The Policing Pledge explained

Jane makes a historic trip to Bangladesh

Find out what it's like to work for the Ministry of Defence Police
I am really pleased to have the opportunity to edit this edition of Grapevine in the absence of our usual editor Kim Madill, who is currently enjoying her maternity leave with new son Gabriel. I am sure you will join me in sending all our best wishes to Kim and her family. Well our Spring issue is here, despite some very non-springlike weather of late.

We have some great features in this edition including inspirational stories from women officers in the Ministry of Defence Police as well as a fascinating insight into Jane Townsley’s trip to Bangladesh for the launch of their women’s network.

Make sure you log onto the BAWP website at www.bawp.org for the full details of the BAWP best practice guide supporting Gender Agenda, see the article on page 3.

The Policing Pledge is undoubtedly high on agendas in forces currently and the article on pages 12-13 gives the Home Office interpretations of the actions needed to meet ‘The Pledge’.

If you have problems with the uniform for women in your force, turn to pages 6-7 to see how one officer has worked to make changes in Kent Police.

Now, back to babies, we continue with health advice from Dr Peter Bowen-Simpkins, Medical Director at the London Women’s Clinic, who this time focuses on whether there ever is an ideal time to have children.

Speaking as an ‘old Mum’ there is some really useful information in this article. Don’t forget if you would like us to focus on any specific health or other issues, do let us know.

Finally make a note of the dates for your diary below.

**Dates for your diary**

**2009**


**Spring Professional Development Day** – Personal v Professional – Achieving a Balance. Stratford Holiday Inn. Wednesday April 22 (awards dinner) and Thursday April 23.


Cover photograph: Reproduced courtesy Ministry of Defence Police. Read the feature on pages 8 and 9.

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**BAWP**

British Association for Women in Policing

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**NEWS**

**Gender Agenda Best Practice** 3

BAWP launches bumper document

Female officers top 32 per cent in Cumbria Police

Mentoring in action: Vicky Skeels shares her experiences

Kent Police introduce new uniform for women

Health Matters: Age and pregnancy – how old is too old?

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**FEATURES**

**Focus on:** 8-9

**Ministry of Defence Police**

Learn more about the roles available in the force from two women who work in it.

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**In the Spotlight** 10

DC Pauline Thomas answers our ten questions

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**The how to of meetings** 11

Find out how to prepare for them, act in them and get yourself heard

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**The Policing Pledge explained** 12-13

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**IAWP News** 14-15

First Vice President Jane Townsley reports on her trip to Bangladesh to attend the launch of their women’s network – the first in the Asian sub-continent.

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**Membership details** 16

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The grant application form we have to complete each year to bid for funding from the Home Office always makes us stop and reflect on the past year’s achievements. I think we all suffer from the hamster wheel mentality at times, failing to appreciate, recognise or even reward ourselves for what we have done, but instead always chastising ourselves for what we haven’t. Well I have decided to buck the trend and share the year’s BAWP highlights, which are:

- Staging two successful professional development days which were attended by more than 220 people; a national awards ceremony; the Senior Women in Policing Conference which attracted 350 plus delegates; two seminars for force contacts and regional co-ordinators; the creation of a uniform sub-group within the committee to look at and continue to lobby on uniform issues; the production of two leaflets, a good practice document (see page 3) and four issues of Grapevine; taking part in a joint research project; an initiative to support women looking to apply for the High Potential Development Scheme and
- Finally a whole raft of presentations at force events, organisational development days and courses (both national and international). All in all a very busy year – which isn’t bad considering our limited budget and resources.

We are already planning for the next 12 months and looking forward to recruiting our new national co-ordinator and wishing Liz well in retirement.

Our 2009/10 plans include further lobbying on the ever present uniform issue (although I see Kent Police are already making real in-roads – see pages 6 and 7), we also intend to run some mentoring courses to encourage women to support their colleagues. Finally we are commissioning some long-needed research into women’s sickness absences. It is time to get a grasp of this issue and discover what if any reasons lay between the differing sickness rates of men and women.

From the President’s Desk

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Young people are role models for peers in the community

Essex Police has sponsored Young People of the Year or ‘YOPEY’ which is described by its founder Tony Gearing as “the antidote to all the bad press about the younger generation”.

YOPEY rewards young unsung heroes and sets them up as positive role models. It in turn creates many pages of positive publicity to improve the reputation of young people in the area.

Police forces have been increasingly involved in YOPEY since it started in Hertfordshire four years ago. But Essex Police is the first force to become a main sponsor alongside Essex Police Authority.

Assistant Chief Constable Peter Lowton, who is responsible for Essex young people as part of his Territorial Policing remit, said: “In our day jobs, Essex Police deal with the minority of youngsters who give the younger generation a bad name.

“But we want to encourage more good behaviour and we feel that by sponsoring Young People of the Year we will be helping to create positive role models for the younger generation of Essex to admire and copy.”

The entries to the competition were varied.

They included boys who diverted from anti-social behaviour by organising music events; a youth mayor who gets young people involved in clearing up her town; young carers and leading members of youth organisations, such as the Scouts and Guides.

To date 25 YOPEY contests have been completed – with thousands of young people taking part in the six-month long campaigns – in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Nottinghamshire. There has also been a YOPEY contest in a national women’s magazine.

Police forces have been involved since the start with senior officers on YOPEY’s ‘virtual’ judging panels – all the judging is done via the Internet rather than by meeting in time-consuming committees. Other judges range from local dignitaries, including representatives of the Queen, bishops, mayors and MP, to young people who belong to the growing ‘YOPEY VB’ (volunteer board).

Among the high-ranking officers who have judged YOPEYs are BAWP President Julie Spence, Gillian Parker, Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police, and Francis Habgood, Deputy Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

Mrs Spence has been involved in YOPEY for three years. She said: “I have seen some wonderful young people properly rewarded for their selfless work and been impressed by the positive impact it has had on them, their families, their schools and their communities.”

