

# HMIC

(Personnel, Training & Diversity)



## SAFETY MATTERS

Review of  
Officer (Personal) Safety Training

April 2007

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Chief Constables for providing the information necessary to carry out this initial review. Particular thanks go to the following forces for facilitating the scrutiny of their organisations:

Northamptonshire  
Devon & Cornwall  
Surrey  
Merseyside  
West Midlands  
Northumbria  
West Yorkshire  
Hampshire

I am also grateful for the assistance provided by Centrex and The ACPO Self Defence and Restraint Committee.

In addition I express my thanks to the many police officers and staff who provided contributions to the inspection process.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the commitment and expertise applied by Paul Devlin of the Police Service of Northern Ireland who led on this review at all stages.

## **Executive summary**

This review was focused on addressing several issues of concern that were raised by the Police Federation of England and Wales, however during the review process other issues were identified as being in need of attention. Details of all areas of concern are contained in the main body of this report. This review involved the collation and analysis of information received through a variety of methods including, questionnaires, field visits to forces and meetings with other relevant departments, including Centrex and the Self Defence and Restraint Committee of ACPO.

### **Recommended training time**

HM Inspector found that in many forces the ACPO recommended 12 hours annual officer safety training per officer was not being adhered to. Furthermore, in many forces where it is being adhered to, the 12 hours per year is seen as a ceiling. In a significant number of forces little consideration is being given to the actual needs of groups of officers.

### **Frequency of training**

There exists a wide variation of delivery methods from force to force, for example, some forces deliver one solid block of training every year, while other forces deliver OST in a series of smaller blocks over the year. The existing evidence suggests that skill application and retention is enhanced when the latter method is employed. It appears that good training practice is sometimes sacrificed in the interests of administrative expediency.

### **Evaluation and quality of training**

HM Inspector found that effective evaluation of OST programs has been left wanting. Where evaluation does exist, it is normally confined to level 1 or 2 of the evaluation process. Generally the information gleaned from these processes is not put to any meaningful use. With the lack of information from any kind of evaluation strategy available to the HM Inspector, it is inappropriate to make any kind of definitive judgment upon the quality of officer safety training, however certain themes did continually arise during the course of the field visits as being worthy of attention; the status of trainers, trainer qualifications and training methodology.

HM Inspector found that some difficulties around contextualisation of OST existed where the trainers were drawn solely from police staff. HM Inspector considers that the availability of current police officer trainers during OST programs is necessary, to ensure adequate support for both police staff trainers and trainees.

There is currently no standard qualification for officer safety trainers; however the development of occupational standards through Skills for Justice, Lifelong Learning UK and the Self Defence and Restraint Committee is at an advanced stage. It should be noted, however that it has recently been agreed that the National Occupational Standard for personnel involved in a training role in the police service is set at NVQ level 3 in Learning and Development. In practice the HM Inspector found that officer safety trainers qualifications varied extensively. HM Inspector views the development of a standard qualification for OST trainers as a matter of high priority.

Officers (trainees) feel that more benefit is to be gained from OST when it includes the use of scenario based training, utilising proper personal protection equipment, as opposed to a programme consisting merely of static drills. The HM Inspector recommends the development of scenario based training which should ensure that it incorporates safe systems of work, while delivering effective training.

Currently there is no guidance on trainer/student ratios. All forces should ensure that they undertake a formal risk assessment of their OST programs to ensure an appropriate trainer/student ratio is in place.

### **The importance of OST**

HM Inspector found that generally OST was given high regard by senior management. Operational officers, that is the end users of the product and their supervisors, also regarded OST as being one of the most important areas of training. Commonly the importance of OST diminished at OCU/ BCU commander level which consequently led to an ineffective system of delivery.

### **Professional Standards Department liaison**

Although generally there appears to be communication between professional standards departments and OST training teams, it is largely informal, which leads to issues over accountability when advice is sought and given.

