

Wednesday 3rd June 2015, Bishopscourt

Facilitator: Janine Watson

Attendees: David Arnold, Jim Battle, Catherine Boyd, Ruth Bromley, Cym D'Souza, Nasir Hafezi, Ian Hopkins, Peter Joyce, Sally Lester, Sean McHale, Shaid Mushtaq, Ruth Purdie, Bishop David Walker

Officers in attendance: Smyth Harper, Emma Stonier

1. Getting to know you session

Janine Watson introduced the day and led a session, to open up the group and to help the committee get to know one another better.

2. What the Ethics Committee is about? How are we doing so far?

David Walker and Jim Battle introduced this item.

David Walker's thoughts on progress of the committee so far;

- Consequences of committee being independent -1st police Ethics Committee which has been entirely independent.
- Role Ethic Committee being able to comment policy/strategy and being independent of the culture of GMP means the committee has role to play as a critical friend to the police.
- Committee can provide fresh insight into major challenges which the police face
- Need to think about how can support culture of GMP, whilst remaining outside of this culture.

Jim provided the following update;

- First time demonstrate accountability of the police – how make sure policing is done for the right reasons?
- Change taking place in demand of police officers
- Public visibility of policing for e.g. smart phones/cameras
- Public perception of policing shifted about what police should do – law enforcement/protect/care/vulnerability
- Independent voice is very important, first committee set up this way so have potential to set a blueprint.

- Committee has opportunity to take control, determine its own direction and set the agenda

Committee were split into three groups to discuss the following; good things so far, the challenges' facing the committee and what hasn't worked so far.

Group one feedback: What worked so far?

- Collectively the right group with the right skills
- Extensive knowledge of Ethics
- Independent and diverse – ahead of the curve
- Strategic
- Communication is improving
- Good link into communities of Manchester
- Discussions so far have been stimulating

Group two feedback: Challenges so far?

- Not clear about purpose – where starting and where heading towards, what are outcomes and what does success look like.
- Framework of discussions – ethical issues; what are the areas trying to get to grip with?
- Body Worn Video – perceptions of this work.
- Not aware of individual committee members positions – would be useful to know their ethical ideas/views
- Agenda setting – agenda set by GMP/PCC
- Lack clarity in structure of GMP
- Difficulties in building relationships with other committees across the country
- Challenges of communicating via email – may not be the right way to discuss issues
- Clear agenda set out at start which don't seem to be achieving
- The need to set a framework of how committee addresses ethical issues
- Building public trust and confidence in the police
- Clarity about role of committee
- Distinguishing between public confidence and consent – Ethics Committee has important role in policing by consent – confidence in police comes out of this.
- Hearing voices in police force that are on frontline – currently only hearing voices of senior management

Group three feedback: What hasn't worked so far?

- The purpose/object of the committee is not clearly defined
- Distinction between issues and ethics relating to issues
- Have been reactive and not proactive about issues which come to the committee
- Need think about the public profile and how communicate the work of the Ethics Committee
- Committee needs to be more accessible for fast/short turnaround issues from GMP.

Following the group feedback discussion took place around the subsequent areas;

- Instead of senior officers bringing an issue to the committee could scenario/case studies be brought of real life/real decision making which officers have to make? Not an IAG/audit/complaints committee but here to share views/experiences/ethical dimensions.
- Role to raise questions and not necessarily to provide answers, should be a challenging friends, only by talking to people on the frontline then able to tease out the subtle issues of ethics.
- Ethics committee is also here to support police in their role, to drive standards/confidence, whilst remaining independent.
- Would the committee be liable for any advice/recommendations had provided to GMP? Not clear what remit is.

3. GMP – Ethical challenges facing policing

Ian Hopkins gave a short presentation on the ethical challenges facing policing in GMP. Handout provided to the committee which plots demands on policing and shows what do each day. The summary of the challenges faced is as follows;

- 1 police officer for every 400 members of the community
- Economic uncertainty
- Interconnectedly – negatives this brings as well as the positives
- Urge greater transparency and accountability of police
- Types of crime are changing – less theft, burglary and robbery and more personal crime between people known to each other.
- Sexual assault/Child Sexual Exploitation
- Crime 20% police work – protecting vulnerability is majority of police work
- Cybercrime and internet fraud
- Troubled families – part of ethics debate going forward
- Public Sector Reform – integrated, practical information sharing

Ian Hopkins discussed some ethical issues facing the police in the future, which had arose from a discuss Ian and Jim Battle had prior to the away day;

- Ethical issues around needs based policing
- Public expectation – serious crime vs. visible policing – two conflicting expectations
- Embedding ethics within policing/organisation
- Politics in policing – Mayor role – understanding political process and engagement between politics and paid service
- Communications data – public/political appetite for this vs. increasing reliance on technology in fighting crime at all levels
- Whistleblowing/disclosure in public interest
- External scrutiny leading to a more defensive stance
- Crimes, for example sexting which potential criminalise young people

Action: Ian Hopkins to circulate presentation to the committee.