Mr Gearing toured Essex schools, taking assemblies and giving citizenship lessons to encourage young people to take part in this latest contest.

Find more information www.yopey.org or call YOPEY founder Tony Gearing on 0845 838 2640.
Forces share their success stories to improve the lot of women in policing

A document detailing best practice to support women in policing has been posted on the BAWP website. It was pulled together by National Co-ordinator Liz Owsley and Sandra Brown from the NPIA’s Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Unit.

The examples show how some forces have delivered the aims of Gender Agenda 2 and ensured equality across the board.

It is hoped other police forces will learn from the comprehensive examples given and where possible tailor them for themselves. This in turn will improve the working environment for many women across the police service.

The example are varied: from flexible working patterns to maternity packs, events to balance out the sexes in the specialist units to initiatives to improve the policing service women in the community receive. And many of the initiatives don’t just help women, but are “transportable across the diversity strands”, says Mick Pearson, Secretary of PFEW Equality Subcommittee.

What Liz Owsley says she finds the most encouraging is that each item of good practice has a real person behind it and success story to boot.

“When we were pulling this document together I kept thinking how many people’s lives had improved in each example.” She said.

Submissions came in from across the country with staff from many forces sharing their success stories.

Guide to European forces produced

A comprehensive guide to police forces in Europe is now available, thanks to the hard work of three Buckinghamshire New University students.

The document gives a flavour of each force’s history and background. Details on the support organisations active in the force are provided along with the percentage of women employed.

The work was initially completed by members of the European Network of Police Women in 2000. A lack of funding prevented it being kept up to date, which is why Liz Owsley suggested the students, who are on a Policing Studies Course, might want to get involved.

Liz said: “We devised a new questionnaire and the students sent it to all European police forces and support organisations, with a covering letter from their tutor and me. While the response wasn’t great it still enabled them to produce a comprehensive reference guide for anyone to use the blank template included within the document which can be downloaded and completed. Any new information sent to the BAWP will be used in future versions of the guide.”

BAWP President Julie Spence has urged colleagues, particularly ACPO officers, to read the guide. “This is a document founded in information sent to the BAWP and will be used in future versions of the guide.”

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Help women fight poverty

BAWP members are being asked to consider loaning small amounts of money to women in the developing world who are trying to become self-sufficient.

The loans can be made via a website www.kiva.org

National Co-ordinator Liz Owsley says she has loaned money to Mercy Ofosu in Nigeria to buy more lace for her business. She said: “You are helping a real person achieve economic independence and improve life for themselves, their family, and their community. I have had some of the money repaid already. I can now keep it in my KIVA account, lend it again or take it out. I aim to wait until the whole loan is repaid and then lend it again.”

New female ACC for North Yorkshire

NORTH Yorkshire Police has appointed Sue Cross as one of its assistant chief constables. Mrs Cross had been acting ACC following the retirement of Peter Bagshaw last year. She will take responsibility for territorial policing.

Mrs Cross started her career 25 years ago in West Yorkshire and also worked for Cleveland Police before transferring to North Yorkshire Police as Crime Commander for the Western Area in 2006.

Online resource with advice about children

A new website has been set up to help anybody working with children and young people.

www.headsupscotland.co.uk provides practical information and techniques on how to respond helpfully to children and young people’s troubling behaviour, build up their self-esteem and promote their positive mental wellbeing.

There are also 25 sets of videos from specialists giving tips and advice. The website was commissioned by the Scottish government through HeadsUpScotland and was developed by Playfield Institute (NHS Fife) in partnership with Barnardo’s and the University of Dundee.
Cumbria Constabulary has the highest percentage of female officers in the UK.

More than thirty-two per cent (32.8) of all officers in the constabulary are female, and are represented in all ranks up to chief officer. Cumbria Constabulary say the figures haven’t been “achieved by chance” but are the results of “hard work”.

They cite the fact that the constabulary champions flexible working and supports those who need to balance their role with commitments outside work. They also hold specialist department open days and have “transparent selection and promotion procedures” which are possible reasons for the gender shift. Officers and staff are also offered a diverse range of opportunities to help them progress including women’s development programmes such as Springboard and Spring Forward.

The second Spring Forward course was attended by individuals from six different organisations in the North West, giving some of the constabulary’s female leaders a chance to meet with other professional women and share ideas.

The course costs were shared between: Cumbria Constabulary, North Yorkshire Police, Lancashire Police, Civil Nuclear Police, Cumbria Probation Service and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. Organiser, Helen Ivory said: “The course created an affordable option for organisations looking to offer high-quality management training, specifically designed for women. It also offered unbeatable networking opportunities that will pay dividends long after the programme has ended.”

Inspector Janice Spedding, who leads a local policing team in the Lake District, has worked as a full time uniformed officer within Cumbria Constabulary for 11 years, which she balances with being a single mum to a son and daughter.

She said: “My dual roles require significant planning by scrutinising shifts and pre-booking nursery places and overnight stops with family, but I am happy that this allows my children to lead a well-balanced and organised life that provides continuity as well as variety.

“During my service within Cumbria Constabulary there has been a marked increase in the number of female officers. In 1997 I worked on a shift with one or two others, compared to ten or twelve men. Since then the numbers have dramatically increased with a large number of new female recruits, as well as several high ranking female officers, including the Deputy Chief Constable, Christine Twigg.”

Insp Spedding and a group of female colleagues have also joined together to create a Women’s Network which was launched in January.

She said: “The network events provide opportunities to share experiences and network with others, attend seminars with motivational speakers and career progression guidance, and discover self-development tools.”

Deputy Chief Constable Christine Twigg, who is portfolio holder for the Progression portfolio within the ACPO Workforce Development Business, said: “Our next challenge is to work towards increased gender balance throughout the ranks. I am confident that with our continuing support and with the growing number of female role-models to aspire to, that we will achieve this in the future.”

