

Squaring the circle: projecting gender balance and its implications for the police service by 2020 a provincial constabulary case study

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## Executive Summary

This study was commissioned by the British Association for Women in Policing (BAWP). The objective of the study was to replicate a previous report estimating the impact of a changing gender balance in the warranted police officer workforce. The original study had been undertaken on data from a large metropolitan police force. Women were projected to reach 38% of the police establishment by 2020 but, because of their greater average rate of sickness absence, were projected to account for 49% of the working days lost due to sick leave. If maternity leave was also factored in, then the full time equivalent in lost deployable days for that force was calculated to be 213 FTE<sup>1</sup>.

The BAWP wished to assess whether the general trends in the earlier findings could be confirmed to give a more robust evidence base from which to develop policy.

The original research assumed a continued increase in the numbers of police officers. Given the worldwide financial downturn, the change of Government in the UK, and a number of reports published since the first BAWP commissioned research, the present study's assumptions have adjusted the methodology to the changing circumstances.

There are a number of potential tensions that will need resolving. These are the aspirations within the Police Service to achieve 35% representation of women and preserving work-life balance, which may have to be considered against the operational priorities in a financial landscape of diminishing resources. The study makes the point that consideration of the specific subject of this report, i.e. the ramifications of the increasing percentage of women officers, should be seen within this wider political, economic and legal context. The present analysis assumed no further growth in police numbers for the foreseeable future. The cost calculations are based on the projected salary for a mid career operational uniformed constable modelled by the recent Independent Review (Winsor,2011). A provincial police force was chosen as a comparator. In addition, the metropolitan force's data were re-calculated using the same methodology as in the present study. Thus three sets of calculations are available: the projections for the present research force (a provincial constabulary); the original projections of a metropolitan force which assumed a continued growth in establishment; and a re-calculated projection for the metropolitan force based on no growth.

The resulting analyses show some variability, but strong indicator evidence that, however the calculations are done, women will have reached the threshold 35% by 2020 and, progressively, will account for a higher proportionate share of working days lost such that by 2020, 48% are attributable to women.

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1. There was an error in the original report and the present estimate is based on a re calculation of the original figures

If the rates of women's absence due to maternity and sick leave are totalled and the difference calculated between this and the days lost attributable to men's sickness absence then for the research force in the present study the cost is calculated at £1.2 million or 34 FTE in the year 2020.

We can present this estimate as a calculation of the lost deployability by function as designated in the recent HMIC report, "Demanding Times, 2011." Thus for this provincial force, in 2020, it will lose the capability of the equivalent of 14 response officers, 7 specialists, 8 middle office support personnel and 5 backroom staff.

Given the strictures that Government will be placing on the Police Service to absorb and manage a 20% cut in central government funding, and the urgency with which HMIC is asking the Police Service in England and Wales to maintain its service delivery to the public, it is striking that the changing gender balance and its implications have not been factored into forces' strategic thinking to plan for the new financial landscape. It is also striking that Chief Constable Peter Neyroud's report into police leadership and training does draw attention to issues of women's (and BME) progression into leadership positions within the Service but notes that making progress may well be problematic when the Service is likely to be static over the next several years.

The differential between the lost deployable days attributable to men and women officers represents about 1% of the estimated 2020 establishment in the research force. Policies designed to manage and minimise this loss become all the more important at a time when resourcing is under such pressure. Certainly it is the case that women do take, on average, more sick leave than their male counterparts. As the gender balance increases in favour of women, then proportionately more will be taking maternity leave. Although it has been shown that absence rates among women officers with children are, on average, higher than those without, it is only conjecture that women's greater rate of sickness absence is proxy for child care problems, nevertheless, managing officers on maternity leave so that they return, up to speed, in terms of operational procedures and practices and with appropriate care arrangements in place is paramount.