### **Quality Assurance and Assessment**

HM Inspector found little evidence of any kind of quality assurance process associated with OST. Programme content and OST Trainers should be subject to a rigorous QA system that ensures students are receiving the best training possible. The development of National Occupational Standards, associated with officer safety skills, for both trainers and trainees, is essential to ensure that a robust and auditable assessment process can be implemented by forces.

### **Centrex Personal Safety Manual of Guidance**

HM Inspector is very concerned about the lack of substantial, documented medical evidence to support the claims listed in the Manual of Guidance with regards to 'probable' and 'less likely' medical outcomes. An urgent and full medical review of the manual is required with the resulting document published in a supplement to the manual itself. The current position is entirely unacceptable and this review should be treated as a priority. Medical experts involved in the review process should also be prepared to support their 'opinions' in any kind of court proceedings if necessary, thus providing a 'cradle to the grave' support structure for police personnel on use of force issues. To support this process further, forces should only include in their OST programmes, those techniques listed and described in the Manual of Guidance.

# Introduction and Background

Officer (personal) Safety Training (OST) consists of training for relevant police personnel in the application of techniques and certain equipment which seeks primarily to protect the personnel concerned and to restrain violent people in the most effective but safe way possible.

ACPO guidelines for OST “strongly recommends” that all officers receive at least 12 hours training per year. This recommendation was contained in a letter written by Mr. Paul Acres, the former ACPO portfolio holder for Conflict Management, in 2003.

In March 2006 the Police Federation of England and Wales expressed concerns to HM Inspector regarding the issue of OST currently being delivered. These concerns were expressed as follows:

- 1 That some forces were not providing the ACPO recommended 12 hours training per year to their staff, and that by only “strongly recommending” this level of training rather than mandating it, there is a real danger of non compliance in some cases.
- 2 That in some forces the training provided was not frequent enough to allow officers to develop their skills and knowledge.
- 3 That the quality of training needed to be improved and that no guidelines existed on trainer / student ratio.
- 4 That OST is perceived to be given a low priority status by Senior Managers.
- 5 That there is insufficient engagement between OST trainers and those departments responsible for discipline enquiries.

The Personal Safety Manual of Guidance was produced by Centrex on behalf of the ACPO portfolio holder for Conflict Management and the ACPO Sub-Committee on Self Defence, Arrest and Restraint. It was authorised and disseminated to all forces in August 2002.

The manual contains descriptions, both written and pictorial, of various techniques that can be used by police officers and staff to deal with violent behaviour. It also has sections covering the legal aspects of using force, communication skills and the potential medical implications of using the techniques in practice, including application in a training environment.

The manual is intended to be reviewed and updated annually. The responsibility for this review rests primarily with the ACPO Self Defence and Restraint Committee, who pass their decisions to Centrex where it is expected that adjustments will be made to it.

Within forces there are lead trainers whose role includes that of cascading the OST Programme to other trainers. These other trainers subsequently deliver training to all other force personnel.

Lead trainers are required to attend a 3 week initial trainer's programme delivered by Centrex, and to follow this up with attendance at a refresher programme every two years.

## Methodology

A questionnaire was circulated to all Home Office forces and also to British Transport Police, Ministry of Defence Police & Guard Authority, Police service of Northern Ireland and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary. A total of 46 responses were returned.

The questionnaire primarily solicited information regarding compliance with the recommended hours of training, and the degree of compliance with the OST Manual.