Cambridge University college is asking retiring policewomen and staff, or those thinking of taking a career break to study, to consider applying to Lucy Cavendish College.

The college, founded in 1965, is one of three women’s colleges in the university, and its special niche is to admit only mature students (aged over 21).

Dr. Lindsey Traub says women who go to ‘Lucy’ have always done something else first. “Our potential students aren’t sitting in school, on track for university, but are scattered throughout the adult population. We have to be pro-active in telling the world that, yes, there really is a college at Cambridge that is dedicated to mature women students.”

Dr Traub added: “The college is ideal for women who have completed an interesting and demanding career, as in the police, and are looking for their next challenge – often an intellectual one, based on long-held interests or academic ambitions.

“Every degree course in the university is available for both undergraduates and graduates – so why not check out the college website to find out more: www.lucy-cav.cam.ac.uk/”
Inspirational mentoring

Cambridgeshire Chief Inspector Vicky Skeels has helped many students on their career path since joining the Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) Employer Mentoring Scheme two years ago.

Vicky was inspired to give something back to the university after completing her post graduate certificate in the management of anti-social behaviour and saw the mentoring advert in her force’s internal magazine.

She acts as a mentor to students interested in the criminal justice system, but who don’t necessarily know which direction to take.

Vicky said: “I feel that I give students a gateway into our organisation and enable them to have a taste of a wide range of police specialisms. One student was really interested in case file preparation but had only thought about working within a solicitor’s office. She had never heard of the criminal justice unit and the role of case file builder. Another student was really interested in the force response to honour-based violence and I was able to engineer her into the force training sessions and to connect her with force experts. I have also taken a student to observe our policing response to a visit by HRH Prince of Wales.

“My current student is really interested in forensic science so I am also arranging for her to review a robbery arrest in Cambridge where a full DNA profile was significant and body mapping technology was considered.”

Vicky says a work experience placement at a local police station helped her decide her future career and that she hopes she can help others make career choices too.

She said: “When I was growing up I knew that I wanted to be a police officer. I spent a week on a work experience scheme at Ely Police Station in Cambridgeshire dealing with incidents, managing prisoners and attending court. The staff were really kind to me and it cemented in my mind that I was destined to be a police officer. The scheme has given me an opportunity to replicate the support and advice I had as a young student.

“We all have an obligation to think about our successors and a career other than our own. Having someone observe you in the workplace and asking you about your actions can be very challenging and refreshing. It certainly keeps you on your toes with legal developments and current affairs. It also reminds me how lucky I am to have such interesting and satisfying work which I want to boast about to other people.”

Staff protect key dates off

Staff in Merseyside Police are being invited to ‘red circle’ key dates they don’t want to work in a bid to improve their work/life balance.

The force is allowing both officers and staff to ‘red circle’ up to three rest days and up to three shifts in a year. They will be able to nominate rest days that will not be subject to cancellation and shift days that will be protected from variation. Staff will be required to give 35 days notice of their intention to ‘red circle’.

The force says the policy is essentially “formalisation of what might be seen as good management practice.”

It added: “Red circle days are to be granted ‘subject to exigencies’. That is, they will not be permitted to interfere with normal business and they have no statutory strength. It is expected that only unforeseen events would be likely to have an impact on red circle days, once approved.”

Bank holidays, Halloween, Bonfire Night and the Grand National are excluded from the scheme. The dates of some local events, which require large scale policing, are also excluded.

News in brief

Join the registers to help save Emilia

BAWP members are being urged to join one of the UK’s two bone marrow registers.

The plea comes from colleagues in the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf Cambridgeshire firefighter Phil Hubbard. His ten-year-old daughter Emilia has a rare blood disorder and urgently needs a bone marrow transplant. Despite an extensive search a match hasn’t been found.

You can join The Anthony Nolan Trust (020 7284 1234) if you are aged 18-40 years or the British Bone Marrow Register, which is run by the National Blood Service (0845 7 711 711) if you are aged up to 49 years.

Single equality scheme launched

CENTRAL Scotland Police has created a single equality scheme which combines all aspects of diversity – race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion/belief. The scheme covers the period 2008-2011 and is the first time the force has amalgamated all areas of equality into one scheme.

Chief Constable Kevin Smith said: “The scheme is a road map for the successful mainstreaming of equality into every aspect of our operations.”

Staffordshire Police rewards female staff

FOUR officers, two Police Community Support Officers and two police staff have been rewarded for their excellent contribution to policing by the Staffordshire Association for Women in Policing (SWAP).

The recipients, who will go forward as the force nominations for the BAWP awards, include: Sgt Sue Button and DC Michelle Banks for Excellence in Performance; Sgt Caroline Bailey for Officer of the Year; Insp Emma Griffiths for Leadership; PCSO Elie Beaumont and PCSO Nicola Aying for Community Service and Leigh Morgan Jones and Tracie Roberts for Police Staff Achievement.
I STARTED by carrying out a review of the uniform stores facility at Kent, looking at the service it provided to officers and staff. I then focused on the uniform garments individually and listened to what officers and staff had to say about their uniform. The majority of complaints were undoubtedly from women who argued that the uniform they were provided with just did not fit properly and was therefore uncomfortable.

My next step was to hold a workshop for women to further encourage the debate around uniform and get them to suggest where the force could make realistic improvements. The debate was lively and pointed me towards the anoraks and shirts that women wore which they were clearly not happy with.

Tasked with addressing this I decided that if there wasn’t products on the market which fitted the needs of our female officers then we would get creative and design them ourselves. A small team of women from the force, including me, got together and worked with a design team from our current supplier of jackets and coats to create exactly what the female officers had asked for in high visibility motorway jackets and outdoor coats – which we have called town beat coats. We addressed problems with sleeve length, cuffs and waist size. We also asked for them to be sized differently, so instead of ordering in a small, medium or large – female officers just ask for a 12 or a 14. The jackets are available in sizes 8-20 and smaller and larger sizes can also be catered for.

