positively influence colleagues and partners (described more fully in [section 4.4.2a](#)).

Six out of the 13 interviewed line managers/workplace coaches at the point of programme completion (cohorts 1 and 2) did, however, raise a concern about the collaborative, consultative approach. They suggested that, while their direct entrants had well-developed 'soft' leadership

'I think people find me more open. This is not necessarily a Direct Entry thing, but having come from outside where there's not particularly that grade-ist, rankist based culture, anybody can come and talk to me. I won't send them away. People do give me feedback saying this is a positive thing.'

Programme member

'S/he's very collaborative. Always willing to have engaged conversations with people, always to recognise when s/he's wrong as well, that's pretty rare in policing.'

Line manager

'Particular emphasis and sincerity is placed on individual welfare needs...These character traits are of course evident amongst others but if I had to perhaps sum up any difference it would be that the Direct Entry superintendent is more enquiring and consultative with others than some – a good trait.'

Officer managed by a direct entrant

skills, they had not seen and were less confident around them taking a directive or command approach when needed (for example, in dealing with under-performance or discipline issues) or making quick-time, autonomous decisions. It was said by one line manager, for example, that their programme member had talked for too long in briefings, whereas officers wanted brevity and quick instructions.

Perceptions around not being sufficiently decisive and authoritative in decision making were typically linked to lack of operational experience. One line manager was of the view that the programme should have done more to help develop the direct entrants' confidence and resilience, so that they could feel more comfortable with making autonomous decisions. More commonly, it was suggested by several end of programme line manager/workplace coach interviewees that this confidence and ability would increase with time. The possible validity of this view is supported by the concern having been raised less frequently in the three-year post-graduation fieldwork (only one out of five line managers raised similar concerns in this fieldwork and only one out of eight respondents to the simultaneous survey to those managed by a direct entrant).

A further consideration is the debate around how helpful it is for police leaders to adopt a directive/command style with colleagues³⁰. As one interviewed programme member explained, they were conscious of pressure in force to use a directive mode of leadership at times, but they wanted to avoid it as they found taking a personable approach more effective. Similarly, one respondent to the survey for those managed by a direct entrant described how they had thought it unusual that their direct entrant had taken a sensitive and considered approach to dealing with a serious discipline issue. The direct entrant ensured that there were appropriate consequences for the individual, but the direct entrant was described as careful to understand the issues behind the behaviour. The survey respondent was of the view that other leaders in force could have avoided tackling the issue, due to the risk of negative repercussions for them or the organisation. By dealing with the matter sensitively and thoroughly, the direct entrant was said to have mitigated the risk.

'One of the things that we've worked on and we've highlighted and we're still working on now, is her/his ability to performance manage. So s/he can do the soft side, s/he can do all the really important engagement bit, that encouragement, s/he's less capable of doing hard performance management. It's been a struggle for her/him.'

Line manager

30 Campbell, I. and Kodz, J. 2011, 'What makes great police leadership: what research evidence can tell us about the effectiveness of different leadership styles, competencies and behaviours – a rapid evidence review', National Policing Improvement Agency, available online at whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/What%20Works%20in%20Leadership_development_REA.pdf

‘Some of the more traditional officers spend a little bit more time perhaps in a command control mode than I do. In [my previous career]... I probably spent one per cent of my time...in directive mode. The rest of your time you spend engaging with people, getting them to understand why you do something, getting that buy-in, taking time to explain it. Actually then people do stuff because they understand the core mission.’

Programme member

‘The considered approach to dealing with a serious discipline issue... The member was far more engaging with the [officer]...They focused on the end result rather than frustration with the [officer’s] behaviour. Ensuring all avenues of support were exhausted...’

Officer managed by a direct entrant

Three of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees (at fieldwork end) described their Direct Entry superintendents as having a more collaborative leadership style than typical in force. For example, one chief constable interviewee described a direct entrant as always consulting with subject matter experts (while making clear they were accountable), encouraging discussion and empowering people to ask questions, for example, if they weren’t clear about a requirement. The approach was described positively by all three interviewees. One said how it ‘brought out the best in others’. Another described how they wanted a range of leadership styles within the superintendent rank – indicating that they wouldn’t want them all to have a directive style.

One of the chief constable/officer interviewees thought a collaborative leadership style was partly a product of being a direct entrant – in the sense that members had to draw on expertise of colleagues when learning on the job. Two also said that the approach could be brought in from previous careers. One suggested it was particularly noticeable among those who had come from jobs (particularly in the private sector) where matrix management/project team approaches were used, while another linked the approach back to a direct entrant’s people-focused, prior work experience in the public sector.

4.3 Ongoing career progression

4.3.1 Overview

Drawing in talented leaders from outside policing, who had the potential to progress to chief officer ranks, was an aim of the programme and a focus of the selection and assessment methods for external scheme recruits. This section provides evidence of success in this area, in that members in early cohorts have typically been keen to progress and some have already succeeded, but it also presents evidence around perceived barriers to promotion.

Specifically, the section provides data on graduations and promotions to date (**subsection 4.3.2**) and perception evidence on members’ interest in and readiness for progression (**subsections 4.3.3** and **4.3.4**). The section also covers perception evidence on potential barriers to promotion (**subsection 4.3.5**).

4.3.2 Programme graduations and promotions

At the end of the evaluation fieldwork period (June 2019), the longest any Direct Entry programme members had been in substantive superintendent roles was three years (cohort 1 had graduated in May 2016). By this time, one Direct Entry superintendent from cohort 3 had passed the Senior Police National Assessment Centre (senior PNAC) and had been appointed as assistant chief constable in a force which had never previously employed a direct entrant. In addition, three others (one from cohort 1 and two from cohort 2) had been promoted to chief superintendent.

4.3.3 Interest in progression

In the three-year post-graduation interviews with five out of eight cohort 1 members, all except one had changed role (while remaining at superintendent rank) at least once since graduating. All of the interviewees remained motivated to reach chief officer ranks, but to varying degrees and with different timescales in mind. Three had already taken active steps towards getting promoted, although none of the interviewees had achieved this at the interview date (April 2019). One interviewee was highly ambitious to progress through the ranks and their expectations around timescales for achieving this had not been met. The individual felt their career had stalled, compared with the progress they could have been making in their previous, non-police career.

Most of the five cohort interviewees were looking at making lateral moves and gaining more experience at superintendent rank. Three of them described becoming less focused on rapid promotion, since they had become a substantive superintendent. They described enjoying their current roles and teams, and not wanting, at that time, to add to existing pressures around work-life balance.

4.3.4 Readiness for progression

Of the five line managers interviewed as part of the three-year post-graduation research, two were extremely positive about the readiness of their direct entrant to progress to the next rank and said they would want them as their successor.

Similarly, two were very confident that their direct entrant had attributes that would make them suitable for chief officer

‘They ... absolutely have the capacity and the capability to do it. Also, they’re quite sensible. They’re not rushing...I see absolutely no reason why Direct Entry superintendents can’t be chief officers.’

Line manager

rank. The three other interviewees felt their direct entrant had potential to be promoted to senior roles – not dissimilar to other effective superintendents.

Several line managers were supportive of their direct entrant not rushing for promotion and spending time developing skills, knowledge and experience at superintendent level. One emphasised that a senior police role was very people-focused – both in terms of managing the workforce and the nature of policing. They felt it could take time to adjust to this and develop appropriate skills, if different to prior work experience.

4.3.5 Perceived barriers to promotion:

The following issues were raised by evaluation participants around potential barriers to career progression for Direct Entry superintendents.

a) Promotion processes: Two of the five line managers, when interviewed three years post-graduation, felt that police promotion processes could be a potential barrier to career progression for Direct Entry superintendents. One suggested there was a potential for inadvertent biases in the process and another questioned the effectiveness of the promotion processes at identifying the most suitable leaders. Another respondent expressed complete confidence that programme members would get a fair chance to succeed.

b) Limited policing experience: Throughout the evaluation period, some interviewed programme members were of the view that superintendents (including Direct Entry superintendents) in smaller and rural forces could get more opportunity to engage in strategic level work and take on more varied responsibilities – which, it was thought, could help with their career development and progression. A lack of previous policing experience in specialist roles was also raised as a barrier by several line managers and programme member interviewees in the three-year follow-up fieldwork – with the suggestion that it could limit the number of promotion opportunities open to them.

c) Negative views of the scheme: While the interviews mainly drew out evidence that line managers were supportive of the direct entrants progressing (and two were said to have explicit chief officer support), two other officers expressed a concern that the unpopularity of the scheme in parts of their organisation could be a potential hindrance.

‘I think there’s jealousy; there’s vulnerability because you’ve got this cohort of people. They are very articulate, very academic...’

‘I am aware of some who are not supportive above my rank... Some people don’t have any dealing with them and they’re just going on rumour.’

‘I worry that we could lose some of her/his incredible talent because of our [promotion processes].’

Line managers

‘I actually think there should be a support network for the first five years [...] I think there’s a possibility to get stuck somewhere, and with some intervention from the College or someone, we can keep progressing.’

‘Sometimes it feels that we don’t have the control over our own careers that we should have, or we think we should have, and sometimes that’s hard to understand for us.’

Programme members

‘It feels to me like the programme is not very structured in terms of the experience it builds or it gives these officers beyond the first 18 months....If we’re going to continue with this programme, optimise its use, getting really great people into chief officer roles, it needs to be better managed.’

Line manager

d) Personal control over career choices: Programme members throughout all phases of the evaluation fieldwork commonly raised concerns over their level of personal control in relation to career choices. During the programme, many said they would have liked more guidance and say over their future roles in force and earlier consideration of their options, so they could start preparing and seeking out opportunities in-line with their interests. In the three-year follow-up interviews, one direct entrant described a frustration that in policing, officers applied for the next rank rather than a specific role when seeking promotion. Typically, the programme members had come from careers where there had been more personal choice around career next steps and the relative constraints in policing were raised as a barrier to their progression.

e) Post-programme development support: A few direct entrants and line manager/workplace coach interviewees suggested that there should be more ongoing career development support, for example, by the College, once the programme ended. There was also a recognition that such support could damage their credibility (by indicating that they might need more help than officers promoted through the traditional route). One programme member thought colleagues already incorrectly assumed that such support was given to direct entrants – hence, they thought, damage to their credibility was already being done.