So, clearly, the reasons for women's greater rates of sickness absence requires a more detailed and accurate understanding to explain the differences from that taken by men. However it is neither tenable, nor a legal option, to restrict the number of women serving in the police as a solution to the loss of deployable days.

The conclusions suggest that better management of sickness absences generally and for women in particular would seem one obvious intervention, as would proactive policies for maternity leave. This might involve more clarity over flexible working and re-negotiating the psychological contract between officers and the organisation in terms of work-life balance for the individual. The demands on police forces to maintain their service commitments to the

public under times of decreasing resources may also require a re-balancing of public expectations of what it is possible for forces to deliver.

Finally, the report presents a brief discussion about more profound ramifications which touches on the relationship between forces and their staff and between the police and the public. Fiscal constraints are likely to exacerbate distrust between individual officers and the organisation. The notions of the psychological contract and entitlement, address the potential widening gap between management and officers and police staff. The potential gap between public expectations and some real term reductions in resources may become part of a wider debate about the social contract between public and police.

# 1. Introduction

This study supplements that of an earlier study entitled:

Added value? The implications of increasing the percentages of women in the police service by Jennifer Brown, Jess Fielding and Sue Woolfenden. 2009.

That study looked at the projected rate of recruitment of women officers in a large metropolitan police force and its impact on resilience of the force in question. By 2020 women were projected to be 38% of the police officer establishment and to account for 49% of working days lost due to sickness absence. A calculation was undertaken to estimate the FTE loss to the force by 2020 for the projected increase in the percentage share of the establishment by women, assuming a year on year increase in the numbers of serving officers. That calculation projected a capacity loss of 91 FTE i.e. the rate of women's working days lost through sickness absence and maternity leave minus the working days lost attributable to men.

The BAWP commissioned a further piece of research to confirm the general trends reported in the earlier study which is the subject of the present report.

Clearly circumstances have changed dramatically with the financial crisis besetting the economy worldwide and this country in particular. There has also been a change of Government, whose policy has been to engage in a rationalisation of public sector finances which has resulted in a series of cost cutting measures which affect all aspects of the public sector, including the police. Across the board, the Police Service is facing a reduction of staff rather than the continued year on year increase.

In addition, several recent reports have been published that presents a clearer picture of the likely scale of cut backs and their implications for the Police Service in England and Wales e.g. Winsor's "Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remunerations and Conditions" and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's paper "Demanding Times; the Front Line and Policing Visibility". The former recommends changes in police pay. Whilst it is not yet clear if Government will accept these recommendations, it is likely that they will. The latter defines front line staffing and draws attention to officer availability.

The present report has taken the findings of these reports into account when making its calculations and drawing conclusions.

## 2. Background

In February 2010, The Home Office published a report entitled “Assessment of women in the police service”. The Police Minister, David Hanson, stated in the foreword that “the number of women in policing has increased dramatically and women have progressed to the very highest levels.” The report itself indicates that the Police Service has made substantial progress in recruiting women officers but that “the service needs to set stretching and ambitious local targets to deliver levels of 35% representation”. The previous research, reported in the Added Value study, estimated that the Police Service as a whole will have 35% representation of women officers by 2020, given the then rate of recruitment, wastage and progressive increases in establishment.

The minister also said “the right policies and structures are also fundamental in supporting women to remain and progress in the police service”. This resonates with the aspiration in Gender Agenda<sup>2</sup> “to develop an understanding of the competing demands in achieving a work-life balance and a successful career in policing”.

The Assessment report indicated that resignation rates of officers remains low and that it is broadly comparable between men and women although women officers are more likely to leave for domestic reasons. The overall wastage rate for all officers was 5.4% and women leavers amounted to 16.6% of total leavers. The report also identifies the issue of women’s health and suggests a proactive focus on associated sickness absence rates. Moreover flexible working arrangements should continue to be monitored as one means for helping to retain women officers and other staff.