The success of the trials was overwhelming and Kent’s Chief Constable, Mike Fuller and Mrs Ann Barnes, the Chair of Kent Police Authority, supported the introduction of the new uniform.

At the same time Kent Police became the first in the country (I believe) to trial a new style of black patrol shirt which comes in male and female designs and uses high street sizing.

Again the officers testing these shirts gave them the thumbs up and from mid-summer these shirts will replace the traditional white shirts for all operational officers.

It is clear from listening to both female and male officers that when they feel untidy, unprofessional and look like a sack of potatoes they are less likely to do their job well. Our aim has been to give female officers a uniform they are proud of. It is not about being fashionable; it’s about being comfortable in your role. For example the sleeves on the old style high visibility motorway jackets were so long many female officers had to keep rolling them up so they could write in their pocket notebooks. As one female officer put it: “I dread putting mine (uniform) on every shift as it is so uncomfortable”.

Sgt Abigail Gilson models the new style town beat coat (left) and the new high visibility full-length coat.
Uniform issues

Two officers model the new black shirts

“It is not about being fashionable; it’s about being comfortable in your role”

My work has led me to engage with the Gender Action Group here in Kent and the ‘Kent Network for Women’, a force support group. This has proved invaluable and has led to uniform becoming an integral part of the agenda.

Since undertaking this project, the force has also made improvements to the female and male trousers, shirts, jackets, coats, PSU wear and PCSO clothing. Maternity wear is now also under review.

Other forces are watching with interest at what we are doing. There’s really no excuse for issuing female officers with poorly fitting uniforms initially designed for men and we’re doing something about it in Kent.”

Health Matters

Peter Bowen-Simpkins looks at whether there is an ideal age to have children

Busy jobs, mortgages, a love of exotic holidays or sometimes just a lack of a suitable partner add up to postponement of pregnancy. At present, the average age for a woman having her first baby in the UK is 29 and the age is rising. We are seeing increasing numbers of women over the age of 35 seeking help to get pregnant, and this is an age when fertility starts to decline.

Between the ages of 20 and 35 a woman has a 15 per cent chance of getting pregnant in any one month. This is cumulative and after six months there is a 90 per cent chance that she will be pregnant providing she is having regular intercourse two to three times per week. By the age of 40, this will have dropped to 50 per cent in six months and after that the chances decline even more rapidly. Just to make things worse, the miscarriage rate starts to rise and by 42 it will be at least 25 per cent. So what can be done to help the older would-be mother?

Firstly be healthy: eat sensibly, don’t smoke, drink alcohol and caffeine in moderation and ensure your weight is between a BMI of 19 and 30 (body mass index is worked out by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared - get a calculator for this). If you have a partner you could get his sperm count done through his local GP. If you are single or a same sex couple a number of clinics offer donor insemination.

A woman is born with about two to three million potential eggs in her ovaries, but as she ages these rapidly disappear. By puberty there are probably no more than 150,000 left and at 50 they have just about gone and the menopause intervenes. The problem is that after 40 the quality of the remaining eggs is poor and many won’t fertilise. The number left is called the ovarian reserve and it can be measured by a number of blood tests. Also the number of follicles can be counted. If your fertility is low you will have to decide whether to go ahead with treatment or consider donor eggs from a younger woman.

A new technique for freezing eggs, called vitrification, has been introduced at a number of clinics for under 35-year-olds. Eggs are collected – using most of an IVF cycle – then stored for later use. Banking your eggs is becoming increasingly popular and is an insurance if circumstances result in leaving attempts at getting pregnant until later in life when fertility is declining.

The best advice is to have your baby when you are ready for it, but ideally try and make sure that this is before you are aged 40.

Peter Bowen-Simpkins is Medical Director at the London Women’s Clinic and spokesperson for Wellbeing of Women (WoW).
About 17 years ago I headed off on a journey, quite literally. It entailed three trains, a bus ride and then a walk down a very lonely road culminating at the gates of a rather wet, dark and very imposing naval base on the Scottish West Coast. Little did I know that this was to be the start of a very varied, exciting, challenging but ultimately rewarding experience.

One of the great facets of being a Ministry of Defence police officer is the eligibility to serve throughout the UK. In Scotland my role was mainly that of armed security at a high profile naval base. I then decided to have a complete change of role and moved to South London to become part of an area policing team. This role was tailored more towards community policing throughout the MOD estate. This was followed by a brief spell in the Yorkshire Dales at a base with a large American presence, this time with the impetus primarily on anti-terrorism, before it was off back to London.

Today, happily ensconced in my role as a police constable at Whitehall Station, it’s hard to believe that the force I joined is the one I work for now, as so much has changed. My core role as an officer at Whitehall is to provide a high profile Counter-Terrorist policing service to the MOD headquarters buildings in Central London. The use of Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 is a valuable tool in MDP Whitehall’s fight against the threat to the MOD from international terrorism. We routinely carry out both armed and unarmed foot patrols in the immediate vicinity of the MOD buildings and investigate any crime that occurs within.

Due to the unique nature of the role here at Whitehall, continuous training is a necessity. I must maintain high standards of proficiency with the Heckler and Koch MP7 weapon system and the X26 Taser, as well as regularly attending tactical firearms training, which is tailor-made for armed officers working in Central London. We work very closely with our Metropolitan Police Service colleagues and when we prosecute our cases through the civil court system we also use the CPS service. This can at times be challenging, as not only do I have to keep myself up to date with current MDP crime reporting systems, but also those of the Met.