4.4 Perceptions of members making a positive difference

4.4.1 Overview

It was an aim of the programme to attract individuals with new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing. This section presents perception evidence around success individual members have had in this respect – particularly in relation to force management and culture, as well as using pre-existing work skills. The section summarises perception evidence around how early programme members may have influenced positive change in their forces (**subsection 4.4.2**), and used prior work skills and knowledge on the programme and afterwards (**subsection 4.4.3**) as well as barriers and facilitators to this, finishing with evidence around staying different and retaining skills (**subsection 4.4.4**).

4.4.2 Perceptions of influencing change

a) Perceptions of influencing change through leadership/management style

When asked, towards the end of their programme, about what difference they hoped to make, the majority of cohort 1 and 2 programme members mentioned contributing to a more inclusive, empowering leadership style in force (see [section 4.2.5](#)). This could partly be due to an emphasis in College modules on adopting this style (see [Appendix 1, section A1.5](#), particularly ‘attitudes and behaviours’ learning objectives), but interviews and early focus groups with cohort 1 and 2 members indicates that this was the approach most were used to from their previous careers.

Interviewed programme members would often clarify that there were other leaders in their force with such an approach (members recognised that they were not unique in this respect) but they were conscious it was a minority style. By implication, their presence could be helping to shift leadership in force away from what members could perceive as a common tendency for hierarchical, transactional styles among force leaders. A couple of programme members indicated that chief officers in their force had moved away from such styles, but it could still be apparent among senior leaders. One suggested that this could be contributing to a sense of blame culture in junior ranks, despite chiefs trying to encourage an innovative mindset in force – hence adding to the case that the direct entrants’ more inspiring, motivational approach could have particular value at superintendent level.

‘Officers on the ground they don’t feel empowered, and I think there’s this real blame culture that they feel that if they were to make changes and somebody doesn’t agree with it, then they could get in a lot of trouble about that, and so there’s always this clash of what’s being said at the top which is great but then the reality on the ground...’

Programme member

As an illustration of the common management approach of the direct entrants, an interviewed line manager, at the point of scheme completion, described how their direct entrant had found the room where they briefed officers to be ‘cold, dark, uncomfortable’ and they thought it ‘set the tone for a poor briefing’. In response, the direct entrant had found an alternative ‘light, airy briefing room’ with ‘comfy chairs and just a different feel about it’. The line manager acknowledged that this was something that they and their peers would not have thought of doing and they considered it a positive change. In another, similar example, a direct entrant described how they secured funding to refurbish the common rooms in a station. Even while on the programme, they felt they had a duty, as a senior leader, to proactively take an interest in the wellbeing and working conditions of the workforce. This could be contrasted, for example,

'...we have meetings and the superintendent will come to brief us and it would be really aggressive and I don't think all superintendents are like that, but I think a lot are.... they just say things like, "Look we haven't got enough [name of missing item removed] and it's your fault because you put them in your office, so either sort this out or I'll be going through your lockers."... Imagine a teacher talking like that, you know, like an aggressive teacher. And then they say, "Any problems?" and no one will say anything.... There isn't an open communication line between the bottom and the top.'

'I'm the only person sitting in the SLT that's recently been through the ranks who actually can give a voice to the PCs. I think that's almost my duty now.'

Programme members

with a description by a programme member of a perceived aggressive style in a briefing session led by an already established superintendent in their force – where the superintendent threatened to go through more junior officers' lockers and no one said anything in response.

The direct entrants recognised that their experience of working across different ranks, while on rotation, had given them current, first-hand knowledge of frontline work. Having this, they felt able (even morally obligated) to suggest improvements with senior colleagues or initiate changes themselves. The rotations had also given them visibility and the chance to form working relationships with constables, sergeants and inspectors – contributing to the sense of the direct entrants being approachable and accessible.

Feedback from line managers and those managed by a direct entrant, three years post-graduation, was very positive around the impact of the common leadership style of the members. For example, four of the eight people line managed by a direct entrant, who responded to the three-year post-graduation survey, chose to use their direct entrant's leadership style as an example of how they were making a positive difference in force – one described the direct entrant as improving team performance by being 'collaborative and inspiring as opposed to dictatorial and task orientated' and another said that, as a result of the direct entrant 'genuinely and properly communicating with staff', officers were more engaged and willing to cooperate with a change programme. As well as being seen to actively consult and explain decisions, two said their line managers (both direct entrants) had a greater interest in welfare issues than they were used to and there was mention around sincerity when engaging with the workforce and interest in fairness.

Even during the programme, there is evidence that the leadership style of programme members could be influencing colleagues, including upwards. One line manager, in end of programme interviews, said their direct entrant had had a huge, positive impact on others they worked with, of all ranks and grades, including a comment from a member of their senior leadership team, that 'I come to work and find I want to be better, just because s/he's around'.

Such evaluation evidence suggests that the direct entrants' common approach to leadership was in-line with the principles of 'organisational justice', around ensuring fair and respectful treatment of the workforce and involvement in/explanation of decision making. In combination with other force leaders with similar styles, the

fieldwork evidence suggests some members could have been having the positive impacts that are associated with this model – primarily, improved employee organisational commitment, job satisfaction and reduction of counterproductive work behaviours such as withdrawal of effort³¹ – at least on those they worked closely with. Several direct entrants were described by interviewees, including line managers, as being actively sought out as mentors, including by individuals that had not worked with them – suggesting their reputation for having an empowering, positive working and leadership style had spread beyond their immediate teams.

b) Perceptions of influencing change through offering a different perspective and challenging norms

‘[...] we act as a catalyst for change and if I’m in a meeting, there are people who are more willing to suggest something that is out of the ordinary. My presence in the force gives people permission to be different.’

Programme member

‘I think [s/he] brought in some really, really different thinking. [S/He] looked at things from a completely different perspective.... [s/he] ... creates the ideas... Could we do something differently? What are they doing, perhaps, in other parts of the world, never mind across the region or nationally, and not even constraining it to the police service.’

Line manager

‘[They have] no problem with grabbing [the chief officer] and actually saying why don’t we consider this, so that’s a skill that they’ve got and a confidence that my peer group haven’t.’

Workplace coach

Direct entrants in evaluation fieldwork also commonly said they had a role to challenge norms, to ask ‘why’ and encourage others to do the same. This was apparent in all stages of the fieldwork (in-programme, end of programme and three years post-graduation) and was strongly supported by feedback from many of the interviewed line managers/ workplace coaches and surveyed individuals managed by direct entrants. The direct entrants were also commonly described as being more open to change and encouraging others to be the same, as well as being more willing to challenge upwards and to look outside of policing for inspiration and learning. One member (and a chief constable interviewee) described how the very presence of direct entrants in force could indicate that challenge and difference are welcome and hence induce others to make innovative suggestions.

Three-year post-graduation feedback from a sample of cohort 1 programme members, their line managers and people they managed provides further evidence of how they could encourage colleagues to think differently and in particular, become more enquiring. One line manager (a chief superintendent) was extremely effusive about the personal impact their direct entrant had had on their thinking and approach to work – saying they had been made a ‘better cop’ as a result. They explained that the programme member was always questioning and looking to consider issues deeply and thoroughly – which in turn, had kept the line manager ‘on their toes’. They said they were now reading academic papers for example, because they

31 Quinton, P., Myhill, A., Bradford, B., Fildes, A. and Porter, G. (2015) ‘Fair Cop 2: Organisational Justice, Behaviour and Ethical Policing: An interpretative evidence summary’, College of Policing, available online at: [whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf](https://www.whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/150317_Fair_cop%202_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)

'I suppose the people without the [outside] experience [it] gives them a greater licence to ask the why question which I think is healthy.'

'S/He is really challenging. They ask questions, they always say "so what?"... So I read papers, I do it because they are not going to accept just because I'm the boss... "you're a superintendent and I'm the chief, you do what you're told" but I've got professional pride that I want to understand what I'm talking about and they are far more challenging.'

Line managers

'the...[chief] police officer who coached me towards the end of the training period...s/he always says...that as much as s/he taught me about operational policing, I taught her/him about doing things differently.'

Programme member

'If I speak to staff they say, s/he is different, capable, competent and they really like her/him but s/he asks different questions – brings difference to thinking. There is a freshness and a challenge.'

Chief constable

knew the direct entrant would not simply accept their word for why they should do something. The line manager indicated that they had professional pride to rise up to the expectations of the direct entrant and emulate their professional curiosity and rigour around informed decision making. A programme member also described how their chief officer mentor had said they had benefited as much from their meetings as they expected the direct entrant had – by being challenged by their different perspectives.

All but one of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees (at fieldwork end) described Direct Entry superintendents in their force as challenging norms and encouraging others to be more enquiring (the exception was a chief constable who felt it was too early to perceive benefits). This was often linked with leadership style, particularly around being willing to ask questions and engage others in discussion. A couple of these interviewees also indicated that the people-centred approach of direct entrants could help them challenge in a constructive way. Three of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees described direct entrants in their force as bringing 'different' or 'fresh' perspectives – which one described as 'healthy' and 'lifting the atmosphere'. It was said the direct entrants could encourage more outward-looking thinking in the organisation. One chief said they had deliberately participated in the scheme as they wanted to 'ginger things up' – as in their force 'everyone knows everyone'.

While the interviewed chief constables/officers queried the success of the programme in terms of improving visible diversity, they expressed positive views around how it had supported diversity and inclusion in a wider sense. One described how the scheme had meant that, for the first time, their force was able to show it was actively looking for external talent at a senior officer level. Another said the scheme had 'challenged what people might have perceived as the old boys' network of promotion as we are taking people from completely outside'. Both of these chiefs were indicating that the scheme was changing perceptions of the senior ranks of policing – both internally and externally. It was making the senior ranks appear more open and showing that difference was valued at this level. One of the interviewed chief constables thought the scheme had, by consequence, 'changed people's views on what is possible' – indicating that the scheme may have reduced perceived barriers to career progression, among members of the existing workforce.

‘There was a sense on her/his part that we’re here to change the culture and there was a sense on my part that’s a little bit like the Titanic charging at an iceberg, you’re not going to win that one. Not on the scale that it’s currently being undertaken. But if the outcome is to put really talented people into important jobs and let them just deliver against the rank within which they exist, then I would say [the programme] absolutely ached it, but I don’t think that is the intention of the programme.’

‘I think because of the limitations of learning the role, the complexities of that role, the risks, there isn’t time to then get involved in changing the culture or whatever it is set out to do.’