Results from workshops commissioned as part of the Assessment study, indicated that workshop participants felt flexible working arrangements, issued as Home Office guidance, were still not being managed well. Moreover participants particularly noted the need to support pregnant officers.

The Assessment of Women Officers in the Police Service concluded by recommending that each police authority publish an annual plan that identifies priorities on female recruitment, retention and progression. The present study provides some pro-active focus, as suggested by the Assessment report.

The Association of Police Authorities (2009) issued guidance about setting targets for the recruitment of ethnic minority officers and women. The guidance states “it is essential that analysis is conducted on the current police workforce, utilising all relevant force employment data. A clear understanding of the current position in terms of recruitment, retention and progression within your local police force is imperative”. This should be done, the guidance suggests, so that trends can be identified, such as the role sickness absence

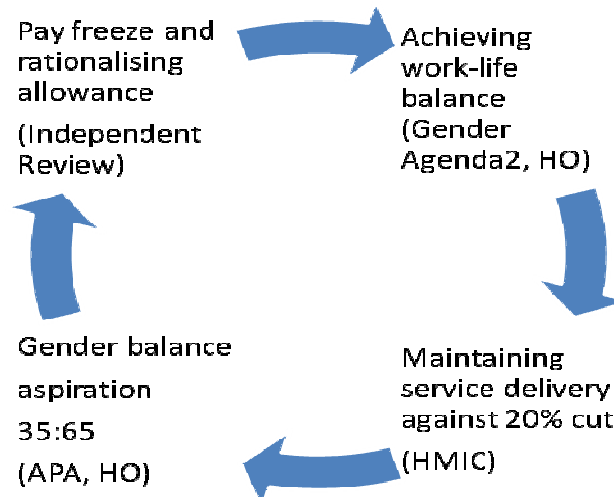
may be playing and to anticipate any other areas of concern which need to be addressed.

The research commissioned by BAWP therefore is a timely piece of research consistent with the impetus in the APA guidance and the directive implied by the Police Minister. It also addresses aspects of the deployment capability discussed recently by HMIC (HMIC 2011).

The HMIC report on meeting demand recognises the importance of maximising the number of officers and police staff available to meet public needs for service. Four basic roles in policing were identified and the relative percentage of officers and PCSOs estimated to be in those roles are as follows: visible response and patrol (61%) specialist investigation (21%) middle office support (14%) and back office support(5%). Overall 68% of the total police workforce across England and Wales was calculated to be front line (varying between 62 and 75% across forces). Moreover the report estimates that it takes between five and six individuals to maintain one colleague on duty 24/7 and that currently, police are operating at the upper end of the efficiency range. The reported estimated an average of 194 days that a police officer is available for duty (range 161-228).

In the current climate aspiration for gender balance and work-life balance potentially is competing with the financial realities and pragmatics of maintaining levels and quality of service to the public. It is against this background that the current study is being undertaken. This can be represented as follows.

#### Potentially competing demands on the Police Service





### 3. The present study

The focus of the present study is the resilience implication for forces of the shifting gender balance amongst the police officer work force being mindful of :-

- the aspiration to achieve 35% women officers;
- the contraction in the overall number of officers in the current economic climate;
- the ambition to achieve work-life balance;
- a cut in government spending on policing.

By projecting the number of women officers that will be working within a large provincial constabulary by the year 2020, the report seeks to estimate the time taken to achieve the 35% target and also to determine a best guess on the potential loss of deployable days through sickness absence and maternity leave.

The aims of the present study are to:-

- a) confirm the trends reported in the earlier Added Value study;
- b) monitor the gender balance in the research force over time;
- c) estimate women's share of the total sickness absence and the contribution this and maternity leave makes to deployment capacity.

NB

It should be noted that there are limits to the accuracy that it is possible to achieve when undertaking these projections.