Field visits were then made to eight forces and personnel who could provide an insight into OST were interviewed. Interviewees were drawn from the following areas:

1. The Learning and Development Department (The Head of function)
2. OST Trainers and their line managers
3. Health and Safety

In addition to these interviews, focus groups were undertaken with:

1. Operational officers
2. Operational supervisors up to inspector rank
3. Centrex Personnel involved in OST programme development and delivery

Field visit locations and dates are shown in the table below.

| <b>Force / Organisation</b> | <b>Inspection Date</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Northamptonshire            | May 2006               |
| Hampshire                   | June 2006              |
| Devon & Cornwall            | June 2006              |
| Surrey                      | June 2006              |
| Northumbria                 | June 2006              |
| West Yorkshire              | June 2006              |
| Merseyside                  | June 2006              |
| West Midlands               | July 2006              |
| Centrex                     | July 2006              |

# Findings

The findings are presented in two main sections:

1. Police Federation Concerns
2. Emerging issues

## Section 1 Police Federation Concerns

For ease of reference this section is presented by repeating each of the five principal concerns raised by the Police Federation.

**Concern 1:** - *That some forces were not providing the ACPO recommended 12 hours training per year to their staff, and that by only “strongly recommending” this level of training rather than mandating it, there is a real danger of non compliance in some cases.*

33 forces indicated in the returned questionnaires that they were compliant with the recommendation, whereas 13 acknowledged they were not. HM Inspector is unable to determine a principal reason for non compliance, but reasons articulated during the field visit phases included other training and operational priorities taking precedence over releasing staff for OST.

HM Inspector is concerned that “strongly recommended” minimum training hours for such an important area are not being adhered to in a significant number of forces. Clearly the concerns of the Police Federation as expressed above are therefore justified.

Independently of the expressed concerns HM Inspector questions the justification for a ‘blanket time’ for all officers without recourse to consideration of the specific roles they undertake. It should be recognised that police personnel perform different roles within widely variable contexts. For example officers working in non uniformed roles will have different OST needs to those who work in uniform. Furthermore, uniformed officers working primarily on foot in an urban context will have different needs to officers primarily engaged on motorised duties or in rural environments.

HM Inspector acknowledges the spirit of the ACPO recommendation and endorses the need to set a minimum number of hours, albeit in the present case this has proved to be ineffective in terms of compliance in at least 13 cases that have been voluntarily declared.

However, the field visits to some forces strongly suggest that even in those where the 12 hour minimum criterion has been adopted, this is seen as a ‘ceiling’ rather than a genuine ‘minimum’ from which role specific requirements can be further developed.

Failure to acknowledge the contextual differences referred to above could lead to a situation where some officers who require more than 12 hours training because of their



role may not have access to this, particularly where the 12 hours training time is viewed for all practical purposes as a ‘final target’.

HM Inspector also points out that the 12 hours minimum criterion was established prior to the introduction of new and more technically challenging Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) including new batons, rigid handcuffs and incapacitant spray.

Equally, as will be seen in the findings relating to the Police Federations ‘third concern’ below, the introduction of scenario based training, which is an essential component of developing OST programmes, also increases the time required to effectively teach programmes.

In conclusion therefore HM Inspector considers that the issue of minimum hours for OST is one which is in need of review.

| Recommendation 1  |
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| <p>HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertake a review of the minimum hours required for OST and that these hours are fixed according to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The specific role requirement of trainees and the geographical context within which they predominantly work. This should be underpinned by robust risk assessment.</li><li>2. Any additional time necessary as a consequence of new PPE.</li><li>3. Any additional time necessary as a consequence of adopting ‘scenario based training’ for aspects of the OST programme.</li></ol> <p>Thereafter the agreed minimum hours should be set as a mandatory requirement underpinned by reporting mechanisms in all forces to monitor compliance.</p> |

**Concern 2:** - *That in some forces the training provided was not frequent enough to allow officers to develop their skills and knowledge.*

Mostly, this concern is answered above in relation to the hours expended in relation to OST. Essentially any ‘complex’ skill which is trained requires time to master, and initially the skill can only be practised in a protected learning environment.

However, development of proficiency beyond the training environment requires regular application. Where a skill is only used in practice infrequently there is a need to restate the underpinning training at appropriate intervals, particularly where there are only limited opportunities to use the skill in a real situation.

For example, Firearms Officers train at very regular intervals in highly simulated environments. This is because in practice individual firearms officers rarely apply their skills to a real environment. The frequency and amount of training therefore is designed to ensure a high level of competence and preparedness.