‘[...] [s/he]’s not ruffling any feathers...quietly getting on with stuff but at the same time, [s/he]’s making a good impression.’

Line managers

‘What I was less prepared for, I think, is how many more years I will have to put in before I’m really able to influence the organisation.’

Programme member

c) Perceived barriers to influencing change

While the evidence from the three-year post-scheme completion fieldwork indicates that Direct Entry superintendents could positively influence others they worked with, participants could also raise strong barriers to them having wide influence on the workforce. Some suggested that they would need to reach senior roles and it was also said, with the small scale recruitment through the programme, aims to make a positive difference on force culture were not realistic.

There was a commonly expressed view in end of programme interviews (with programme members, as well as workplace coaches and line managers) that the direct entrants had limited opportunity to directly influence change while completing their training – given their workload and needing to learn the role of an operational superintendent. A couple also suggested that, when new to an organisation and still training, making a good impression could be more important than ‘ruffling feathers’. One chief constable interviewee emphasised the importance of direct entrants first gaining professional respect from colleagues, before they could successfully challenge existing ways of doing things.

Several programme members spoke about the resistance they had experienced within their force to getting involved with more strategic-level work and there was a suggestion that hierarchy and the rank structure was creating a barrier to them making a difference.

The two community projects, completed as part of their programme, were recognised by most programme members as a potential opportunity to influence change in force. One member said this could be enhanced by allowing the topics to be selected later in the programme, when the cohorts could be in a better position to identify valuable and influential themes. Several others suggested in evaluation feedback that the project work was a distraction when on the programme and queried how realistic it was for it to achieve real change.

4.4.3 Using pre-existing professional skills and knowledge

a) Examples of using pre-existing work skills and knowledge

The example presented above, in **section 4.4.2b**, around a direct entrant encouraging more informed decision making, related to one of the most common ways programme members could be

‘(S/He is) really keen to think more strategically than we often do. S/He tries not to get as bogged down in tactical stuff, and that’s really good because that’s all we do really. We get bogged down in tactical stuff.’

‘[S/He] thinks differently... [s/he] broke down some of the areas that [s/he] wanted to really delve into ...s/he brought a whole level of skill to that that we just didn’t have. And [s/he] produced some really good work and handled the whole issue really well...one of the benefits for me of having a direct entrant is that they bring with them things that you wouldn’t normally see in a police officer.’

Line manager/workplace coach

‘I also like testing things out, challenging the “It’s always been done this way.” Well let’s try and look at something else to do.’

‘I’m comfortable working in the partnership area, working where there’s political risk, media risk, it’s an environment that I’m used to... It has been very beneficial in doing what I’m doing now.’

‘I’m able to speak the same language as the stakeholders, I’m able to ask appropriately difficult questions about their own processes.’

Programme members

‘Their partnership expertise has been outstanding and has really been a strength for us.’

Line managers

viewed as using pre-existing work skills. It was commonly suggested the members brought well developed analytical, problem-solving skills with them from their previous careers, as well as a polished, professional approach to presenting the results. In end of programme interviews, two line managers and a workplace coach described three separate direct entrants taking a different approach to researching a problem or issue than would be typically seen in the service. They were said to have delved deeply into aspects of the issue and drawn on evidence to inform their findings – and had produced influential reports, presentations and recommendations.

An informed approach to decision making had also been encouraged in College modules. One direct entrant, in three-year post-graduation fieldwork, spoke specifically about encouraging a more evidence-based approach to problem-solving (something specifically promoted in College training) and said they were often querying what evaluation or research evidence lay behind existing practices.

In the three-year post-scheme completion interviews, the most commonly raised example of using prior skills (in interviews with programme members and line managers) was in relation to partnership working – with several direct entrants said to have drawn on their strong prior experience of such work, but also there was a sense that the direct entrants could act as a bridge between policing and non-police partner organisations (particularly in sectors that they had previously worked in or closely with). One direct entrant was said to have been mentoring colleagues around effective partnership working.

Other examples of using pre-existing skills were raised in the three-year post-scheme completion fieldwork, for example in relation to change management and financial/budget handling skills. One line manager described how their direct entrant had been extremely successful at securing substantial external funding for an important project. There was an overlap between the direct entrant’s prior work experience and the project – which, the line manager said, had made the direct entrant comfortable and confident in negotiations with stakeholders and extremely effective at building trust and relationships at every level. The line manager also explained that the project had given them the opportunity to appreciate how well skilled the direct entrant was in a range of areas, and how effective the individual was at transferring these skills to police work.

In earlier interviews too, at the point of graduation, line managers, workplace coaches and programme members had raised a similar mix

‘And s/he’s had to move up and down the scale of stakeholders from techies, through to government civil servants, chief officers, contractors and indeed the investing stakeholders themselves. And s/he’s done a fabulous job.’

Line manager

of examples (though typically, at a less high, strategic level as provided in later, three-year post-graduation interviews) with partnership working again being most common, but also workplace coaching, modernising training and trying out different force communication and engagement methods all being raised as ways direct entrants had used their pre-existing skills. Line managers and coaches that spoke of these initiatives were very impressed with the results and acknowledged that they had been achieved because of the different skills, knowledge and ways of thinking of the direct entrants.

Three of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees (at fieldwork end) gave compelling examples of how the prior work skills and knowledge of one or more of their Direct Entry superintendents had benefited their force. One scheme member was said to have played an important leadership role in an organisational change programme – which directly related to their previous work specialism. When the programme encountered serious difficulties, the direct entrant was said to have brought leaders together, powerfully explained the benefits of the programme and brought ‘an aura of calmness’. Another chief said a direct entrant had been prepared to take a considerable pay cut to join the scheme, as they were so committed to using their pre-existing skills and knowledge in a policing context. They said colleagues and external partners had been impressed by the direct entrant’s breadth of prior knowledge and high-level understanding of issues relevant to their police work.

b) Barriers and facilitators to using pre-existing work skills and knowledge

Programme members throughout the evaluation period and line managers, both at the point of graduation and three years later, discussed many perceived barriers and facilitators around the use of prior skills and knowledge.

Both before and after graduation, it was suggested by programme members and interviewed line managers/workplace coaches that opportunities were influenced by the roles the superintendents were in and whether they’d had the chance to get involved in strategic projects, where it was typically felt prior skills (such as in relation to organisation and people development, finance and business skills) could be most relevant and have most value. In the three years after graduation research, all direct entrants were able to give examples of working at a strategic level (for example, one line manager was extremely positive about how a direct entrant had radically

‘It’s a relatively strategic role, possibly less strategic than it might be in some... forces. The way [my force] tends to work, I am not sure superintendent is as strategic, but it is certainly a very broad coverage with a huge range of partners.’

Programme member

‘S/He went away and s/he systematically completely transformed how we deal with a particular form of vulnerability in [force area removed]...so we got a template for how we operate in this...arena for Police UK... S/He did that as well as her/his day job here and in one of the most challenging police environments in the UK.’

Line manager

‘What I’m doing now is a lot of process administration, and not enough strategy and long-term thinking.’

Programme member

transformed the force approach to a particular form of vulnerability – with implications for national practice) but some direct entrants still felt they were being under-used in this respect.

A number of line managers and workplace coaches queried whether operational superintendent roles were the best position for direct entry officers. Given their limited operational experience, there was a view that they may be better developing a specialism. Some also suggested that they may be more appropriate in strategic roles, where they could have more opportunity to influence force-wide change and use pre-existing skills. At the same time, interviewees recognised that these options raised issues around fairness and whether the direct entrants should be protected from high stakes and operational work, which may also be more likely to require working shifts.

All phases of fieldwork (three-year post-graduation research, in programme and point of graduation) with programme members produced examples of direct entrants sharing knowledge from their previous careers with colleagues. However, one of the three-year follow-up interviewees raised problems which, they felt, could affect anyone referring to a past career. They felt that if brought up too often there was a risk it could appear to be bragging, boring or sharing old, irrelevant knowledge.

Many programme members, across all cohorts, reported that they would have liked more opportunities to make use of their pre-existing skills and make a difference right from the beginning of their programmes. For a few interviewed cohort 1 and 2 members, there could be a strong sense of frustration around the lack of suitable opportunities in this respect – particularly if it had been a primary motivation for joining the scheme. There was also concern about becoming de-skilled and around losing their previous networks. A smaller number, however, explicitly said they solely wanted to focus on developing police skills and knowledge while on the programme.

Cohort 1 and 2 interview feedback suggested having opportunities to apply prior skills to police work, during the programme, often depended on the interest of their supervisor (some appeared more readily accepting of the transferability of prior skills than others) and also whether they had been invited to sit on the senior leadership team early on.

‘In order to use someone effectively, you need to know what their skills and abilities are. ... It’s like having a CV to say, this is what this individual’s done. These are the skills and abilities. This is what we think their leadership style looks like...a pen picture of an individual.’

Line manager

‘...the [force] will go and pay tens of thousands of pounds to an external consultant to give them that advice. Why not tap into what we’ve got internally?’

‘Other than (people management) I don’t think there’s been very much opportunity to use the skills unless I do something about it.’

Programme members

‘It could never really have been that the main benefit of the programme was to use skills from outside. There is in the superintendent group, people who have gone down very different paths in terms of their own personal learning, personal experiences, the areas they are interested in, and those experiences are all as equally valid as the things the Direct Entry brought in.’

Line manager

‘If you are a Direct Entry superintendent with a background in change management and you’re put into a change management role, then that defies the whole rationale for having us in the first place. It has to be about something different. It has to be about something that is potentially less tangible than that.’

Programme member

Interviewees offered suggestions for how better use could be made of pre-existing skills and knowledge. This included better sharing of information about the background experience of the direct entrants, putting them forward for force level and national projects (the College had, for example, drawn in direct entrants to support the 2015 Leadership Review work) and potentially having direct entrants able to move force to fill skills gaps where required (at least one direct entrant had taken up a secondment to another force, during the evaluation period, for this reason). There was also a view expressed by one direct entrant that the programme members needed to be proactive in looking for opportunities to use their experience and knowledge – and potentially, go ahead with their ideas even if not backed-up with support from other colleagues.

Some line managers, while impressed by the skills and prior knowledge the direct entrant brought with them, did not think they were completely lacking among the wider workforce. One was of the view that all superintendents brought a range of different skills and knowledge drawn from their varied careers – whether from working in the police service or outside. A couple of line managers and programme members said, in interview, that they would not want the members’ prior work experience to be a focus for the programme and their ongoing police careers – thinking it could limit their career choices and ways to have influence.