1. It proved too complex to estimate pay taking all ranks and allowances into account; therefore the constant used in the calculations was a modal figure based on a mid career constable's annual salary as modelled by the recent Independent Review.
2. Given the real term cuts in the policing budget, a no growth base line was used.
3. Year on year establishment numbers were based on maintaining a steady state using recruitment rates to fill vacancies created through wastage rates.
4. Deployable days per officer were calculated to be 208 as used in the previous Added Value study.
5. The calculations undertaken for the research force in the Added value study presumed a year on year increase in the number of officers, whilst in the present study a steady state situation was used as the basis of the calculations. To enable a more direct comparison, the data from the Value Added study were re-calibrated using the base rates for the present study.
6. Light duties, paternity leave and secondments were not taken into consideration.

## 4. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is similar to that used in the previous report by Brown, Fielding and Woolfenden (2009). However in the case of the present calculations, rather than a year on year increase in number of officers, the projections assumed an initial reduction and then steady state in the establishment as implied in the Independent Review.

The available deployable days of a police officer were on average estimated to be 194 days by HMIC in its recent report. In the Added Value report, this calculation was estimated to be 208 days. Given that this is within the range suggested by HMIC we have kept this as the average for the present calculations.

The Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions, modelled pay rates for constables. In the present report the modal rate of £36,519 was taken to be a representative average salary for constables.

In the body of the text each step in the calculations is explained. In addition, rather than using a fixed rate of increase, based on the average of the preceding incremental rate of women's recruitment, the present study utilised a calculation that took into account the present wastage rate and replacement recruitment and assumed a steady state establishment for the foreseeable future. The national average wastage rate is .5.4% of which 16.6% are women. In the research force women represent 40% of current recruitment.

The initial loss of officers for the research force in this study was based on estimates published in Police Professional, February 10, 2011, i.e. at 100 officers.

The research force provided original data which were subjected to analysis by the present authors.

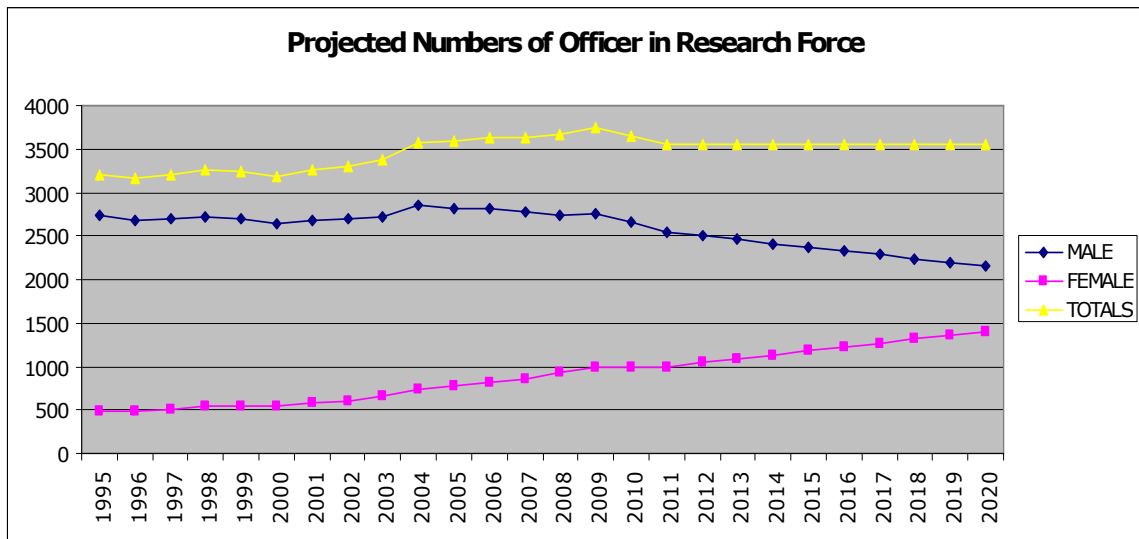
## 5. Results

### Step 1. Projecting the Number of Women in Force by 2020

Here it is assumed that:-

- The planned reduction of 100 officers is achieved.
- The reduction was proportionate in terms of the present gender balance within the force i.e. 27:73.
- The establishment remains at steady state of 3,549 officers.
- A national average wastage rate remains at a rate of 5.4% of which 16.6% are women.
- A recruitment rate in the research force of 40% women is retained.