The application of OST skills to a real environment is more common, but by no means

universal in either range or frequency. The contextual factors explained earlier again apply.

HM Inspector found that all forces in the field visits scheduled the delivery of their OST programmes in different ways. This ranged from delivery of the whole programme in one block annually, delivery of four blocks of three hours quarterly, and variations in between, including one case where only six hours was delivered once every two years.

These approaches do not take account of the basic educational principles that apply to the assimilation and retention of skills and knowledge of the kind which are contained in the OST programme. HM Inspector is concerned that approaches are being determined by administrative expedience at the expense of quality training.

Whilst not examined during this review, HM Inspector was informed by a number of interviewees in several of the forces visited that they perceived smaller blocks of training repeated at regular intervals were more effective in terms of skills development and retention. This concurs with the general educational principles explained above.

| <b>Recommendation 2</b>   |
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| HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertake a review of the scheduling of OST Training to determine the most effective model to apply in order to achieve maximum skills development and retention. |
| The model should be informed by evaluation of comparative approaches in selected forces.  |

**Concern 3:-** *That the quality of training needed to be improved and that no guidelines existed on trainer / student ratio.*

This concern relates to two separate issues - the quality of the training and trainer/student ratios.

**Quality of the training** – The term ‘Quality’ is open to interpretation. HM Inspector would point out that the only real way to determine whether training of a particular kind could be described as ‘good quality’ is to conduct a thorough evaluation of it at any stage from the analysis which preceded the programme through to the impact the training had on operational performance.

HM Inspector could find no evidence of meaningful evaluation of OST Programmes in most of the forces visited. In the small number of forces who had applied some effort to the area, it was limited to levels one and two evaluations (reaction to the training and the degree to which trainees had learned what they were supposed to), and even then, there was no evidence of the resultant data being meaningfully utilised.

### Recommendation 3

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO commission the development and implementation of an Evaluation Strategy for OST to determine the effectiveness of it and to identify how the programme should be developed. The strategy will need to take account of the findings in this report.

In light of the absence of any meaningful evaluation data it would be inappropriate therefore for HM Inspector to comment on the quality of OST training beyond the articulated perceptions of interviewees during the field visits and some generically applicable observations. These include:

1. Status of trainers
2. Trainer qualifications
3. Training methodology

**Status of trainers:** - Broadly speaking trainers engaged in the delivery of OST are either police officers or police staff. This reflects the situation across the service in many areas of training.

Whilst technical skills of many kinds are capable of being assimilated and taught by personnel irrespective of their status, it is an inescapable fact that utilising these skills in an operational context is mostly only available to police officers. This in turn leads to an enhanced ability to contextualise the training, particularly in those instances where students present trainers with a “but what if”? type question.

OST trainees that were spoken to during the field visits frequently stated their preference for the programmes to be delivered by a police officer with relevant experience. Equally, police staff trainers also acknowledged that contextualisation by explanations based on their own practical experiences in an operational environment presented challenges over which they had no control.

HM Inspector would point out that this situation has existed in the service for many years across a range of training areas. There are very real benefits to using police staff as trainers, and in practice many areas do not need contextualisation as much as others.

In the present instance however HM Inspector considers that the issue is sufficiently important for forces to be more conscious of it than might be the case. Mechanisms need to be put into place which ensures that police staff trainers are adequately supported so that where contextualisation issues arise, their students receive an appropriately speedy response.

This might be achieved by a combination of means such as having mixed teams of police and police staff trainers, or dedicated teams of police staff trainers overseen by a police officer who would be available when OST is taking place.

#### Recommendation 4

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO determine the most appropriate mix of OST training teams to ensure that police staff trainers have access to appropriate support where contextualisation issues arise.