4.4.4 Staying different and retaining skills

Programme members in both cohorts 1 and 2 expressed concerns in early interviews (when they were new to their programme) about potentially losing their unique qualities (both in terms of their pre-existing skills, perspectives and leadership style). Later interviews, at the point of graduation, revealed more confidence that they had been able to retain these qualities and not fundamentally change their approach at work, but some concerns remained, and some members said support for retaining difference would be important.

In the three-year post-graduation follow-up interviews, there were mixed views from programme member participants and their line managers on the extent to which the direct entrants were and should still be considered different. Several line managers said that they and their colleagues could easily forget the direct entrant on their team had joined through that route. A couple suggested that they would be best not to draw too much attention to it, should they wish to progress through the

‘I’ve certainly had support and encouragement to maintain my different views, my different perspectives, so that’s positive... If it was different to that I think it would be very hard to maintain my own view, my own perspectives.’

‘I think there’s a defined window, it’s not very long, it’s probably a couple of years to be honest, whereby you have the opportunity to bring your new skills and experiences into the organisation and put them to use.... After that it’s very easy to be coloured with the same brush as the other superintendents.’

‘I guess we are on that balance between insiders coming in, and somebody internal being in, with the balance starting to shift, and that is a definite challenge of an 18-month programme.’

‘Coming up to three years substantive I don’t think I’m really seen as a Direct Entry any more. I felt more pressure at the start to be seen to be bringing something extra... as time goes on, more and more just another superintendent.’

‘I wrestle with whether I announce I’m a direct entrant at times and actually I should be championing it a bit more which will make the path easier for others... You can make life easier but you can also make life more difficult.’

‘Definitely still viewed as a Direct Entry person... Absolutely yes. And you couldn’t not. I don’t understand how anyone can take the perspective that we’re not seen that way.’

Programme members

ranks and be treated the same as any other superintendent. While programme members continued to express a strong interest in positively influencing force culture and making a difference to policing, none of the five interviewees expressed, at that stage, an enduring strong interest in promoting their Direct Entry status.

One direct entrant explained that trying to excel in a superintendent role, while continuing with home-life commitments, was demanding enough without the added challenge of meeting programme aims to make a positive difference. They also explained that, in their view, there were other superintendents who had been promoted through the traditional route, who were consciously quite different to their colleagues. Being ‘different’ wasn’t unique to being a direct entrant nor necessarily a barrier to being accepted by colleagues. For them, being accepted, while maintaining their difference, had been their most important goal and three years into their substantive superintendent position, they expressed confidence around having achieved both.

4.5 Learning to support future programme delivery

4.5.1 Overview

The aim of this section is to draw out learning around how the programme could be developed to better support the preparation of members for superintendent rank and ongoing career progression, including for individuals that might not have prior policing experience and, for other reasons, may find it particularly challenging. This section summarises members’ perceptions of the learning and development opportunities provided by the programme (4.5.2), including College-led and in-force learning, as well as the perceived pressures and challenges around completing the programme (4.5.3).

4.5.2 Members’ perceptions of the programme elements

a) College-led learning and development

Programme members have shared a lot of very positive feedback about College-led training and the College delivery of the scheme as a whole (in evaluation fieldwork, as well as in the separate standard programme monitoring by the

'I think there's accepted and there's different. So the bit that I strive for or struggled with is being accepted and the indication I get is that I'm part of the wider team and that's what I strive to achieve. I've got credibility and people will ask my opinion and they won't just discard it. I've got, being different actually, it doesn't matter, as long as you're accepted, if that makes sense. Even within the superintending cadre in [current force name removed] there are a number of others that were probably self-defined as different, in terms of their approach, their style. So I don't think it's a bad thing to be different.'

'In terms of the College, they were really fantastic [...] I appreciate how hard they've worked to put things together to interact with forces, to work on feedback... I see so many of the things we've suggested going through to year 3 so while sometimes it was frustrating for us, actually they've been really great.'

'...the programme... It's reliant on, you know, a lot of cops to come and give courses. It does raise the question in the modern world, are those folks always going to deliver consistent quality or influential teaching. I think not.'

'The method of delivery has sometimes felt as if a traditional method of training is being used for a non traditional course – perhaps a new approach is needed?'

'I was doing research projects and presentations and exam revision and completing a work-based assessment which felt... like jumping through hoops fulfilling an internal requirement rather than focusing on doing the job as such. I feel it held me back from doing the role as opposed to prepared me for it.'

Programme members

College). Where there were criticisms, early cohorts tended to caveat them with an appreciation that the scheme was new and continuing to evolve. Cohort 1 and 2 interviewees noted the challenges around catering for various learning styles in a structured programme – most felt the College had tried to accommodate these, but there was a view that it would be impossible to meet all needs. Several individuals had wanted the programme to be aimed at a higher educational level and be more akin to a university delivered course.³²

The valuing difference module was particularly praised in content feedback – partly as it fitted with the programme aim to encourage diversity of perspective. There was a common suggestion among members that the programme could be adapted to more robustly promote the key programme aim to bring individuals that could make a positive difference in policing. To this end, there was a suggestion that centrally delivered inputs could be more innovative and rely less heavily on seconded and retired officers.

The value of compulsory additional elements of the programme beyond the College modules and in-force rotations, particularly the Action Research Projects (see **Appendix A1.7**), was questioned by some members from all cohorts. Respondents could be of the view that they took time away from learning on the job and created extra workload pressures, for little if any developmental benefit. Some also questioned the value of having to rote learn for the Knowledge Based Examination. A suggestion was made that the deadlines for projects and work-based assessment could have been brought forward, to earlier in the programme, so that the time spent on the superintendent rotation could have solely been spent on achieving rank-specific experience, while with a mentor.

The seven respondents to the first survey to cohort 4 and 5 members almost unanimously disagreed that 'the programme struck a good balance between assessment and development' (six out seven, and four of these disagreed strongly) and the open text responses to the question reveal the preference was for less assessment.

³² Since 2015, the programme has been accredited by Teesside University and completion leads to a level seven qualification awarded by the institution, but the programme is not delivered by them.

b) In-force learning

All interviewed direct entrants described how important the rotations at each rank was to their development. This was the way they said they mostly learnt about the operational side of policing (since the College inputs deliberately had a focus on leadership development and developing strategic awareness and understanding – see **Appendix A1.6**). Having frontline operational experience was also commonly described by members as important to their credibility. As mentioned in **sections 4.2.3** and **4.4.2**, they had also valued working as part of the team, getting to know individual officers and getting a first-hand insight into issues affecting the front line. A small number suggested the rotations could be shortened.

Programme member interviewees could be conscious of a lack of consistency between the in-force experiences of programme members. On the one hand, one early cohort member expressed a frustration around having been largely confined to response-related roles, whereas another had been able to get an insight into the work of a wide range of teams and units. There was a recognition that there was a fine balancing act between the College being prescriptive about in-force programme requirements and allowing programme members and forces the opportunity to tailor the rotations to suit the specific circumstances in the force and the interests of the individuals.

A preference for more clarity about the programme requirements was expressed by cohort 4 and 5 survey respondents, after they had completed their first College module and constable rotation. Seven out of 10 cohort members responded to the survey and presented mixed views on how well informed they felt about the programme, as well as an ongoing perception (also expressed by some cohort 1 and 2 members) that communications between forces and the College needed to improve.

Table 7: Direct Entry Superintendent programme evaluation first survey responses, cohorts 4 and 5 combined (1st extract)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements	Agree	Neither	Disagree
The College has kept me well informed about the programme.	3	2	2 (1 strongly)
My force has kept me well informed about the programme.	2 (1 strongly)	1	4 (1 strongly)
There is good communication between the force and the College.		3	4 (1 strongly)

Feedback from programme members, for all cohorts, indicates that effective support for programme members, while on rotation, was important to their development; this was in terms of being suitably mentored, being in a generally supportive environment conducive to learning and in terms of having a force that was actively engaged with the programme, ensuring direct entrants got the development opportunities that would best prepare them for superintendent rank and beyond. An effective Single Point of Contact (SPOC) could be crucial in relation to this last element, since they had a role to liaise with the College about programme requirements and effectively smooth the path for programme members as they moved roles. Without this type of support, in-force experiences could be reported as much more challenging.

In the early years, when the programme was first being set up, the support of College staff including when the officers were on rotation, could be considered extremely helpful. Later cohort members also reported favourably on College support during on-site modules, but they felt the College was detached from them when in force. Sustaining the level of College attention for individual programme members, as new cohorts joined and new schemes started, would have become more challenging – perhaps increasing the importance of adequate in-force support being made available and at the least, ensuring the National Minimum Requirements set by the College for member support during the programme were met (see **Appendix A1.4** and **A1.8**).

‘I’ve had brilliant support. My PC tutors are brilliant, I’ve got a mentor who’s...excellent as well. My [senior force leader] is very supportive of the scheme.... I think I’m hugely fortunate for that, because I don’t think everyone’s got that.’

‘The College gives us so much attention.... I feel like we’re getting so much attention, so much ability to do things, if we make a request, it’s taken seriously and people move a lot of things to make things happen for us. So it is fantastic from that point of view.’

‘The thing that has been most enjoyable is the welcome, particularly a PC to inspector level that we have received in our forces.’

Programme members

Programme members said they drew support from various forms of in-force support and many interview participants (cohorts 1 and 2) spoke highly of their mentors and the support they had received from their workplace coaches/tutors during their rotations, their managers and other leaders in force. They also, typically, had very positive experiences with the individuals they shadowed and worked with while on rotation through the ranks. One cohort 1 member in particular, described the warm welcome they had received from police constables and inspector-level colleagues as their best early experience on the programme. All of these forms of support were considered extremely helpful.

Members emphasised the value of having an open and approachable manner to ensure they did not alienate colleagues when in force and on rotation. Two interviewees (in cohorts 1 and 2) queried the merit of wearing superintendent pips while on rotation through the ranks. They felt that it put them in a difficult position, whereby they were

needing to learn from constables, sergeants and inspectors on rotation, but they also needed to gain their respect and develop their credibility as superintendents.

Similarly, in the survey to cohorts 4 and 5, just before they started their sergeant rotation (completed by seven out of 10 cohort members), respondents were typically strongly positive in relation to line manager and tutor support. Three out of seven, however, disagreed that they had a helpful mentor to approach for advice, indicating that mentoring support for programme members was inconsistent.