Alongside my daily duties it is my privilege to be actively involved in the Women’s Staff Association (WSA). Many of the original committee comprise of BAWP members and we all work together; the most recent strand utilising the menopause and menstruation questionnaire devised by West Midlands Police. As the MDP is a national force, we have links to all Home Office support networks and it is so beneficial to be part of a network that is making a positive move on removing the barriers to female recruitment, progression and specialisation.

I joined the WSA in 2007 because I thought the best way to dispel the usual myths surrounding minority support groups was to become a part of them. I was pleasantly surprised to find like-minded females who, far from believing the Agency gave them a raw deal, merely wanted to highlight issues surrounding females that in the past had been overlooked due to a lack of awareness. I have also been invited to talk to minority groups within the Ministry Of Defence about my policing role and build on the support networks that exist within the Civil Service, Navy, Army and Airforce.

Currently the proportion of female officers within the force stands at 10 per cent. It is quite often the norm to find only one female on a station’s compliment, and it is a situation I have found myself in several times throughout my career. It is the WSA’s aim to be a voice for these females in the hope that united we can be heard more effectively; however, anybody that knows me knows I need no help in being heard.

Far from being at the end of the journey I embarked on 17 years ago, the MDP still continues to satisfy my career appetite. It is an ever changing policing role that I am very much proud to be a part of.
I joined the Ministry of Defence Police in 2006 and spent my first two and a half years at AWE Aldermaston. During this time, my main duties were that of armed security, mobile patrols and the occasional removal of illegal protestors.

Although I enjoyed this experience, my aspirations were to specialise in dealing with protest and rope access work, which I felt I could do if I pursued a career in the Operational Support Unit (OSU). My first interaction with the OSU was during a ‘Block the Builders’ protest at Aldermaston: a number of protestors had locked themselves together and obstructed one of the entrance gates to the site. The OSU had been called in to free the protestors from their locking devices so that arrests could be made and traffic flow restored. It was because of this experience that I knew that the OSU was where I wanted to be. I felt the diverse nature of the work it did, ranging from searches, public order, rope access, protestor removal and working in confined spaces, in conjunction with a greater firearms capability, would keep me engaged and active both mentally and physically.

I subsequently applied for the OSU assessment in January 2008. This initially consisted of a written application. On passing this paper-sift, I was then called in to free the protestors from their locking devices so that arrests could be made and traffic flow restored. It was because of this experience that I knew that the OSU was where I wanted to be. I felt the diverse nature of the work it did, ranging from searches, public order, rope access, protestor removal and working in confined spaces, in conjunction with a greater firearms capability, would keep me engaged and active both mentally and physically.

I subsequently applied for the OSU assessment in January 2008. This initially consisted of a written application. On passing this paper-sift, I was then invited to a two day firearms assessment at the firearms training centre, where I was required to attain a set standard in order to progress. I was then asked to attend a further five day assessment at our headquarters. During this I was given an introduction to searching, and training in public order, as well as participating in several fitness tests and being asked to give a short presentation. The five days, although hard work, were great fun and everyone was supported by a personal mentor throughout.

I subsequently joined the OSU (South) in July 2008 and since then my feet haven't touched the ground, sometimes quite literally. The normal working hours are 8am to 4pm from Monday to Friday. This is so much more flexible than the twelve hour shifts I was doing previously. I can now enjoy my hobbies again and I am able to socialise and see my family more regularly.

The nature of the jobs the unit undertakes mean that you can be deployed anywhere in the country at short notice. Most of the away jobs, though, are pre-planned and only last between one night and a week. Rare jobs that call for long periods away from home are generally planned well in advance.

The unit was quick to make me feel part of the team and get me involved in as much as possible. Everyone is willing to help you as much as they can with anything from legislation to fitness plans. It’s a real confidence boost to know that if you are unsure on a piece of equipment for protestor removal, or you feel a bit rusty on dry weapons skills, or are needing clarification on a rope access technique, then all you have to do is ask and someone will take the time to help you. The greater responsibilities I have already been given make me feel less like the new recruit and more like a valued member of the team. The challenges I am set here give me a chance to extend my knowledge and to test myself both mentally and physically. I have really enjoyed my first few months on the OSU and I am very glad I made the move. This may sound cheesy, but for the first time in my life I wake up and want to go to work.

**Ministry of Defence Police – the details**

The Ministry of Defence Police is a unique force in many different ways. It provides dedicated policing across the defence estate and has 3,500 officers at more than 70 MOD sites.

These include training to deal with armed terrorist attacks or waterborne assaults – the force has the largest marine capability of any police force and is deployed regularly to escort warships into naval bases.

Officers are also trained to deal with incursions at military sites and illegal protest activity (when protesters cut through fences or attempt blockades).

Its fraud squad is one of the largest in the UK, and supports the MOD’s stewardship of the defence budget which stands at nearly £65bn annually.

The force is also in the vanguard of international policing, currently providing support to the Foreign Office and the Afghan government in training and mentoring the Afghan police force.

Outside the MOD, armed units are used at some gas processing sites in the energy sector where specialist policing capability is required.

Its female strength currently stands at 353 officers, all of whom are weapons-trained, with many deployed daily on armed duties throughout the UK.

The MDP also provides more traditional uniform policing services for the defence community. Unit beat officers support the military covenant by providing a dedicated service to families living in MOD housing.

The role places a heavy emphasis on reassurance policing and deals directly with the quality of life issues of concern to military families with a member on active service overseas.

The force has one of the largest police dog sections in the UK – with around 200 fully trained police dogs and handlers, many of which have specialist arms/explosive/search (AES) and drug-detection skills.
In the Spotlight

Name: Pauline Thomas  Age: 47
Current posting/role: A detective constable in the Family Crime Investigation Unit, St Helens, Merseyside Police where I am responsible for the provision of a domestic violence service to victims.