**Trainer qualifications** - There is no recognised standard qualification for officer safety trainers. The organisations 'Skills for Justice' and 'Lifelong Learning UK' are engaged in the development of a range of occupational standards for various training roles. It has recently been agreed that the national Occupational Standard for personnel involved in a training role in the police service is set at NVQ level 3 in 'Learning & Development'.

During the course of the research to determine this qualification, an argument was put forward that some personnel need a different qualification due to their roles being more aptly described as 'instructor' rather than 'trainer'. Typically the former designation would include those engaged in OST and Firearms training roles. The work to identify an appropriate standard for 'instructors' has yet to begin, and is unlikely to be completed before the late spring of 2007.

HM Inspector has a degree of concern regarding this duality of approach, which may be based on as yet untested assumptions. The principle assumption relates to the dominant delivery methodology remaining the same as it is at the time of writing this report. More is said regarding the methodology below, but for the time being it is suffice to say that the skills necessary for the most effective delivery of OST are likely to change in the short to medium term, if indeed this is not already required.

The field visits revealed that Trainer qualifications varied significantly within the sample group of forces visited. Typically, officer safety trainers had spent more time developing their 'technical' skills (those which lead to proficiency in handling equipment, deploying techniques etc), but less time developing their skills as a trainer – i.e. those skills which are necessary to understand and apply educational principles which seek to maximise learning.

**Training methodologies:** - Interviewees in many of the forces visited felt that OST bore little resemblance to reality, frequently consisting only of static drills. Few officers felt that they were able to transfer the skills taught in the training environment such as 'empty hand', handcuffing, and baton techniques to real life situations.

A small number of forces visited had begun to implement far more innovative training methodologies than static drills alone. These included 'scenario training' incorporating the use of padded strike suits. Officers trained in this way said they felt more confident about using the techniques in real life situations, and the trainers were better able to contextualise the training.

HM Inspector expects that the work to identify a National Occupational Standard for 'instructors' takes cognisance of the issues in this report and in the event of OST trainers being designated as 'instructors', that the relevant qualification includes competency standards which cover the broader educational principles explained.

In addition HM Inspector would expect to see the recommended evaluation strategy include work to determine the most effective training methodology for the various aspects of OST are employed.

| <b>Recommendation 5</b>   |
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| HM Inspector recommends that ACPO agree the minimum National Occupational Standard for personnel acting as Officer Safety Trainers and thereafter ensures that all relevant personnel achieve the standard. |

**Trainer/Student ratios-** The ratio of trainers to students is a judgement based on a number of factors, including the type of training being delivered and the methodology chosen to do so.

For example, lecturing a group of students on factual issues is likely to require a smaller ratio of trainers to students than group activities which require high degrees of trainer observation and interaction.

There is currently no guidance as to student/trainer ratio for OST programmes. Clearly however, the nature of the training involved demands ratios which are more likely to reflect the ‘group activities’ example explained above. Principle reasons for this include watching for inappropriate use of techniques, inappropriate attitude towards the use of force, and not least - safety.

It may be the case that some elements of the OST programme will require higher ratios than others.

| <b>Recommendation 6</b>  |
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| HM Inspector recommends that all forces undertake a formal risk assessment of their OST programmes to ensure that trainer/student ratios are appropriately determined. |

**Concern 4:-** *That OST is perceived to be given a low priority status by Senior Managers.*

HM inspector received very positive feedback regarding the perceived levels of support at Chief Officer level for OST and the importance of it. This is reassuring, particularly when one considers that operational officers themselves also share the same sense of importance for this particular aspect of their training.

The visits to forces in the sample groups mostly revealed a less favourable degree of perceived support at BCU level, manifested by the practical responses to servicing OST requirements.

HM Inspector was informed that attendance levels for OST programmes was widely variable, with officers failing to attend, and in some cases whole courses having to be cancelled due to the low attendance rates.

Fulfilment of the OST requirement is inexorably linked to the value that individual BCU

Commanders place on it and the degree to which there are accountability mechanisms in place to check compliance. In practice, HM Inspector found that there were no effective accountability mechanisms.