Action: Ian Hopkins to circulate slide on Ethics Issues to consider for the future.

4. Ethics in other organisations

Three members gave an overview of how ethics work in other organisations.

The first member gave a brief overview of medical ethics and how the General Medical Council works. The member distributed a handout of a 'typical day of a hearing/day in the life' for information. In medical ethics have to ask what risks are and what the ethical issues are. Medical profession has a long history of embedding ethical issues in practice, over the years supplemental guidance has been issued. Ethics remain constant but are also evolving all the time in relation to societal change, changing views and the arising of new issues. In a GMC hearing relate back to perception of public and the effect of public confidence. A framework of ethics is behind all decision making by the GMC.

A second member informed the committee about the development of the Clinical Ethics Committee at University Hospitals South Manchester. This committee makes recommendation based on case scenarios, is knowledge based and convenes on live referral issues. Three people on the committee are available to discuss live issues, which is something that could be applied to this committee. The member also developed a curriculum of ethics for medical professions which could be shared with the committee for information; no equivalent document to this in policing, opportunity is there to develop one. Ethics Committee is to assist in making police service the best it can be, and Ethics Committee should listen to views of officers, so far the committee does not seem to have touched upon this. This is a potential area of work which could be looked into by the committee.

A third member handed round and talked through the ethical framework paper she had developed to try and work out a way going forward in which the committee could look at ethical issues (see paper submitted for details). She concluded that committee need to know what ethical conundrums are in a particular issue to be able to look further into an issue.

After this overview the committee discussed the following questions and issues;

- The question was asked whether medical tribunals' decisions are public or private. Final decisions are all published and the General Medical Council does an annual review, which are all listed on the regulators website. Interim decisions are not published as take place in a private hearing.
- Ethical curriculum could be developed by the committee, for example in ethics and the law. Ethics is included in police training but is it made explicit? This could help it become enshrined. Has been a cultural shift in police training from classroom learning to personal development.
- Code of Ethics is from College of Policing and is not matched into GMP. It is written by the college and some of it is regulatory as includes conduct of assessment/behaviour. Professional standards/risk assessment separate from Ethical standards/codes.

- Case based learning/scenario learning could be a very useful and a powerful way of engaging people.
- Question asked whether police write up learning, for example in peer review, debriefs etc. In general this does not happen; commanders might have in their books why a certain decision was made a certain time.
- Are ethical issues identified by the police in reports from protests, for example Barton Moss? Could committee look at these to identify ethical issues? Reports won't necessarily identify ethical issues as ethical issues. The ethics might be translated as something else, for example human rights.
- What are perceptions of officers carrying out tasks, for example use of taser. Do opportunities exist for internal challenge of policies, when a policy is implemented is there an opportunity for an individual to question this – feedback from the frontline is crucial, as is how individuals get involved in decisions that affect work on the ground.

Action: The medical ethics curriculum to be circulated to the committee for information.

5. Shaping the Committees' future – what issues should we look at, how are items referred to the committee, future work programme, communications

The committee split into groups to discuss this item. The groups discussed; what issues should look at, how items should be referred to the committee and communications.

Group one: Issues Committee should look at;

- Various approaches could be taken to how identify issues to look at; could take issues from GMP/areas Ian Hopkins discussed in item 3; a second approach is for committee themselves to decide on the issues; take issues from members of the public/police officers association.
- Committees work could be there and then at the committee meetings – hear thoughts/paper – provide instant feedback to person who brought it about what input can provide.
- Long term projects – ethical curriculum, ethical reports and ethical training.
- Capacity of committee to carry out work; how reaches into communities, how broad can it go and how much time can members dedicate.
- How do prioritise work? Who makes this decision?
- Early stage of discussions, need more structure; standing group that can meet between meetings to work agenda of next meeting and to discuss items. Filter out issues which may be able to be dealt with in other areas.
- Intelligence gathering; could operate at three different speeds: long term, medium term and short/flash issues. Limited research resource – if target may have capacity to deliver independent reports on 4/5 topics per year.
- Research capacity needs to be built into committee – gathering together of work already being done and summaries of work by others.
- Make agenda more manageable – less items.

Group two: How should issues be referred to the committee?

- What's new? Change of technology/attitude.

- What concerns the public? How do identify this? Different agenda between policing response and neighbourhood policing.
- What concerns officers? If identify ethical issue, can refer to committee, as a safe way to identify something as an ethical concern.
- Events – how can learn from these, is there way gather information from these into conversations.
- Committee should be concerned with the 'big' ethical issues and not how an individual behaves (misconduct is dealt with internally)
- Need give officers a safe way have saying have an ethical issue with a particular policy.
- Different facets of policing need to be considered – ethical issues of fraud and CSE are very different.
- Ethical codes of behaviour in the military would be interesting to look at as comparison.
- College of Policing Code of Ethics – is it a code of conduct? Committee needs to look at it and test it to work out whether it is a code of ethics or not. What is ability of officer working within the code to challenge it?
- What committee can offer GMP can be groundbreaking in area of ethics in policing – may be easier to carry out at a local level, and not national.

