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Fact

'The police' no longer means uniformed officers – police staff comprise nearly 40% of the police workforce and are increasingly working both on the 'frontline' and occupying senior leadership positions within forces in England and Wales.

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If you ask people what comes to mind when they thing of 'the police' they are likely to picture a police officer in uniform; a symbolic and iconographic representative of 'police' and crime fighting in general. Similarly, if you were to pick up any criminological text or newspaper article discussion on 'the police' it would mostly relate to police officers. Yet police officers account for just over 60% of the police workforce. Police staff, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Designated Officers (police staff who have specific designated powers) make up the remaining 38%, with staff occupying a diverse range of roles beyond 'back office' administration. The modern police workforce has rapidly expanded over the last 15 years and today many staff work in a frontline capacity, indeed, police staff roles are present from the initial crime report to final court session, and all aspects of the criminal investigation in between. For example: If you are a victim of crime your first contact with the police would likely to be to a police staff member rather than a warranted officer; whether it be reported via telephone to police staff call handlers, to a front counter clerk, or on the street to a PCSOs. Crime scene investigation is predominately a police staff role. A police staff investigator might be responsible for the case, from the initial report right through to court. Similarly, for if an arrest is made a suspect would be processed and cared for by designated officers within custody setting. Furthermore, in some forces, hierarchical shifts have occurred to enable police staff to occupy senior management roles, equivalent to Deputy Chief Constable.

This chapter will explore the role of non-warranted officers in the police. It will give a brief history to the 'modern police family' and the development of police staff roles. Using Wiltshire Constabulary as a case study it will outline some of the diverse roles that police staff occupy. It will conclude by highlighting some of the barriers police staff face, compared to police officers, in terms of their professional development and career growth within current police organisational frameworks. The aim of this chapter is to encourage readers to think beyond traditional police force structures and to recognise that discussions on 'the

police' need to include the different subsections and cultures that make up and operate within the organisation.

In order to understand the police in England and Wales it is important to consider its historical backdrop: it is upon this history that the mission, structures, and image of the police is embedded. Reiner (2010) provides a detailed historical development of the police: setting the raft of changes and adaptations that have occurred since the Metropolitan Police Act 1829 locating these shifts within social, political, and economic environments. While police staff have existed within traditional police force structures it is the post-millennium policing period and policy changes concerning workforce modernisation that a new, extended, policing family emerged.

Following on from criticisms, particularly in relation to the lack of diversity within the police force and 'institutional racism' as identified in the Macpherson Report 1999, the New Labour government proposed a series of reforms in order to strengthen frontline policing, to provide a more 'visible' police force within communities, and to increase public confidence in policing. The White Paper 'Policing a New Century: A Blueprint for Reform' (Home Office, 2001) set out the government's intentions to increase the capacity of police officers by enhancing the role of police staff, allowing them to carry out certain policing functions that were traditionally carried out by police officers. It also proposed the implementation of 'Community Support Officers', employed as police staff but wearing a similar uniform to warranted officers who would be a visible presence in the community. With a remit based around community engagement, reassurance, and visibility they would also have basic (limited) powers in relation to dealing with minor offences and anti-social behaviour. These proposals, including the newly created post, renamed as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), were subsequently introduced as part of the Police Reform Act 2002. This Act therefore relinquished the need for warranted officers to perform traditional policing roles and extended some powers of policing activity to this new, wider 'policing family'.

Over the following decade the number of police staff increased exponentially: figures from ONS (2013) and Unison (2014) detail 130,000 police officers across the 43 forces in England and Wales, with a further 65,000 police staff performing a wide variety of roles across all areas of policing. In addition to police officers and staff a further 14,000 PCSOs are employed; added to these numbers there also exist 18,000 Special Officers (a voluntary role whereby trained members of the public carry out the same services and functions of a warranted police officer); and 9,000 Police Support Volunteers (another voluntary and unpaid role providing various support within a policing environment in a non-frontline capacity). Whilst there has been a slight decrease in numbers following austerity measures and spending cuts the current workforce numbers show similar staff/officer proportions: 2017 data shows an overall workforce of 198,684, comprising 123,142 officers, 61,063 police staff, 10,213 PCSOs and 4255 designated officers (Home Office, 2017).

Yet the introduction of police staff has not been without difficulty. Whilst research distinguishes different police cultures that operate amongst officers (see, for example classic works by Chan 1996, and Waddington 1999) little attention is paid to police culture in England and Wales and police staff's role within this. Police civilian staff, including police community support officers (PCSOs) may be part of an 'extended family' (Mawby and Wright,

2012) but that does not mean they have been fully accepted and integrated within existing police structures. There has been little research into civilian police cultures, however, research into PCSOs' acceptance shows a certain amount of hostility (Caless, 2007) and the conflict and 'culture clash' between police staff working as intelligence analysts and police officers has also been highlighted (Cope, 2004).

In particular Cope's research points to a lack of understanding between police officers and police staff both in relation to one another's skills, their remit, and their role within the organisation (2004:192-3). This lack of understanding has an impact in relation to issues surrounding hierarchy and status and thus potentially limits the ability for police staff to pursue leadership roles within the organisation. The issue of hierarchy in particular needs to be considered: police staff grades are difficult to compare to that of police officers' due to the difficulties of police hierarchical structures to fully reflect non-warranted police staff expertise and experience. For example, Cope's (2004) findings suggest the role of intelligence analyst would be equivalent to a sergeant or detective inspector yet this hierarchy is not recognised. As a former member of police staff I have reflected on this elsewhere (Stockdale, 2017); whilst grade/scale may perhaps be recognised and form part of the civilian staff culture, those outside this culture (including police officers and PCSOs) are less likely to differentiate between staff hierarchy. These issues indicate a potential for conflict and tension between staff and officers. It is therefore crucial to recognise the specific roles and sub-cultures within the modern police family when researching and discussing 'the police'.