HM Inspector found that the situation described above is somewhat ameliorated in those forces where OST training is centrally managed and monitored. This is not to say that OST must be delivered centrally, indeed, HM Inspector considers local delivery of training such as this to hold many advantages allowing greater flexibility, immediate contextualisation through local knowledge and convenience that is essential for supporting operational policing.

#### **Recommendation 7**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces introduce robust monitoring arrangements to ensure planned OST programmes are delivered according to pre determined delivery schedules. The schedules should include details of individual officers so that information is readily to hand regarding planned and actual attendance.

**Concern 5** - *That there is insufficient engagement between OST trainers and those departments responsible for discipline enquiries.*

Inevitably, the use of force by police personnel will lead to complaints against the police being made and investigated. Such complaints, be they justified or otherwise provide a valuable source of information from which OST programmes can be improved.

HM Inspector could find no evidence in any of the forces visited of formal liaison mechanisms between Professional Standards Departments (PSD) and OST trainers. This is not to say there is no liaison – indeed there is evidence that a good deal of contact takes place.

Rather, the lack of formality creates a number of actual and potential problems e.g.:

1. A lack of consistency in reporting the nature of complaints regarding the use of force militates against the ability of OST managers to analyse the issues and determine the training implications.
2. Variable technical advice being given to PSD personnel, some of which may be incorrect and based largely on personal opinion.
3. PSD personnel may not be fully aware of some of the technical issues involved in OST programmes, particularly some which may help to place an officer's actions into context when a complaints investigation is being undertaken. Formal liaison could add significant value to developing PSD investigation approaches.

#### **Recommendation 8**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces introduce formal liaison mechanisms between Professional Standards Departments and OST managers. Ideally a 'nominated' person or persons should be identified within each department and a record maintained of advice

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| sought and guidance given on both sides. |
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## Section 2 Other Issues

As a result of the inspection process, issues of concern other than those expressed by The Police Federation were identified. These issues concerned:

- 1 Quality assurance & assessment
- 2 The Centrex Personal Safety Manual of Guidance

**Quality Assurance and Assessment:** - HM Inspector could find no evidence of quality assurance of OST programmes in almost all the forces visited during the field visits. There are many reasons why this may be the case, and this review did not seek to identify these in any detail due to the fact this was an ‘emerging issue’ rather than an originally intended area of focus.

Significant factors that are operating against QA however, were found to include the fact that OST trainers are frequently not under the guidance and control of training departments and also that a substantial number of them deliver OST on a ‘part-time’ basis alongside their other duties.

In forces where OST trainers are performing this dual role, a substantially greater number of trainers have had to be established and in some instances may not actually teach on a regular basis. Due to large numbers of trainers and the possible infrequency of training, QA is made extremely difficult if not impossible.

Formal assessment of officers during OST programmes is also inconsistent. In most cases officers meet their obligations by simply attending the training programme, rarely being challenged over levels of competence.

Assessment has been hampered by the absence of an agreed National Occupational Standard applicable to officer safety for either trainers or trainees. Development of standards for trainees is being undertaken by the ACPO Self Defence and Restraint Committees’ Practitioners Group, in collaboration with Skills for Justice, and the position regarding trainers has already been explained in this report.

HM Inspector is concerned regarding the absence of consistent quality assurance and assessment, and expects to see the work underway at the time of writing this report (NOS for OST Trainers and for Trainees) to be expedited and completed as a priority

| Recommendation 9   |
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| HM Inspector recommends that ACPO expedite the completion of NOS for OST trainees and trainers, together with an assessment strategy which should be implemented nationally no later than July 2007. |

#### **Recommendation 10**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces ensure that their existing QA processes are applied to OST programmes delivered by their staff.

#### **Centrex Personal Safety Manual of Guidance**

The Centrex OST Manual contains a wide variety of techniques and information. There is no expectation that forces should train everything contained in the manual, rather they should pick the most relevant parts and assemble these into a coherent local programme.