Another finding from this survey was that in all but one case, senior leaders in the respondents' forces were considered approachable and most thought their forces were actively engaged in the programme. Interviews with cohort 1 and 2 members had given an insight into how important these two features could be. Several members, for example, had reported not being properly introduced to their chief officer team when they first joined the force and some felt their role in the organisation had not been well communicated, especially in terms of their rotations. This could be seen as a negative start to the programme and unhelpful in terms of securing support from colleagues. Several members had indicated that having the support of chief officers could help with their credibility and with acceptance of the programme.

Table 8: Direct Entry Superintendent programme evaluation first survey responses, cohorts 4 and 5 combined (2nd extract)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements	Agree	Neither	Disagree
I feel confident to express my personal views on work-related matters to my line manager.	6 (all strongly)	1	
I feel able to openly discuss my development needs with my line manager.	6 (5 strongly)	1	
I feel able to openly discuss my development needs with my tutor.	6 (all strongly)	1	
My programme mentor is a helpful source of advice.	3 (1 strongly)	1	3 (2 strongly)
I feel confident I have the support of my line manager.	6 (5 strongly)	1	

I feel confident I have people in the College of Policing I can approach for support or advice.	4	2	1 (strongly)
The senior leaders in my force are approachable.	6 (all strongly)	1	
My force is actively engaged in the Direct Entry programme.	5 (3 strongly)	2	

Three of the seven chief constable/officer interviewees raised the importance of supporting programme members. One, for example, was explicit that forces had to put effort in to get a good 'return on investment'. This chief constable had taken time to meet with their direct entrants and had personally made sure they had appropriate mentors and opportunities. Another described championing a direct entrant – making sure that their achievements were well publicised. This direct entrant always had access to the chief officer team for advice and to share ideas. Another chief officer discussed the difficulty around maintaining bespoke talent management-type support and contact with the members, both during and after the programme, but also how important this was for the force and the individuals (in terms of getting the best from them).

4.5.3 Programme pressures and wellbeing

For most Direct Entry superintendents participating in evaluation fieldwork, the greatest reported pressure seemed to have been around the volume of work while on the programme, rather than the challenging nature of individual elements of it. Members in interviews explained that they had expected a testing programme, but the intensity of the workload and assessments was more than some said they could have anticipated. One interviewee, for example, early on in their programme, described how the 'volume of juggling' was their biggest challenge, including 'revision for the exam, management of two projects, continuation of work-based assessment, learning a job and actually doing a job as well'.

Final interviews and surveys with programme members revealed a variation between members' views on the optimal length of the programme, with some thinking 18 months was exactly right, and some even suggesting shorter (by reducing the length of rotations), whereas some would have preferred it was lengthened, for example, to make it two years. The divergence of views may have, in part, related to the personal circumstances of the programme members. One member said that they were aware of others who were being supported by their partners so they could fully concentrate on the programme for 18 months. For those with caring responsibilities who were not in this situation, completing the

programme within that timescale could be described as particularly challenging. There was a view that there needed to be more flexibility to accommodate individual needs.

Other pressures were associated with the Direct Entry label. Being conscious of negative preconceptions of the programme – at all ranks and grades – along with awareness of wider interest in the scheme, including that reported in mainstream and social media, could be a challenge for programme members. It was raised as a concern by four out of the eight cohort 1 members in early interviews and was discussed at length in their initial focus group.

Examples of overt hostility by colleagues were very rarely mentioned. Two programme members in first interviews (cohorts 1 and 2) described incidents whereby officers in more junior ranks were openly dismissive of them when they realised they were Direct Entry superintendents – the direct entrants had taken this in their stride, but were conscious it could be indicative of how other colleagues felt. In general, there was more concern about the potential concealed hostility of peers and more senior colleagues, than officers in more junior ranks (who typically were described as very welcoming). One cohort 1 member described feeling under constant scrutiny, which, they said, could be psychologically challenging. They particularly linked this with concerns about peers and suggested that, while the situation was worse for direct entrants, competition for promotion could create a sense of ‘sharks circling’ in any hierarchical organisation.

The focus group with cohort 2, when they joined the programme, brought up the controversy surrounding the programme, but not to the same extent as cohort 1, suggesting that, as the first to join the scheme, they may have faced unique pressures. Concerns about dislike of the scheme did not completely go away, however. In later interviews with cohort 1 and 2 members (at the point of programme completion and in the three years later research with five cohort 1 members) it typically manifested as unease as to whether dislike of the scheme within senior roles could undermine promotion prospects.

In terms of acceptance in force, two chiefs said how important it was for Direct Entry superintendents’ salaries to be paid for by the College/Home Office while on the programme. This could reduce concerns among the workforce that they had taken away a promotion opportunity. One chief described how internal reactions

'I did have a chief inspector come and say this wasn't fair but being able to say no one has lost a job over this was really important and to be able to say to the organisation, he hasn't taken anyone else's job as this is the perception.'

Chief constable

'...this bloke said "hello Guv how are you doing?" ... when he said where do you come from and I said "well I'm not going to lie to you I'm actually a Direct Entry superintendent," and his tone changed, his demeanour changed and he stopped talking to me. Now, if I had just been a superintendent which I was two minutes before he asked me...Then we would have got on absolutely fine.'

'The main challenge I found was adapting to the shock of dealing with extreme poverty, violence and neglect in the community. Coming from outside of a public service life, I did feel impacted in an emotional way by this... I did not feel prepared for this but am coping with it better now. I think many police officers go through this and I am in a better position to support new probationers and officers with welfare challenges as a result I think.'

'Obviously coming in at the start it wasn't entirely clear how we were going to be received and if we were to just look at Twitter or just Police Oracle, or wherever, there was quite a bit of hostility or at least scepticism to the scheme, so I think the most enjoyable thing has been the reception we received, whether that be support from the College or forces, or wherever.'

Programme members

to the programme had changed with time. The chief explained that at first, they had avoided communicating too much about the scheme with the wider organisation as there was always such a strong, negative response. However, after the first direct entrant graduated they found 'all who had been involved wanted to be at the ceremony'. One chief said they had not been aware of negative reactions to the scheme in force – on the contrary, they had been impressed by 'the open and welcoming nature of the scheme to those involved'. They thought this would continue while only low numbers were being recruited through the programme. Another agreed with this sentiment, saying 'There is a place for the right number and right calibre of people'.

One interviewed programme member described witnessing a tragic incident and how this had affected them psychologically. Another described the emotional impact of being involved in police work more generally. They understood any new officer would need to adjust to this and there was a suggestion that the programme could include an input to help prepare direct entrants for the distressing situations they might (or were likely) to see and be involved in. Another programme member described how, in their view, their force had put them in situations that were too challenging, too soon. They understood that this had been deliberate, to support their development, but they would have preferred to have had more opportunity to develop skills for quick-time decision making in high risk situations in a safe environment first.

Another difficulty, which came up much more frequently, was around adjusting to force culture and working practices. Hierarchy was raised a lot and some expressed shock at how ingrained they perceived it to be in force. They also needed to adjust to a loss of personal autonomy over career decisions and many described how they did not feel they had been properly recognised as professional adults with strong work backgrounds while they were on the programme. A few described a sense of frustration that there didn't seem to be sufficient recognition that all of the programme members had taken a significant risk by leaving their careers and joining the scheme.

‘Do not underestimate the personal life impact of that 18 months. You don’t go into this lightly, thinking, I’ll change my job and be a superintendent for a bit. It is a massive personal investment... Be prepared to be really tested.’

‘...the cultural shift can’t be underestimated and I think that appreciation that it’s not just learning of the law and learning about best practice, it’s learning a whole new culture and operating in a completely new environment, often coming at things from very, very different perspectives.’

Programme members

‘Some of [her/his] workload was exceptional, and [s/he] was always in work... I don’t think that two or three more weeks at each rank would have harmed [her/him] in any way, and it might have made just a little bit of a difference around trying to manage that work-life balance.’

Workplace coach

Another common source of potential stress while on the programme and from the point of accepting a place, was in relation to programme and in-force administration and organisation. An example included a long delay in getting a contract of employment from their force, with it arriving a long time after a programme member had resigned from their previous job. Delays in getting IT equipment was mentioned, along with a lack of clarity around the requirements of the programme.

5 Conclusion

The five-year evaluation report has drawn together evidence that reveals the concept of Direct Entry can work – individuals from outside policing can be prepared for superintendent rank within 18 months and made ready for the role. It also indicates that these individuals have to be highly motivated, resilient, quick to learn and effective at gaining support and strong working relationships with colleagues since they rely on them to learn their roles in force. The low drop-out rate from the programme (four out of 33 members, as of June 2019) indicates that the College selection process did as intended – it identified talented applicants, with the experience and potential to perform at superintendent rank – and (as many respondents have indicated) strong potential to progress. As of June 2019, one member had secured promotion to assistant chief constable rank – within only one year of graduating from the programme, demonstrating the ability of the programme to draw in future chief officers from outside policing.

The evaluation has presented examples of individuals making a difference in force, including during the programme, but even more so in the three years post-graduation follow-up work. These extra interviews and surveys with cohort 1 members and colleagues demonstrated that, even after nearly five years in the service, programme members can remain committed to the programme's aim to use the differences they bring to positively support the continuous improvement of policing.

The officers involved in the follow-up work are seen as challenging norms and looking to innovate, and most commonly, exhibiting a style of leadership which is increasingly being encouraged in forces, which seeks to motivate, empower and collaborate with those who are being led rather than reinforce control and hierarchies. This is the style that fits with the Policing Vision 2025 report and the aspirations around making the workforce more capable of responding to future and complex needs. It also fits with the principles of 'organisational justice' and the well-evidenced outcomes around organisational commitment, when individuals are involved in decision making and treated fairly and respectfully.³³

Programme members have also brought a range of highly developed and valuable skills from their previous careers – and while the evidence suggests that participating forces have, to some extent, benefited from this – the findings also indicate that more could be done to realise this benefit.

Further follow-up research with cohort graduates, when they are further into their careers, could help address the return on investment question more insightfully. It could, for example, explore what proportion have stayed in policing, whether and how they have moved through the ranks and what difference they are thought to be making. Even then, it is unlikely that a robust approach to

³³ Myhill, A. and Bradford, B. (2013) 'Overcoming cop culture? Organizational justice and police officers' attitudes toward the public', *Policing: An International Journal*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 338-356.

measuring 'return on investment' would be possible. Unavoidable constraints on the evaluation approach were described in **section 3.3** and **Appendix 3**, and similar would apply to attempting detailed cost benefit analysis in the future.