Brief career history: Pauline joined the force in 1991 and spent 10 years on uniformed response patrol and the past seven years working in domestic violence. She was responsible for introducing a nationally acclaimed ‘freedom programme’ for women in the St Helens area and has encouraged other agencies to take up the mantle to deliver the programme. Early evaluation shows repeat calls from victims who have completed the programme are down 60 per cent. Pauline has also worked tirelessly to introduce domestic violence awareness into the secondary school curriculum.

Family: I am married with one daughter

Q. What did you want to be when you were growing up?
A. When I was growing up I had quite a lot of responsibility looking after my mother who was not in good health. I loved sport and the independence and freedom it gave me and I wanted to, and later did become a PE teacher before joining the police.

Q. Who has been your greatest inspiration or role model and why?
A. My greatest role model was Margaret Thatcher. When I was very young I used to watch her on TV and what she said often infuriated the men around me. I used to find it fascinating that she had the power to do that, regardless of her politics.

Q. What barriers to success have you come across and how did you deal with them?
A. There will always be some men who will treat women as inferior and my main ambition has been to sidestep those who feel that way and overtake them on the inside lane. Nobody has stood in the way of success for me. I have deliberately chosen not to progress up through the ranks as I thoroughly enjoy what I am doing and look upon that as a great success.

Q. What is the most memorable moment of your career to date?
A. The most memorable moment of my career was single-handedly arresting four violent males for burglary. It gave me a real sense of satisfaction and I received a Chief Constable’s commendation for it, which made my family really proud. The only disappointment was hearing one of the assistant chief constables saying to my husband: ‘Come on, what really happened?’ That made me feel very deflated. What really happened was, I single-handedly arrested four violent males for burglary. Which part of that sentence is difficult to understand.

Q. What advice would you give to an ambitious new officer or member of police staff?
A. My advice to a new officer would be to try and remember how important your family are and leave space for them too. I do believe that you get more satisfaction out of your job if you throw everything into it and give it your all. So there is the contradiction. It is not a simple equation, more like advanced algebra, but keep seeking the formula.

Q. Where is your favourite holiday destination and why?
A. In good weather my favourite holiday destinations would all be in England. I love the English countryside and more especially if it is somewhere I am discovering for the first time.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years time?
A. In five years time I see myself in a hammock under a shady tree, with my sun hat covering my eyes and rocking gently in the breeze.
If you are someone who would rather carry out foot patrol on a cold February night than attend a meeting then this could be the article for you. Retired Chief Superintendent Diane Lowe says often the thought of being the ‘lone female’ in a meeting, particularly alongside more senior colleagues, can strike fear into the heart of the most competent of women. Here she shares her top tips to create an impact and get what you want out of the meeting itself.

Among the subjects I specialise in which includes leadership, change, diversity, coaching and mentoring, I am interested in work done to improve the impact women have at meetings and their personal style. “Can you attend a meeting?” How come those five words can make some women run for the hills.

Women are often brilliant at building teams and being inclusive, but sometimes find it more difficult to get themselves heard and create an impact in meetings.

Creating impact
When you attend a meeting for the first time, the initial sound/visual ‘bite’ - a combination of your looks, your dress, your bearing and the tenor of your opening remarks - will be remembered by the other attendees. Be confident and even if your knees are shaking, don’t let it show. Think for a moment how you want other people to think about you? What sort of impression do you want to make? What is the appropriate image for a successful woman in your business environment? Think about dress, behaviour, attitude, and body language to create an image of what this should be like. If you look confident, feel confident and act confidently then the chances are you will be confident. Remember the saying: “If it walks like a duck, sounds like a duck then...yes it is probably a duck!”

The meeting itself
• Make sure you have done your research on the topic. Whatever the meeting never arrive without doing background work whether that is reading previous minutes, policies or relevant papers.
• Think about what outcome you would like to achieve. Have you gone there representing someone else? Make sure you are clear about what a successful meeting means to you. Put yourself in the other person’s shoes and ask what will they expect from the meeting?
• Make sure you sit in a central position where you have the eye of the chair and can be seen by the group. Remember you are a member of the meeting and your view, opinions and questions are as valid as anyone else’s.
• Use body language to create space for yourself and remember to lean forward and signal when you want to speak.
• Watch out for the “three second squeak”. Women’s voices are generally softer and higher pitched than men’s so if you’re not careful it can be difficult to get a word in and when you do it may not come out quite as you had planned. To avoid this try to speak early. It will give you confidence and ensure that people know you are there.
• Build on others’ ideas and summarise. Speak clearly and to the point.

Remember managing your image and your impact is not about trying to be something that you are not. It’s about becoming aware of your strengths and putting them forward in a credible way. Take notes to suit you, just because the boss isn’t writing anything down doesn’t mean you can’t. Do what suits you so that you have a record of the meeting and the decisions made. After the meeting review how it felt and what went well. What could have been done differently? If you get on well with someone else who attended the meeting then ask for some honest feedback, so you can learn. Before you know it you will be a meeting expert and advising others.

If you want any more information about other techniques to prepare for your next meeting, job or even promotion then please feel free to get in touch.

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A pledge to the public
But what does it really mean for the police service in England and Wales

Grapevine takes a look at each Policing Pledge point in turn and gives the Home Office’s interpretation of the tangible actions needed to meet them. By Nicky Phillipson

The police service in England and Wales will support law abiding citizens and pursue criminals relentlessly to keep you and your neighbourhoods safe from harm. We will:

1. Always treat you fairly with dignity and respect ensuring you have fair access to our services at a time that is reasonable and suitable for you.

This element is not a measure, but is about the experience. It also important that all citizens have access to policing services. This includes publishing when police stations are open and ensuring opening times are varied around demand. It is not anticipated that stations will open all the time. Accessibility is a key feature as are options to respond to the diversity of the area, physical access and should include telephone contact, email and use of the internet.

2. Provide you with information so you know who your dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team are, where they are based, how to contact them and how to work with them.