Yet there are promising developments: as the numbers of police staff have increased forces are adapting and (partly due to austerity measures and spending cuts) workforces are undergoing significant modernisation, including substantial reviews of their force operational models. In some forces, there has been radical transformations with a flattening of police officer hierarchy and greater opportunities and roles for police staff in terms of leadership roles and a creation of new opportunities for professional development within the force. Wiltshire Constabulary is an example of this. Over the last three years the force has removed traditional police hierarchical structures with many areas of the force now showing 50% divide between staff and officers in leadership roles. The diagram below demonstrates how this new structure works in practice; four Assistant Chief Officers now sit underneath the Chief Constable as part of the senior management team: two of these roles are police staff, two are police officer roles. Within each of these areas the leadership roles are occupied by either a police superintendent or police staff equivalent.

Force Structure - Wiltshire Police (April 2017)

Assistant Chief Officer Business & People Development
- **Head of Strategic Development** Police Superintendent
- **Head of Standards and Protective Security** Police Staff
- **Head of People Development** Police Staff
- **Head of Corporate Communications** Police Staff
- **Head of Business Improvement** Police Staff
- **Head of OHU** Police Staff
- **Head of Health and Safety** Police Staff
- **Head of PSD** Police Superintendent
- **T/Head of HR** Police Staff
- **Head of People Services** Police Staff

Assistant Chief Constable Operations
- **North Hub** Police Superintendent
- **Central Hub** Police Superintendent
- **South Hub** Police Superintendent
- **Head of Crime Standards and Justice** Police Superintendent
- **Head of Tri-Force** Police Superintendent
- **Director of Intelligence** Police Staff
- **Head of HQ Ops** Police Superintendent
- **Head of Collaboration** Police Superintendent

Chief Constable

Assistant Chief Officer Chief Finance Officer
- **Head of Facilities and Estates** Police Staff
- **Fleet Manager** Police Staff
- **Head of Finance** Police Staff
- **Finance Operations Manager** Police Staff

Assistant Chief Constable Public Protection and Force Development
- **Head of PPD and Safeguarding** Police Detective Superintendent
- **Complex and Serious Investigations** Police Detective Superintendent
- **Head of Crime Prevention** Police Detective Superintendent
- **Head of Crime** Police Detective Superintendent

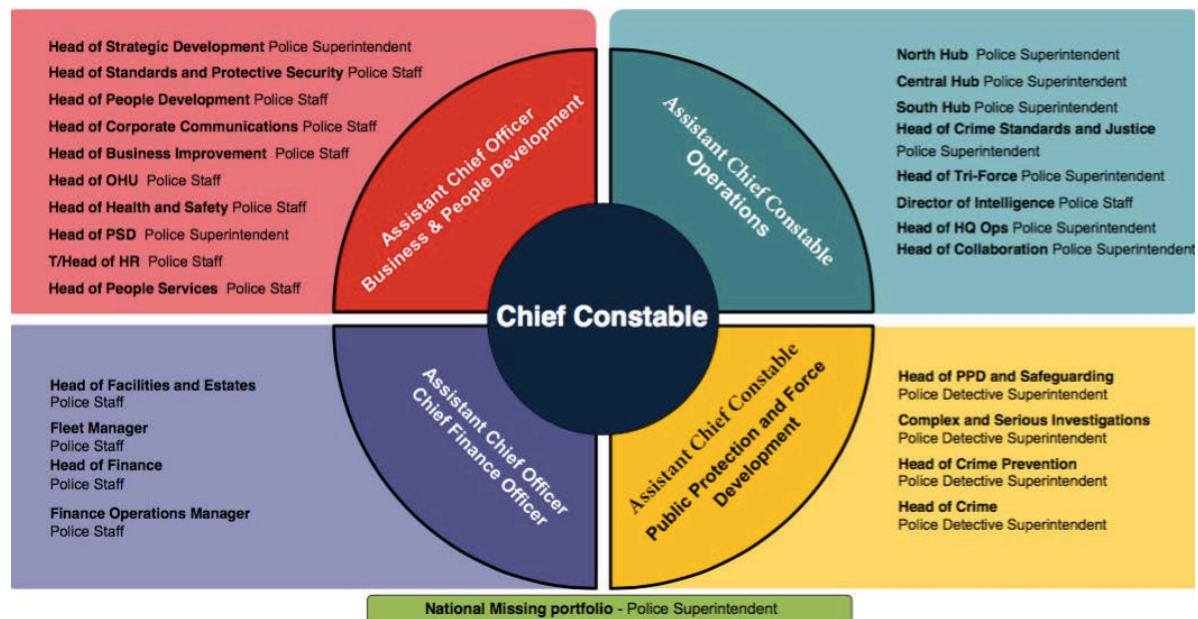**National Missing portfolio - Police Superintendent**

Image reproduced with permission from Wiltshire Police Corporate Communications Department.

Whilst there are many promising developments within police forces and the role police staff play within the organisation is being recognised, developed and incorporated into new force structures, the language and understandings of 'the police' has failed to adjust and keep up to speed. In the future it is important for criminologists, students, and researchers to consider both the existence of, and differences between, these expanding police sub-cultures that now operate within the modern extended policing family.

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