The projected percentage of women officers is calculated by assuming that the outgoing rate of officers in terms of natural wastage and the incoming rate of recruitment maintains the steady state of the establishment i.e. no growth. The accompanying graph shows that women's percentage share of the establishment is estimated to reach the target of 35% by 2017. By the year 2020 women were calculated to be 39.5% of the warranted officer work force.



Assuming a steady state in the research constabulary's establishment, it is noticeable that based on the estimated rate of recruitment and wastage, the gender balance shifts over time. Thus there is a declining percentage share contributed by men and a corresponding increase by women such that by 2020 women make up approximately 40% of the officer complement.

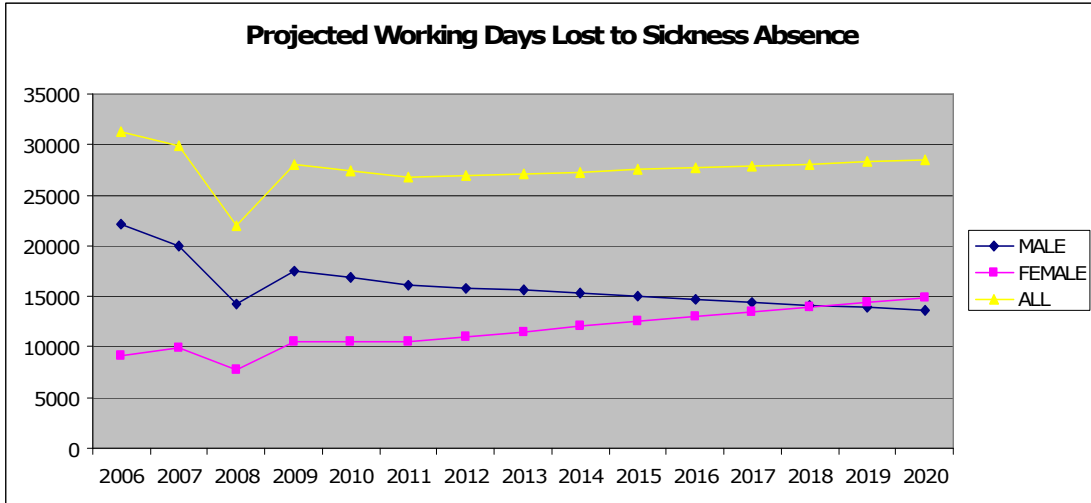
Projected percentage gender balance from 2010 to 2020.

Year	% WOMEN	% MEN
2010	27.2	72.8
2011	28.1	71.9
2012	29.4	70.6
2013	30.6	69.4
2014	31.9	68.1
2015	33.1	66.9
2016	34.4	63.6
2017	35.7	64.3
2018	36.9	63.1
2019	38.2	61.8
2020	39.5	60.5

## Step 2. Projecting Sickness Absence Rates

The next set of calculations examined the rates of sickness absence and projected forward to 2020. The research force provided data which included rest days. Thus the projected estimation is based on:-

- a) Home Office data of average working hours lost per officer in the research force during 2006-2007 from which it was calculated that working days lost amounted to 69.7% of total days lost;
- b) this discount which was used to estimate a working days lost figure excluding rest days from the total days lost figures provided;
- c) an average calculation, which found working days lost attributable to women to be 11.2 days per officer and 7.9 days for men;
- d) the previous projections of the number of men and women officers in the research force were then used to estimate the following rates of working days lost for men and women calculated to 2020.



From this it is possible to calculate the percentage share of days lost attributable to men and women. It can be seen that by 2020 women are estimated to account for 48% of working days lost.