The intention of this element is to ensure citizens have access to information identifying the key people in a neighbourhood team, where they operate from and how to contact them. This should be published by a variety of methods to ensure that the majority, including diverse groups, have access to details of their local team. This should form part of the local Pledge and include how communities can get involved with their local team.

3. Ensure your Neighbourhood Policing Team and other police patrols are visible and on your patch at times when they will be most effective and when you tell us you most need them. We will ensure your team are not taken away from neighbourhood business more than is absolutely necessary. They will spend at least 80 per cent of their time visibly working in your neighbourhood, tackling your priorities. Staff turnover will be minimised.

Being visible includes working on problem solving, briefings, and for operational reasons could include proactive work in plain clothes to problem solve an agreed local priority. Clearly, the final example challenges the word visible, however the emphasis is about working for the area, in the area and not being abstracted away for other duties. When abstractions occur and are operationally appropriate staff should be prepared to explain at meetings why it was necessary. It is important that shift patterns reflect the needs of local people and demand, for example with agreed patrol strategies. Clearly, late turn and weekend working is important to provide visibility and meet agreed priorities and problem solving.

4. Respond to every message directed to your Neighbourhood Policing Team within 24 hours and, where necessary, provide a more detailed response as soon as we can.

It is important when the public contact the police concerning an issue for their local neighbourhood team that it is treated with the same level of priority and attention as other calls requiring police attention. The challenge is to ensure the public are satisfied with the action taken. It may be there is no one available on the team to provide this service within the next 24 hour period. On such occasions an attempt should be made to resolve the issue with the caller using other resources or seek agreement as to when the Neighbourhood Team will respond. The principle is around ownership of the call rather than transfer to a voicemail or unanswered telephone. The same applies with letters and emails. The level of satisfaction is achieved through agreeing what happens next.

5. Aim to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds; deploying to emergencies immediately, giving an estimated time of arrival, getting to you safely and as quickly as possible. In urban areas, we will aim to get to you within 15 minutes and in rural areas within 20 minutes.

The key principle is around the word ‘aim’. There is an expectation that the service will aim to have a police resource to the incident within the specified time. This is aspirational as it is recognised that at certain times, such as rush hour, congestion coupled with the location to be attended means these times will not be met. On such occasions it will improve the confidence of the caller if an estimated arrival time is provided.
6. Answer all non-emergency calls promptly. If attendance is needed, send a patrol giving you an estimated time of arrival and:
   a. If you are vulnerable or upset aim to be with you within 60 minutes.
      There is a requirement that calls filtered as non-emergency are still answered promptly and not diverted for example to an electronic process where messages are left. There will be occasions when the call taker, using common sense rather than a strict criteria, makes a judgement that the person is vulnerable or upset (if they are crying, confused or have a particular disability for example). They should agree the type of attendance and give them an estimated time when they can expect the response.
   b. If you are calling about an issue that we have agreed with your community will be a neighbourhood priority and attendance is required, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes.
      This element ensures that where a community has agreed local priorities and it forms part of the published Local Pledge, it is our aim, when alternatives to personal attendance have been discounted, to attend within 60 minutes.
   c. Alternatively, if appropriate, we will make an appointment to see you at a time that fits in with your life and within 48 hours.
      This agreement is concerning a published neighbourhood priority and not all calls for service. Delayed attendance (after 48 hours) should be agreed with both parties. The principle is about meeting the caller’s individual need – taking into account neighbourhood team commitments.
   d. If agreed that attendance is not necessary we will give you advice, answer your questions and/or put you in touch with someone who can help.
      This reinforces the customer ethos of negotiating the response to the caller or alternatively resolving it to their satisfaction by providing information or ensuring they are put in contact with someone who can help them.

7. Arrange regular public meetings to agree your priorities, at least once a month, giving you a chance to meet your local team with other members of your community. These will include opportunities such as surgeries, street briefings and mobile police station visits which will be arranged to meet local needs and requirements.
   This element of the Pledge is about providing a wide variety of opportunities to engage with the public on a frequent basis, whether this is using traditional school hall meetings or new ways to share information such as emails or SMS, and ensure consultation and agreement upon local priorities – which should be published. These priorities don’t necessarily need to change or be re-negotiated monthly, but progress and relevance should be reviewed with the help of communities. The minimum is one published meeting a month and details of what is discussed should be made available to the rest of the community.

8. Provide monthly updates on progress, and on local crime and policing issues. This will include the provision of crime maps, information on specific crimes and what happened to those brought to justice, details of what action we and our partners are taking to make your neighbourhood safer and information on how your force is performing.
   It is important that the public are kept informed of crime and other issues affecting their area. This element is not about swamping communities with lots of statistics but ensuring the information given is relevant to their area, current and of local interest. Updates relating to agreed priorities should be provided and crime mapping will help meet this point.

9. If you have been a victim of crime agree with you how often you would like to be kept informed of progress in your case and for how long. You have the right to be kept informed, at least every month if you wish, and for as long as is reasonable.
   This doesn’t replace a member of staff’s obligations under The Victim’s Code it just reaffirms the minimum response to be provided. The emphasis is on keeping victims informed of progress and ensuring if there is a change of staff ownership the existing agreement with the victim is honoured.

10. Acknowledge any dissatisfaction with the service you have received within 24 hours of reporting it to us. To help us fully resolve the matter, discuss with you how it will be handled, give you an opportunity to talk to someone about your concerns and agree with you what will be done about them and how quickly.
    Aspects of this element of the Policing Pledge are from the Quality of Service Commitment and are about quickly recovering failures in the service provided. It is important that the public understand the procedure to ensure a quick resolution to put things right. This is not about complaints against individual officers as existing procedures should be followed. This element will ensure a dissatisfied person is reassured something will happen, the complaint is being taken seriously and someone is owning the report.

   ‘We want to do our best for you but if we fail to meet our Pledge we will always explain why it has not been possible on that occasion to deliver the high standards to which we aspire and you deserve’.