Firstly, it is important to note that the use of the OST manual is not mandatory. Clearly this can lead to forces using only part of it and this was found to be the case in almost half of those surveyed.

From its inception and on an ongoing basis the manual was supposed to be submitted to medical experts who would review the intended techniques and assess the ‘probable’ and ‘less likely’ medical implications of strike areas, pressure points and specific techniques.

During the course of this review HM Inspector was made aware of certain issues which suggested clarity regarding the degree to which this process is rigidly audited may not be present.

HM Inspector visited Centrex to examine this area further and was concerned to find that the required clarity did not exist. Records of specific techniques being assessed against medical implications were found to be variously uncertain, unavailable, and lacking the holistic compilation which ought to be present. This situation is wholly unacceptable.

#### **Recommendation 11**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertakes a full and comprehensive review of the latest version of the OST Manual to ensure that:

- All techniques have been assessed by a medical expert and that these assessments remain in line with the most current medical opinion.
- A robust version control process for the manual is established.
- Changes to the manual and reviews of it are capable of audit.

The Manual relies on input from forces in order to keep current. This is done by way of a ‘toolkit’, which is submitted to the ACPO National Portfolio Holder for approval and subsequent inclusion. The toolkit requires that individuals or groups from forces who wish to recommend an addition to the manual submit, among other things, evidence to support the medical implications of the proposed technique. The initial medical assessment should be provided by a qualified person.

In the event that the ACPO National Portfolio Holder decides that further medical



assessment is required the proposal has historically been resubmitted to a nominated medical expert before authorisation for inclusion in the manual is given. At the time of writing this report a dedicated Medical Assessment panel has been established to ensure consistency of opinion, although the panel has not yet started work.

This process used to be co-ordinated by Centrex but is now temporarily the responsibility of the Chair of the SDAR (Self Defence & Restraint) Practitioners Committee as Centrex does not currently have personnel in place to fulfil the role. It is also the case that the SDAR Practitioners Committee relies on funding from the home force of the officers who comprise that committee. This arrangement fails to guarantee sustainability of practice, adherence to agreed systems and protocols and accountability. It is vital therefore that this is addressed as a priority.

#### **Recommendation 12**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO & Centrex agree and fund a central facility for the maintenance of the OST manual and those functions of the SDAR Practitioners Committee which demand full working time application.

HM Inspector must also point out that the above process is not mandatory where individual forces decide to introduce techniques locally. This initial review did not examine the extent to which individual forces had introduced their own techniques, nor did it enquire into the individual processes followed to ensure that medical opinion had been sought in respect of them.

The main concerns around forces adding techniques to their OST programmes, which might not have been approved by ACPO, centres on quality assurance and audit trails. If unapproved techniques are adopted by forces, and there is an undesirable consequence as a result of using them, it leaves the force and individuals open to possible criminal and/or civil proceedings.

Trainers and officers are relying on the information contained within the manual (nationally and locally derived) to be correct and where necessary, to be supported by the assurance of medical opinion. Failure to have the medical implications reviewed by a qualified medical expert has left police officers, trainers and forces in general vulnerable, and could have serious implications for public safety.

#### **Recommendation 13**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO issues a clear policy to forces which forbids the use of OST techniques other than those contained in the OST Manual. At the same time individual forces should review their current OST programmes to ensure locally derived techniques have been medically assessed.

## **Health and Safety**

Force's Human Resource departments should be aware that under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), there is a requirement to report accidents to the enforcing authority (HSE) if they "result in death, major injury or if they result in the worker being away from work or unable to do the full range of their duties for more than 3 days". (*Violence at Work*, 2006, Health and Safety Executive).

HSE's definition of violence is "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work". This definition would, therefore, also cover any psychological injury resulting from a traumatic incident, during which a police officer or police staff member was abused or threatened. An assault or act of non-consensual violence to a person at work qualifies as an accident and thus should be reported in the same way as any other qualifying 'accident'.

