

Investigative development programme for new sergeants

Training for newly promoted sergeants focusing on using the investigative mindset when attending and supervising crime scenes.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Organisational
Topic	Leadership, development and learning
Organisation	Police Service of Northern Ireland
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Region	Northern Ireland
Partners	Police
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2023
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Workforce

Aim

To provide newly promoted front line sergeants with a training package on:

- people management
- investigative skills
- criminal justice processes.

The first-line managers development programme aims to address these thematic strands in one bespoke course.

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of this training is for newly promoted sergeants to:

- have the building blocks in place to manage their teams
- be competent in managing investigations

Description

The need for this training package was identified by PSNI's Senior Executive Team due to an increase in the number of junior in-service officers attaining promotion.

The course is split into four days. The first two days are delivered by PSNI's leadership teams, covering:

- managing difficult conversations
- human resources (HR) processes
- absence management
- performance management
- discipline.

This part of the course is heavily dependent on subject matter expert (SME) input.

Day three of the course uses Hydra immersive learning. This technology is utilised to educate officers on a variety of skills while developing their knowledge of the law in a range of police scenarios. A scenario was developed to illustrate attendance at a same-sex assault. The aim of the day is to demonstrate to the learners how to apply the investigative mindset to all investigations and cascade the benefits of using that investigative tool to their officers. It teaches the learners the importance of adopting an open mind and refers frequently to their obligations under the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act. A contemporary murder case study is used to articulate the elements of the investigative mindset using professional curiosity to drive forward an investigation.

PSNI has found Hydra to be an effective tool to ensure that all content is contemporary and provides the flexibility to add new content based on policing trends. Some themes currently highlighted are coercive control, officers' use of mobile telephones within crime scenes, critical incidents, officers' use of appropriate language and digital media investigation.

Day four is delivered by a police gatekeeper (the person responsible for the submission of files for a decision to charge or prosecute). It follows on from the scenario of day three, which resulted in an arrest. It takes the learners through the disposal and criminal justice processes, discussing options and procedures.

Overall impact

Written feedback was obtained from attendees at the end of each segment of the course.

PSNI received excellent feedback for days three and four, with learners showing a distinct increase in their confidence to carry out their day-to-day role as a result of the training. Learners have benefited from exposure to the principles behind the investigative mindset, which in the PSNI is only taught as part of the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP).

However, learners expressed the desire to reduce the content in days one and two to elongate the remainder of the course.

Learning

- Hydra appears to be an effective way of delivering this type of training. It allows officers to learn from the trainer, their peers and the scenarios they face, without fear of making mistakes. The plenary sessions allow for candid discussion and sharing of experiences.

- One of the biggest issues in application of this course was found to be abstraction. Four days can be difficult for a district to lose a sergeant, due to resilience within sections. Despite this issue, it was clear this training is very much required.
- Days one and two could perhaps be better integrated into a scenario or by using case studies to demonstrate policy and procedure.

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Tags

Investigation Leadership development