A lot of the value of the Direct Entry Superintendent programme to date has been the learning that can be drawn from it. The scheme was developed rapidly and has so far only been delivered on a relatively small scale. As of June 2019, only 33 individuals had started a Direct Entry Superintendent programme. In effect, it has been a relatively small launch of a radically new recruitment and talent development scheme, that has drawn out extensive and invaluable learning around what can work well and what improvements could be made to it or future, similar initiatives. A scheme that allowed individuals to join policing at senior leader, superintendent rank had never been tried before in England and Wales and there was a strong interest to see whether it could be safely done and whether it could bring wider benefits. The Direct Entry Superintendent programme evaluation also has overlap with learning from the Direct Entry Inspector and Fast Track Inspector evaluations. Together, they provide useful observations and learning around new methods for recruiting and developing talented future leaders for the service.

Considering how radically new the programme was and how quickly it was developed, the fact that 25 out of 29 programme members (cohorts 1 to 4) successfully completed the scheme and became substantive in post is to be commended. Feedback from all programme members has enabled improvements to be made to the programme, but essentially its basic format has been shown as workable.

As the evaluation has uncovered there is still much to learn and try out. More could be done to attract and successfully recruit applicants from more diverse backgrounds and ensure the programme is developed to better suit individual needs and interests. Programme members, to date, have come from varied work backgrounds, with varied police-relevant experience and with different career interests, home-life commitments and learning preferences.

It is a challenging programme and ensuring individuals have the best chance to succeed, while protecting their wellbeing and making the most of the different qualities they bring, requires the 'national minimum requirements' to be met and ideally exceeded, in terms of force support. While cohort numbers are low, and direct entrants are spread thinly across participating forces, chief officer level championing for the programme may be particularly important.

All members who have participated in the Direct Entry Superintendent scheme to date were career changers and took a considerable risk joining a new and controversial programme. Their endeavours and those of their colleagues, the College, and others involved in supporting the programme, have created a valuable legacy for the service.

Appendix 1: Programme details

A1.1 Overview

The Direct Entry Superintendent programme has not fundamentally altered since it first launched in 2014, but improvements have been made throughout. The following section gives an overview of all programme elements, including of programme marketing (**section A1.2**), recruitment and selection (**A1.3**), governance (**A1.4**), programme content and structure (**A1.5**), learning objectives (**A1.6**), assessment (**A1.7**) and support for members (**A1.8**) – and describes relevant changes that have been implemented during the last five years.

A1.2 Marketing and attraction

Annual recruitment rounds have started with a period of marketing to promote the schemes, originally led by forces for the Direct Entry programmes (with varying regional/local support). The College has delivered a centralised national campaign in recent years and forces have continued to promote the schemes locally through their websites, local and regional PR and social media and regional events.

In order to streamline the College marketing and recruitment offer for the Direct Entry programmes, the College developed a stand-alone microsite called 'LeadBeyond' for the Direct Entry programmes. The microsite was redesigned in 2018 to make it more interactive and engaging for potential applicants. The LeadBeyond microsite was also linked on social media with a Twitter and Facebook account. Both social media accounts were launched in 2018 and used to promote awareness of the programme and direct those interested to the LeadBeyond microsite.

A number of positive action initiatives have been incorporated into the marketing and attraction campaigns throughout the programme to attract a diverse range of applicants, especially those from under-represented groups. These have included: in 2019 gathering expressions of interest with demographic data (with appropriate permissions from applicants) to help forces deliver positive action to those applying; and running 30 virtual meet and engage events (reaching 1,250 people) focusing on providing information on the programme, the role and providing role models for the programme. The College has also provided workshops for positive action SPOCs in force, to upskill them on the Direct Entry programme and recruitment campaign.

Campaign messaging

The communications strategy for the Direct Entry programme recruitment has focused on different messaging over the years to attract suitable candidates. The marketing messages and literature have also been reviewed to ensure they are in line with the positive action initiatives. For the 2019 campaign, the focus

was on the changing nature of the police reflecting the changes in the world in which we live, and reflecting these differences in the workforce, in terms of skillsets and perspectives in the Direct Entry programme. The campaign was designed to attract, inspire and drive potential applicants to the campaign microsite for more information.

A key learning point from previous campaigns was that a strong motivating factor for joining Direct Entry programmes was to make a difference and impact positively on people's lives and the community. This was incorporated into the 2019 messaging by suggesting how skills gained in a civilian role could be used to help and give something back while providing an exciting and rewarding career in the police.

External advertising

The College has run external adverts in various print and online media outlets for the previous years' Direct Entry campaigns. For the 2019 campaign, the following adverts and activities were run by the College:

- Targeted marketing based on specific job titles and recorded skillsets were run on LinkedIn, a professional networking digital platform. The platform allows you to define specific job titles and the skills individuals have listed on their profiles and then targets the marketing material at those who match what is required for the Direct Entry programmes.
- The campaign was launched with an advertisement in the METRO newspaper which appeared in all regional publications across the UK on the launch day. The decision to launch with the METRO on application window opening day was made to reach a new audience and as wide a number of professionals who commute on the rail/tube on day one as possible.
- A radio streaming pilot was co-bought (with a force) as part of a focus on targeted recruitment for applicants from under-represented groups. This is the first time radio adverts have been run.

Events

For the 2019 positive action campaign, the College ran and promoted nine live 'meet the police' events in various locations around the country. The events were advertised via the LeadBeyond microsite and the College website Direct Entry pages. Each event was an opportunity for prospective applicants to obtain an overview of the process and the programmes. A presentation was given about the programmes, followed by personal insight from serving officers and Direct Entry programme members on the programme, training and the job role. Attendees also had the chance to ask questions and network with officers. The events were

advertised via email communications, the LeadBeyond microsite and social media channels in addition to the College website.

A1.3 Recruitment and selection

The application process has varied slightly each year but has always involved the following stages:

- Online application form, including competency-based questions suitable for the rank and application sift.
- National assessment centre, based on the following criteria:
 - The ability to perform competently in the rank of superintendent following an 18-month development programme.
 - The potential and motivation to reach the chief officer ranks during their service.
 - The ability to bring new ways of thinking and different perspectives into the police service and to effectively influence the way that policing operates.
- Final force selection, based on local workforce requirements.

Positive action initiatives were run prior to the assessment centre and included briefings held to ensure candidates had all the information they needed and the opportunity to ask any questions. The College also worked with forces to provide candidates with ongoing support (including mentors) ahead of each stage of the recruitment process.

As referred to in **section 4.1.3**, the lower success rate of applicants from black and minority ethnic backgrounds was monitored throughout the evaluation period. Over the years, various changes in the recruitment and selection process have been introduced and monitored with the intention of continually improving and learning from experience.

Following the 2016 round of recruitment, the assessment process was brought in to the College, to ensure that all parts of the process were conducted according to established and emerging best practice within the field of selection and assessment. Application forms were blind, double marked, and assessors were fully trained including on benchmarking assessment standards. The entire process was quality assured. Guidance on the application process, including on how to complete competency-based application forms was also refreshed.

After the 2018 round of recruitment (and particularly in response to the Direct Entry Inspector programme recruitment figures) it was decided that forces should conduct the application and sifting stages. It was hoped that, with supporting guidance from the College, the closer involvement of forces with their candidates could positively impact on BME pass rates. From this point, forces could also bypass a previously mandatory telephone/Skype interview stage, hence allowing successful applicants in the initial application scoring/sift stage to progress directly to the national assessment centre.

Despite the measures described above, lower success rates for applicants with black and minority ethnic backgrounds continued in recent recruitment rounds (cohorts 4 and 5). The issue continues to be monitored and the possible reasons for differentials explored. In 2018/19, the College commissioned independent reviews of the Direct Entry Inspector process (which follows the same basic structure as the Direct Entry Superintendent process), looking into the application and sifting process and the assessment centre, by a specialist consultancy with expertise in diversity and assessment. Although some suggestions for minor improvements were made, the reviewers did not find any issues or concerns with the assessment process that would explain the differentials in outcomes for some under-represented groups. On the contrary, the assessment centre was deemed to be robust, fair and professional.

The College has, most recently, invested in refreshing its assessor bank to increase the diversity of those conducting the assessments. This work is ongoing and results will be monitored.

Internal research conducted by the College on the application stages for the Direct Entry Inspector 2018 round of recruitment suggested that candidates from black and minority ethnic backgrounds were slightly less likely to provide evidence that they had the right level of experience in their application forms. It is possible that the Direct Entry attraction campaigns have not been reaching or attracting black and minority ethnic candidates with the right skills and experience, or that some applicants with these backgrounds are not sufficiently demonstrating their skills – perhaps due to unfamiliarity with policing or recruitment processes of this type. Ongoing work is taking place to ensure that the Direct Entry programmes attract a diverse cohort of individuals with sufficient skills and experience. Further positive action initiatives are also being explored.

A1.4 Governance, roles and responsibilities

A Consolidated Governance Board (currently named a Professional Reference Group) has managed the Fast Track and Direct Entry programmes since their launch. It is chaired by a chief police officer, in their capacity as representing the Workforce Coordination Committee of the National Police Chiefs' Council

(NPCC). Members include relevant College staff and representatives from stakeholder organisations, including the Home Office, Police Federation and Police Superintendents' Association.

Both the College and participating forces have been required to have a programme lead (in the case of forces, from the chief officer team/executive level) as well as a SPOC for the programme. The force lead has overall responsibility for ensuring the national minimum standards for delivery of the programme in force (as set by the College) are met, while the force SPOC manages the implementation and delivery and ensures that the end-to-end quality assurance of programme requirements is communicated to all relevant in-force stakeholders (including programme members, line managers, trainers, assessors, mentors, workplace coaches and local staff associations).

A1.5 Core learning objectives

The learning outcomes for the 18-month programme were, from the outset, designed to reflect the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that a Direct Entry superintendent would require in order to operate independently as a highly competent, uniformed superintendent in a wide range of deployments. They also address the wider programme aims to support the continuous development of policing. The following list of core learning objectives has been taken from the 2015 programme handbook.