Group three: Communications

- A member to meet police officers and capture narrative and feedback. Could be run as an academic project through the medical school, working with Engagement Strategy Officer at PCC, representative from learning and development at GMP. Outcomes of this would give committee validity.
- Output of committee – do we share with other organisations?
- Ethical issues should be reflected in reports brought to the committee.
- Should police embed Ethical Impact Assessment in reports? Piece of work could be done around how encapsulate an issue and get all information required, reports would then highlight the ethical issues and become engrained in culture.
- Code of Ethics very new – recognition of code and an understanding needs to be spread across GMP.

Action: A list of issues the committee could look at to be circulated

Action: Information about a research budget to be shared with OPCC.

Action: Ian Hopkins to contact the College of Policing to link with Ethics Committee members.

Action: A member to speak to College of Policing to discuss ethical curriculum.

Action: A member to lead on project to meet with police officers to capture their views.

6. Conclusions

Ethics in an organisation can be developed from;

- i. Top down – senior leadership can facilitate ethical practice, set an example and develop a culture where all parts of an organisation can behave ethically.

- ii. Listening to people – listen to members of an organisation, let ethics also develop from the bottom up.
- iii. Scrutiny/challenge/learning – to influence the ethics of an organisation.

Key actions;

1. Jim Battle/PCC office to look into research capacity, working with Ruth Bromley
2. Two members to work together to look at developing an 'Ethical Policing Curriculum' and engagement session with frontline police officers.
3. Standing Groups – to discuss agendas, meet prior to main meeting to ensure agenda is ready for the committee meetings. This group will also be the point of contact for GMP if require any immediate decisions/advice. Initial group – Bishop David, Ruth Bromley, Sally Lester and David Arnold. Membership to be rotated every few months.
4. Opportunity to meet after Committee meetings for informal networking/relationship building for those who wish to do so – to follow on discussion and to get to know each other better.
5. Learning sessions – PCC office to circulate regular briefings, information from e.g. IPCC which may be of interest, look into setting up section on our website for committee members where articles etc. could be stored for committee to look at. Circulate link to Ethics section on College of Policing website which has some useful articles/information.
6. Liaison other ethical bodies – to share learning/best practice. Look into attending other committee and people attending our committee meetings.
7. Ethics Committee to link up to Bath Spa University and Avon & Somerset Police – Committee agreed happy for this link to be established. Smyth Harper to initiate.
8. Bishop David informed committee of a BBC request to follow work of committee. Committee decided needed to be established for longer before undertaking request.
9. Ian Hopkins to contact the small group looking at Counter Corruption investigations would like some advice on. Discussion to take place week beginning 8.6.15.

Usual Committee business

1. Actions

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

The following actions were given an update;

4a. College of Policing vetting policy cannot currently be circulated at this stage. Ian Hopkins to contact Superintendent at College of Policing to offer to share work Ethics Committee have done.

2. Feedback – Tasers

A member provided feedback on meeting the small group attended with Chief Superintendent Giladi. Both felt satisfied that use of tasers by GMP were justified, however there were some minor issues with inconsistency in the way that forms related to their use were completed.

Meeting went well, however felt that when a smaller sub-group goes out to look further into an issue the Committee needs to be clearer about what they are been asked to do, and what the Ethical issues supposed to be addressing are.

Following discussion issue was raised about the timing of papers and documentation being circulated, this is something may need to be looked at, in case it coincides with other investigations etc. Smyth Harper informed the committee he would go back and take advice on document sharing, and come back to the committee with guidance/clarification.

3. Feedback – Parklife

Two members met with John O'Hare to discuss the issue of GMP testing drugs at Parklife festival and alerting festival goers if they were dangerous. The members added a non-legalistic approach to issue, and provided advice about bringing Public Health in, as a body for preventing people being harmed. This was done, and decision taken to alert festival goers to potentially dangerous drugs, and not to say a drug was 'safe'. Jim Battle has since spoken to John O'Hare who informed him he found the dialogue and conversations very valuable. This work is a good example of the committee in action and how the committee can add value to GMP.

4. Future visioning

Committee discussed future visioning and how to measure the success of the committee. The following items were discussed;

- Possibility of doing an exercise in 2 years time about what have done which has made a difference.
- 'How robust is your Committee?' exercise to be completed by committee members.
- PCC to map out how Ethics Committee fits into geography of PCC/GMP – to show committee how they link into other groups.
- Body Worn Video Report – committee comfortable with report going in the public domain. Standing group to discuss this and also to discuss whether minutes should be made public. Smyth Harper will circulate press release to the committee regarding the Body Worn Video report, and decision can then be made on publication.

5. Any other business

Body Worn Video Report is being presented to Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable on 16th June. The committee will be updated once this has taken place. There has also been storage concerns expressed if all officers who use taser also are equipped with BWV.

Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 1st September, 5:30p.m., Church House