   The final declaration of the Policing Pledge reaffirms that our aim is to do our very best, but this acts as an acknowledgement that because of the nature of policing and the demands faced, there will be occasions we do not meet the aspiration. However, it is important to ensure we explain what we are doing and why, and keep people informed.
If flew out of a cold and grey Manchester excited about what lay ahead of me. I was keen to understand some of the culture of Bangladesh, particularly as so many people of Bangladeshi origin lived in the UK and indeed make up the communities that I serve. I was also looking forward to finding out the problems faced by the women working within the Bangladesh Police, both from an internal and external perspective.

I was welcomed off the plane by a group of women, some in police uniform, and one carrying flowers. From that moment on I was treated with the utmost respect and nothing was too much trouble. I was whisked through the airport to a VIP lounge where I was presented with an itinerary for my stay and introduced to Senior Assistant Superintendent Nassian Wazed who, I was informed, would be looking after me for the three days I would be in Dhaka, which is the capital of Bangladesh.

At my hotel I had my first reminder of some of the political issues still facing the people of Bangladesh, the European Commission had a string of bedrooms that had become their offices for their role of election observers.

After a short sightseeing trip which showed both the international investment and the poverty of the city, I was collected by Fawzia Khondker Eva from the Police Reform Program and taken to dinner at a nearby hotel. I was guest of honour and was introduced to a number of the key staff working within the programme, including Hubert Steberhofer, the project manager. The PRP is anticipated to be a ten year intervention in Bangladesh developing a safer and more secure environment based on respect for human rights and equitable access to justice. Six major areas of policing are being focused on:

- Community Policing, Crime Prevention, Gender and Victim Support
- Investigation, Operation and Prosecution
- Training and Human Resource Development
- Internal Oversight
- Information and Communication Technology
- Trafficking Human Beings

There has been a real emphasis on community policing, for example the introduction of Model Police Stations (Thanas). A set of guidelines have been produced by the PRP to ensure that the model police stations provide proper services to all citizens especially to women considering their marginal status in society, be they victims, witnesses, accused or women in general, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect.

The work of the PRP has already seen a 72 per cent increase in incidents reported to the police.

The following day I met two men who are not only very supportive of the women working for them, but are committed to making change within their force. Mr N.B.K. Tripura, ndc, Additional Inspector General for the Bangladesh Police, who is the National Project Director for the Police Reform Programme and the country’s most senior officer Mr Nur Mohammad, Inspector General of the Bangladesh Police recognise that in order to enhance service delivery to the community they need to value the skills and contributions women bring to the service.

I also met another extraordinary man: Police Commissioner Naim Ahmed bpm, who proudly explained how he had proactively sought women to take on command positions within the Dhaka Metropolitan Police despite the sceptics and doubters within his force. A number of his senior women were present in his office and it was clear that he was very much admired by them. He too wanted to know more about the IAWP and was keen to identify opportunities to improve the professional development of women. He understood the benefits of sending them on training and attachments overseas to gain experiences that Dhaka was unable to offer, knowing that when they returned they would bring added benefits to the communities they served.

The force is also ensuring the needs of women employed by the force and those they serve are reflected in the principles of their three-year corporate plan. They make a special pledge to protect “vulnerable groups like children, women and minorities,” and ensure a “gender balance through appointing women police officers at command positions.”

The commissioner was very keen to have an all...
After a trip to the Police Reform Office I was taken for dinner at what I later discovered was the best Bangladeshi restaurant in Dhaka. There I networked with some of the most senior women officers in Bangladesh including Fatema Begum, the most senior woman officer in the country at the rank of Deputy Inspector General and chair of the network. She, like many very senior women across the globe faces issues of isolation in that there are so few women at the highest ranks.

The day of the launch arrived and I was very impressed by the scale of the event. Guests included: representatives of the various embassies and high commissions in Dhaka, officials from the UN, the EU and non Government organisations, senior officers and staff from the Bangladesh Police and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and of course more than 200 women members of the network including many constables. The network is the first police women’s network anywhere within the Asian Sub-Continent and as expected the media were out in force. In fact my speech made national TV that night.

A seminar followed the launch at which I spoke in detail about the IAWP. Yasmeen Ghafoor, Additional Deputy Inspector General, discussed the progress of women police officers in Bangladesh including some of the issues they have and still face (with women only making up two per cent of all officers) and the future aims of the network. She explained how the network intends to show members as role models for the country’s women at large. She believes if the country’s women see their protectors in pitiful and vulnerable conditions, they will feel shaky and insecure. In order to be role models and overcome their own vulnerabilities women officers need to be provided with professional skill development training and education.

The Police Reform Programme also announced their decision to pay for 500 officers to join the IAWP which was a great end to the event.

All too soon my trip to Bangladesh was over. I am determined to revisit the country to see how the network is progressing as well as the changes and developments taking place within policing in the country. With national elections having now taken place in Bangladesh I am hopeful that there will now be a period of political stability to enable the police service to develop its strategies.

The Bangladesh Police has just embarked on its first Strategic Plan, 2008 – 2010. One of its five key strategic aims is “Women Police and Gender Policy” and includes the following detail:

- Development of a gender policy
- Promotion of gender awareness training
- Implementation of specific procedures for treatment and interaction with women, children and other vulnerable groups
- Increase of women’s representation in the service
- Feasibility assessment and implementation of institutionalised support mechanisms from women such as the Women Policing Network.

Tangible actions accompany each area and they aim to recruit 3000 female officers into the Bangladesh Police in the next three years.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police is also committed to improve the gender balance issue.

- It has five women officers at the rank of Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner in command positions
- A ‘Women Police Policy’ has been formulated and steps taken to promote gender equity
- National and foreign training is promised to female officers and gender awareness training given
- A special welfare scheme for female officers has been implemented along with steps to ensure the working environments are appropriate for women
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