Knowledge and Understanding

- A systematic knowledge and understanding of the broad policing and public policy challenges and contending perspectives, discourses and conceptual debates within policing, law enforcement and criminal justice
- a detailed knowledge and understanding of strategic leadership and management theory within a policing context
- a critical awareness of new insights and an evolving, evidence-based approach to policing to inform future professional practice within policing
- a comprehensive knowledge of the regulations, procedures and legislation relevant to the rank of uniformed police superintendent.

Skills application

- communicate effectively and persuasively to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, both verbally and in writing (including clarity of argument, capacity to analyse, and critical interpretation of information)

- plan, lead and execute complex projects requiring cross-disciplinary communications, partnership working and high-level resource management skills
- critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship (from a broad range of disciplines) to inform decisions and to develop and advance the boundaries of professional policing knowledge 13
- utilise established techniques of research, enquiry and evaluation to create and support evidence-based policing
- apply the regulations, procedures and legislation relevant to the rank of uniformed police superintendent sensitively in complex, unpredictable and diverse situations.

Attitudes and behaviours

- have the personal qualities and attributes required to lead a modern, values-based professional police service such as high ethical standards, professionalism, integrity, sound moral judgement, emotional intelligence, initiative and personal resilience
- have a self-awareness of their leadership style and implement effective leadership strategies to create a motivated, empowered and high-performing workforce
- consistently assess and evaluate the key ethical considerations underpinning policy formulation and strategic decision-making in policing
- possess an independent learning ability and a commitment to continuing professional development.

A1.6 Programme delivery and content

The programme follows a core curriculum set by the College. Around 30 per cent is delivered by the College as five residential modules. These are designed to help prepare programme members for their rotation experience at the next rank (constable, sergeant, inspector and superintendent). They also all include topics related to 'leadership in a police context', covering the following broad areas: personal leadership, Code of Ethics, integrity, equality, diversity and human rights, business skills, professional policing skills, media training, and partnership working.

Most of the programme (around 70% per cent) is delivered in the force, mostly as rotation experiences through the different ranks from constable to superintendent. The programme allows flexibility for forces to include development opportunities or training not specified by the College, provided they

are informed by identified, specific requirements of the force or by a programme member's personal development plan.

An example of a programme timetable (from the 2015 programme handbook) is provided below. The constable rotation is 10 weeks long; the sergeant and inspector rotations are, together, 15 weeks in duration, and 12 weeks are spent on the superintendent rotation.

Direct Entry (Superintendent) Programme				
80 week programme				
Programme phase		Location	Month/s	Weeks
In-force induction		In-force	October	1 – 3
Phase one (induction)		College of Policing	November – January	4 – 14
Constable operational rotation	Work-based assessment	In-force	January – April	15 – 25
Phase two		College of Policing	April	26 – 29
Sergeant/Inspector operational rotation		In-force	May – August	30 – 45
Phase three		College of Policing	August – September	46 – 49
Superintendent operational rotation		In-force	September – December	50 – 62
Knowledge exam		College of Policing	November	59
Phase four		College of Policing	December – January	63 – 66
Superintendent command rotation	In-force	January – April	67 – 78	
Action research project completion	College of Policing	March	72	
Phase five	College of Policing	April	79	
Final sign-off	College of Policing	April	80	

A1.7 Programme assessment

The assessment strategy consists of three methodologies: work-based assessment, action research project assignment, and a knowledge-based examination (described below). Programme members are required to successfully complete all three assessment components.

Work-based assessment

Programme members were required to provide evidence of competence against criteria in nine areas (listed below), as set and quality assured by the College. Assessment was carried out by in-force assessors (trained and supported by the College).

- Apply professional standards in policing.
- Providing an initial police response.
- Investigation and interviewing.
- Provide protection to the public.
- Criminal law and offences.
- Apply a preventative policing approach.
- Managing information and intelligence.
- Policing management and operations.
- Leadership in policing.

Action Research Projects

Programme members were required to complete two Action Research Projects during the programme: a Community Partnership Project (to help ensure the Direct Entry superintendents are able to see policing through the eyes of the community), and a Business Improvement Project (to give an early opportunity for programme members to apply their knowledge, skills and experience from their previous careers in a police context and to meet a force need). One project was assessed through a 6,000 word report and the other was assessed through a 30 minute presentation.

Knowledge-based examination

Programme members are required to pass a multiple-choice examination, managed and facilitated by the College, which assesses their knowledge and understanding of relevant law and procedure in relation to the role of a superintendent. Candidates that do not achieve the pass mark have one opportunity to resit.

Scheme completion

At the end of the programme, a review is conducted of all elements of the programme member's formal assessment results before final sign-off is given by their chief constable or force commissioner, in agreement with the College. Those who are signed off graduate from the programme, their probation period immediately comes to an end and they take up a substantive superintendent post in-force.

Since 2015, Teesside University has been contracted to accredit the programme. Successful completion of the scheme leads to a level seven qualification (originally a postgraduate certificate – Strategic Police Leadership, and since 2016, a postgraduate diploma – Direct Entry Superintendent) awarded by Teesside University.

A1.8 Force support

National minimum standards, set by the College, include standards of support for programme members while in force. It is stipulated that forces should ensure programme members have regular performance reviews and a personal development plan, which informs which roles and opportunities the member should take up in force while on the programme. Participating forces are also required to provide each programme member with two mentors – one at least at inspector rank and another of a more senior rank to support ongoing development to meet career aspirations.

For each of the force rotations (constable, sergeant, inspector and superintendent), direct entrants are also to be assigned a workplace coach, who should be an officer at the rotation rank. This workplace coach is responsible for their programme member's training and development and for ensuring they receive the necessary level and variety of operational exposure during their rotation. The College SPOC is also required to provide the programme member with a superintendent from another force (with a coaching qualification) and also facilitate their access to a national network of superintendents participating on other College programmes.

Appendix 2: Programme costs

The programme costs have been calculated using the College's auditable accounts for five years of programme delivery (2014–19). They include all associated College costs of implementing the programme, including: marketing, recruitment, design and delivery, administration and staffing of the programme. The cost for each activity for delivering the programme over the five years (2014–19) is outlined in the table below, along with further detail of what costs were included under each activity.

A2.1 Five-year College programme costs by activity

Programme activity	Total cost: 2014–2019
Marketing	£235,984
Recruitment	£1,151,052
Programme design and delivery	£327,806
Business administration	£28,792
Direct Entry College staff team	£1,823,633
Programme member salaries	£6,349,149
Total (excluding programme member salaries)	£3,567,266
Total (including programme member salaries)	£9,916,415

Marketing

The marketing cost included the costs of: the LeadBeyond website, meet the police events, positive action initiatives, paid advertising (such as in the METRO newspaper), design and production of marketing materials and anything else identified as marketing the programme.

Recruitment

The recruitment cost included the costs of: the sift and selection process (including interviews), running the assessment centre and anything else identified as part of the application to selection process for the programme.

Programme design and delivery: The programme design and delivery cost included the costs of: the design and delivery of lesson plans and tutor guides, delivery of classroom teaching, academic accreditation of the programme, administration of the work-based assessment, knowledge exam and action

research, programme graduation, accommodation and venue, assessment training for forces/candidates and anything else identified as relating to the design and delivery of the programme.

Business administration

The business administration cost included the costs of: couriers, telephony, programme staff team meetings and accommodation, legal advice, IT software and hardware, office supplies, staff training, programme evaluation and anything else identified as involved in the day-to-day administration of the programme.

Direct Entry College staff team

The Direct Entry College staff team cost included the costs of the Direct Entry College staff team salaries and Direct Entry College staff team expenses.

Programme member salaries

The salaries for DE Superintendents in Cohorts 1 and 2 were paid for out of the College programme budget for the length of their programme and a further 24 months. After this 3.5 year period, home forces became responsible for these members' salary costs. For later cohorts, the College budget has paid for member salaries for the 18 month programme period only.

Appendix 3: Evaluation technical information

A3.1 Overview

This appendix section supplements the description of the evaluation methods in the main report (in section three) and describes the research team and governance (A3.2), limitations of the evaluation (A3.3) and a summary of evaluation fieldwork (A3.4).

A3.2 Research team and governance

The research was conducted in-house by College researchers, all of whom were members of the Government Social Research (GSR) service and as such, bound by the Civil Service Code (and its core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality)³⁴ as well as the professional standards set out in the specific GSR code,³⁵ which have been designed to ensure quality, rigorous social research and analysis for government.

Throughout the evaluation, research participants have been guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The researchers have been the only College staff with access to the raw data gathered through qualitative evaluation fieldwork (interviews, surveys and focus groups).

From the outset, a Quality Assurance and Evaluation Steering Group (QAESG) was established, which convened on a quarterly basis through the duration of the five-year evaluation period. The group was chaired by the College Fast Track and Direct Entry programme lead and included the College evaluation leads for the project, other relevant College staff and representatives from external stakeholder organisations (Home Office, Police Federation and Police Superintendents' Association for England Wales), as well as two external academics. QAESG was involved in the development of the original evaluation specification and was a forum for presenting emerging findings from evaluation fieldwork, providing programme updates and discussing and agreeing any adjustments to the planned fieldwork.

QAESG reported in to a larger Professional Reference Group for the Fast Track/ Direct Entry programmes and a separate (and longer established) High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) Board, headed by an external chair (a chief police officer). This group signed off the original evaluation specification, before it was approved by the Home Office.

³⁴ Details available online: [gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code)

³⁵ Details available online: [gov.uk/government/publications/the-government-social-research-code-people-and-products](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-government-social-research-code-people-and-products)

Annual interim reports were produced and shared with the programme team, QAESG members and the Professional Reference Group. The final evaluation reports all underwent external peer review by two independent academics.

A3.3 Limitations of the research

As explained in **section 3.3**, the nature of the programme created unavoidable constraints on the type of evaluation that could be undertaken. Key limitations were outlined in **section 3.3** and further detail is provided below.

a) Limited availability of objective measures

Given the limited availability of objective measures for the evaluation, there was a heavy reliance on perception evidence, which is understandable for an evaluation of this nature.

Methods have been used to enhance the reliability of the perception evidence (for example, guaranteeing anonymity to fieldwork participants and aiming to interview all cohort members to avoid sample bias) but weaknesses, such as the possibility that unconscious personal biases could influence responses, are unavoidable. Additionally, while fieldwork participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, the extent they felt able to be candid is unknown.

The perception evidence was strengthened by comparing responses from different evaluation participant groups (programme members, line managers/workplace coaches and to a lesser extent, those managed by a direct entrant). In relation to the operational competence and effective leadership research question, perception evidence was also corroborated by programme assessment data (most of which was based on observation of programme members by in-force assessors).