However, for the purposes of RIDDOR, incapacity must arise from the physical injury and not be the result of the psychological reaction to the act of violence alone. This does not negate the requirement for forces to record and investigate all assaults, even those not reportable, in order to understand the circumstances and to identify and implement preventative measures. Investigations should include consideration as to the suitability of the workplace, working patterns and practices, staffing levels and competence and if training appropriate to role has taken place.

## **Conclusion**

HM Inspector has responded to the articulated concerns of the Police Federation and concludes that these concerns are generally well founded. OST is a major commitment for all forces, and this situation is likely to rise significantly as the wider police family grows.

The safety of Police Personnel and the public is paramount and nothing less than a comprehensive and speedy response to the issues raised in this report will be acceptable.

HM Inspector is aware that the ACPO SDAR Committee have formulated a response to the concerns raised in this report, which is currently being considered by ACPO. HM Inspector expects to see this response turned into a time bound improvement plan with clear milestones and a final completion date. This plan should be produced no later than 31 May 2007 and will form the basis of ongoing monitoring by HMIC.

## Summary of recommendations

### Recommendation 1

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertake a review of the minimum hours required for OST and that these hours are fixed according to:

- The specific role requirement of trainees
- Any additional time necessary as a consequence of new PPE.
- Any additional time necessary as a consequence of adopting 'scenario based training' for aspects of the OST programme.

Thereafter the agreed minimum hours should be set as a mandatory requirement underpinned by reporting mechanisms in all forces to monitor compliance.

### Recommendation 2

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertake a review of the scheduling of OST Training to determine the most effective model to apply in order to achieve maximum skills development and retention.

The model should be informed by evaluation of comparative approaches in selected forces.

### Recommendation 3

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO commission the development and implementation of an Evaluation Strategy for OST to determine the effectiveness of it and to identify how the programme should be developed. The strategy will need to take account of the findings in this report.

### Recommendation 4

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO determine the most appropriate mix of OST training teams to ensure that police staff trainers have access to appropriate support where contextualisation issues arise.

### Recommendation 5

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO agree the minimum National Occupational Standard for personnel acting as Officer Safety Trainers and thereafter ensures that all relevant personnel achieve the standard.

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HM Inspector recommends that all forces undertake a formal risk assessment of their OST programmes to ensure that trainer/student ratios are appropriately determined.

#### **Recommendation 7**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces introduce robust monitoring arrangements to ensure planned OST programmes are delivered according to pre determined delivery schedules. The schedules should include details of individual officers so that information is readily to hand regarding planned and actual attendance.

#### **Recommendation 8**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces introduce formal liaison mechanisms between Professional Standards Departments and OST managers. Ideally a 'nominated' person or persons should be identified within each department and a record maintained of advice sought and guidance given on both sides.

#### **Recommendation 9**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO expedite the completion of NOS for OST trainees and trainers, together with an assessment strategy which should be implemented nationally no later than July 2007.

#### **Recommendation 10**

HM Inspector recommends that all forces ensure that their existing QA processes are applied to OST programmes delivered by their staff.

#### **Recommendation 11**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO undertakes a full and comprehensive review of the latest version of the OST Manual to ensure that:

- All techniques have been assessed by a medical expert and that these assessments remain in line with the most current medical opinion.
- A robust version control process for the manual is established.
- Changes to the manual and reviews of it are capable of audit.

#### **Recommendation 12**

HM Inspector recommends that ACPO & Centrex agree and fund a central facility for the maintenance of the OST manual and those functions of the SDAR Practitioners Committee which demand full working time application.

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| <b>Recommendation 13</b>   |
| HM Inspector recommends that ACPO issues a clear policy to forces which forbids the use of OST techniques other than those contained in the OST Manual. At the same time individual forces should review their current OST programmes to ensure locally derived techniques have been medically assessed. |