It is possible that the common perceptions that have been drawn out from the fieldwork participants may differ to common perceptions that could be drawn out from other groups that were not involved in the evaluation research. The evaluation only gathered very limited feedback from those managed by Direct Entry superintendents and did not gather views from the wider workforce in participating forces on, for example, how the programme was perceived and whether it had had a positive or negative influence on morale and organisational commitment.

b) Small cohort sizes

This has limited the strength of evaluation conclusions. In most cases, it is not clear how generalisable the findings may be. Small numbers of participants have also reduced the opportunity to look for trends in the data – for example, whether individuals with particular work experience are more/less likely to graduate from the programmes and be promoted. It has also limited what can be reported on, since the low numbers increased the risk of identifying individuals or whole cohorts. Finally, most participating forces only had one or two programme members each, which may have limited the opportunity for the scheme to have a discernible impact at a force level. Even in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS, the force with by far the most members) the participants were spread out within the organisation and geographically.

c) Timescales

The five-year evaluation deadline has meant data has only been gathered on four graduated cohorts – again limiting the opportunity to look for trends. It has also limited opportunity to explore members' performance in substantive posts. It may take time and a greater number of direct entrants in individual forces for more discernible force-level impacts to be realised. Follow-up research with cohort members has only been conducted in any depth in relation to five cohort 1 members – this is only a fifth of programme graduates as of June 2019.

d) Lack of a comparison group

Opportunities for comparing Direct Entry superintendents with traditionally promoted officers were considered but ruled out – largely because fair, objective and helpful comparison measures could not be identified. The programme aims were deliberately broad – around bringing in and making a positive difference. The evaluation has focused on exploring whether and how this may have been achieved with the recruited cohorts. Without having more specific differences defined and aimed for at the outset, it was not feasible to have a more robust research approach, for example, to measure whether the direct entrants were more/less likely to exhibit particular differences to other superintendents.

e) Consistency of administrative data

Data collected for the purpose of recruitment and assessment data could suffer from potential weaknesses such as: misreporting, different recording methods and sample errors.

A3.4 Evaluation fieldwork summary

Cohort	Research method	No. respondents/ population	Fieldwork year
1	Programme start focus group (cohort members)	9/9	2014
	First interviews (cohort members)	8/8	2015
	End of programme interviews (cohort members)	8/8	2016
	Interviews line managers/workplace coaches	6	
	3 years post-graduation (cohort members)	5/8	2019
	Follow-up interviews with line managers	5/8	
	Survey of officers managed by a Direct Entry super (cohort 1)	8	
2	Programme start focus group (cohort members)	5/6	2015
	First interviews (cohort members)	5/5	2016
	Second interviews (cohort members)	5/5	
	End of programme interviews (cohort members)	4/4	2017
	Interviews line managers/workplace coaches	7	
	Exit interviews (resignations, cohort members)	2/2	
3	First survey (cohort members)	3/8	
	Final (one year post-graduation) survey (cohort members)	1/7	2019
4	First survey (cohort members)	5/6	2018
	Final survey (cohort members)	2/6	2019
5	First survey (cohort members)	2/4	2019

In addition, interviews with six chief constables and another chief officer from a seventh force were conducted at fieldwork end. The selected forces had all recruited at least one programme member during the evaluation period.

A3.5 Example of programme member online survey, text only (cohort 4, phase 1)

About this survey

The College has been conducting an evaluation of the Direct Entry programmes since they first launched and a five-year evaluation report is due to be laid before Parliament in November 2019. The evaluation will present evidence and learning on how the programmes have been implemented and how they are meeting their aims. We would like to request your support with the evaluation activity, as well as the ongoing monitoring and quality assurance of the College modules.

Your feedback to this survey will support the continuous improvement of the Direct Entry schemes.

This survey is anonymous and asks for your feedback on Phase 1 College training, as well as your experiences on the programme.

Thank you for your feedback.

Privacy statement

Please read the following statement and then answer whether you have read and understood it.

This survey is commissioned by the College of Policing, and as such, the College is the Data Controller for the personal and sensitive personal data that will be disclosed by survey participants. The College is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office under registration reference: Z3458257. Your participation in the survey is based on your consent, which you are free to withdraw at any time by responding back to the survey invite email. Your information will not be used for any other purposes other than for monitoring and evaluation of the Direct Entry programmes and, anonymously, for the production of future training/guidance documents and/or publicity materials for the programme.

This survey will not ask for your name or any identifiable information. This survey is being delivered in-house by College government social researchers. Access to the 'raw' data (individual responses) will be restricted to the College researchers – who will analyse all responses and only share aggregated data (ie, summarising

feedback from all respondents), along with example quotes, with the programme team and in resulting evaluation reports. All comments will be treated anonymously and no individual will be identifiable in the published evaluation findings or any other published documents drawing on the findings – unless your express permission is given.

Your responses will be held securely by the College research team for 5 years, after which time the data will be securely destroyed. The College of Policing takes its legislative responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) very seriously, therefore, should you have any concerns regarding the processing of your information in this regard, please do not hesitate in contacting the College of Policing Data Protection Officer on: Data.Protection@college.pnn.police.uk. For further information about your rights under GDPR please see our full Privacy Notice on our website.

Please contact the Direct Entry programme team or a force representative directly, if you wish to discuss an issue concerning your programme. Alternatively, please refer to our complaints process college.police.uk/Contact/Pages/Feedback-and-complaints.aspx

Q1. I have read and understood the Privacy Statement (please note, if you select no, you will not be able to complete the survey.)

- Yes
- No

Q2. The Direct Entry schemes aim to recruit talented leaders from outside of policing to bring in different qualities – which could be in terms of skills, perspectives, knowledge, leadership styles, ways of working and other attributes.

a) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree

- I feel I am maintaining my different qualities
- I am being encouraged to maintain my different qualities
- I have had opportunities to make use of my different qualities in force

b) Please use the space below if you would like to expand on any of your answers to the last question

Q3. We are interested in your views around the support you are receiving and also on communications within force and from the College.

a) Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree

- My line manager provides me with effective support
- I feel confident to express my personal views on work-related matters to my line manager
- I feel able to openly discuss my development needs with my line manager
- I feel able to openly discuss my development needs with my tutor
- My programme mentor is a helpful source of advice
- The programme strikes a good balance between assessment and development
- I feel confident I have the support of my line manager
- I feel confident I have people in the College of Policing I can approach for support or advice
- I have had the opportunity to speak with senior leaders in my force (Superintendent level and above for the DE Inspector programme and Deputy Chief Constable and above for the DE Superintendent programme)
- The College has kept me well informed about the programme
- My force is actively engaged with the Direct Entry programme

b) Please use the space below if you would like to expand on any of your answers to the last question

Q4.

a) Thinking about your last period in force and your last completed College module, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

- I would have liked more time in force during my previous rotation
- I would have liked exposure to a greater range of work in my previous rotation
- I would like more College based learning before starting my next rotation
- I feel ready for my next rotation

b) Has anything held back your development (in relation to your last time in force and the last College module)? Please describe below.

c) What has been most effective at supporting your development (in relation to your last time in force and the last College module)? Please describe below.

A3.6 Example of programme member interview topic guide (cohort 2, final interviews)

(The following text was used as a guide for College researchers conducting the interview. Probes were given to help elicit more detailed responses when necessary.)

Purpose: To hear about your experience of being on the DE programme. Ultimately, this will help to shape and improve how the DE programme could be implemented in future years. As such we are interested in hearing about the positives and the negatives.

Disclaimer: All answers will be kept anonymous and confidential, and will only be used to support the ongoing evaluation of the DE programme.

To help us with the research we would like to record this interview, we will delete the recording after the analysis has been done. Are you happy for us to record this interview?

1. Thinking back over the last 18 months, what have you most enjoyed about the DE programme?

- a. What do you think has gone well on the programme?

2. What have you least enjoyed about the programme?
 - a. What would you change about the programme?
3. How prepared and ready do you now feel to take on the substantive role of Superintendent?
 - a. Is there more that the programme could have done to prepare you? If so, what would you have liked?
 - b. Was there anything missing from the programme in terms of training?
 - c. Is the role what you imagined it to be?
4. Can you describe anything that you did on the programme that you thought at the time you were doing it was irrelevant/a waste of your time – but you now feel, in hindsight and being able to reflect, was worthwhile?
5. What did you think of the support provided on the programme?
 - a. If there wasn't enough support, what more would they have liked?
 - b. If you received good support, where did this come from – force or College? Mentor/line-manager/workplace coach/other?
6. One of the main aims of the DE programme is to bring people in to policing with a diverse range of experience and background. To what extent do you feel that you have been able to draw upon skills from your previous roles/careers?
 - a. Do you feel that these have been valued in the police?
 - b. Do you feel that these been nurtured by the police?
 - c. To what extent do you feel you've been able to maintain your 'difference'?
 - d. Have there been any challenges in terms of leadership styles?
 - e. Do you feel that you are the same person that you started out on the programme as?

7. If you had to give your top tips for the next cohort embarking on the DE programme what would they be?

As part of the ongoing evaluation, we would like to contact you in a year's time for a follow up interview – would that be ok with you?

Many thanks for your time.

Appendix 4: Recruitment selection and assessment data

A4.1 Results of Direct Entry superintendent recruitment activity cohorts 1-5

Recruitment stage	Cohort 1 (2014)	Cohort 2 (2015)	Cohort 3 (2016)	Cohort 4 (2017)	Cohort 5 (2018)
No. applications received	867	527	352	534	256
No. invited to assessment centre	46	39	43	37	21
No. withdrew pre-assessment centre	5	7	5	9	5
No. attending assessment centre	41	39	38	28	16
No. successful at assessment centre	13	7	16	12	9
No. accepted places in force	9	6	8	6	4
No. left the programme to date	1	2	1	0	0

A4.2 Home forces of programme members (cohorts 1 to 5), at the point of initial recruitment

Force	Number of programme members
City of London	2
North Yorkshire	1
Avon and Somerset	2
West Yorkshire	2
MPS	12
Sussex	(1 transferred in soon after starting their programme)
Leicestershire	3
Hampshire	1
Hertfordshire	1
Suffolk	1
Thames Valley	2
Essex	2
Northamptonshire	1
GMP	2
Lancashire	1
Total who joined the programme	33

About the College

We're the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

college.police.uk



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