Estimated Percentage Share of Working Days Lost to Sickness Absence by Men and Women Officers 2006-2020

	FEMALE	MALE
2006	29.19	70.81
2007	30.32	69.68
2008	32.51	67.49
2009	33.87	66.13
2010	34.58	65.42
2011	35.65	64.35
2012	37.08	62.92
2013	38.49	61.51
2014	39.89	60.11
2015	41.28	58.72
2016	42.66	57.34
2017	44.02	55.98
2018	45.37	54.63
2019	46.71	53.29
2020	48.04	51.96

### Step 3. Estimated Rates of Pregnancy

The research force provided data indicating the number of its women officers being pregnant during a calendar year. The calculation proceeded by:-

- a) determining the average percentage rate of pregnant officers i.e. 5.54%;
- b) using this average as a constant to project pregnancy rates as a function of the estimated number of women in force year on year.

The following table presents the actual figures provided by the force numbers.

Actual Number of Pregnancies and Percentage of Women Pregnant During a Calendar Year

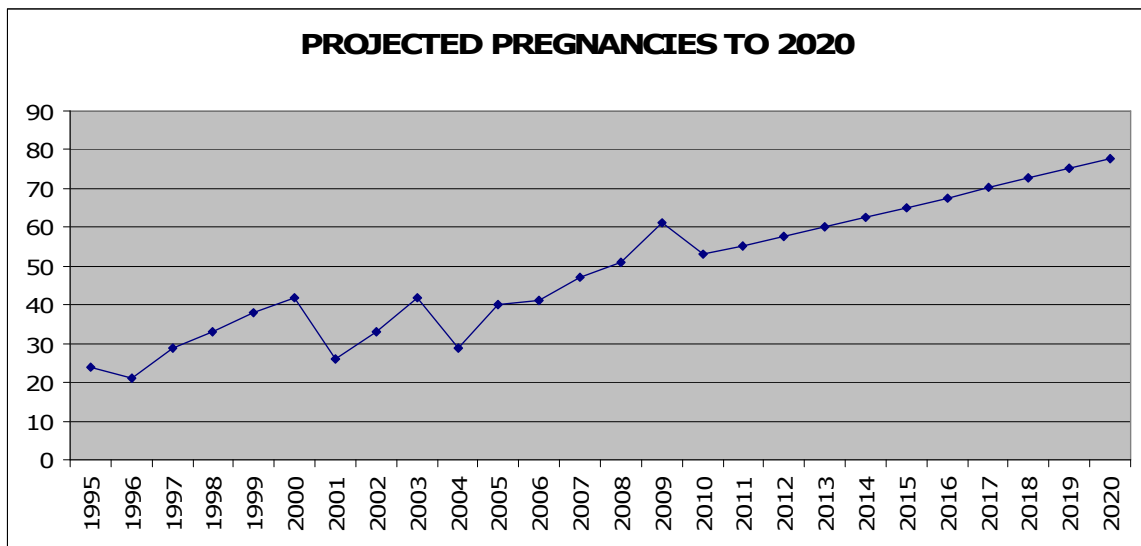
YEAR	n of WOMEN	PREGNANCIES	%
1995	476	24	5.0
1996	485	21	4.3
1997	504	29	5.8
1998	536	33	6.2
1999	543	38	7.0
2000	537	42	7.8
2001	579	26	4.5
2002	605	33	5.5
2003	658	42	6.4
2004	730	29	4.0
2005	772	40	5.2
2006	817	41	5.0
2007	852	47	5.5
2008	932	51	5.5
2009	996	61	6.1
2010	991	53	5.3

The projected rates are presented in the next table which estimates that by 2020 78 women officers will be pregnant based on the constant 5.54% increase.

Estimated Number of Pregnancies 2011 to 2020

YEAR	n of WOMEN	PREGNANCIES	Average %
2011	997	55	5.5
2012	1042	58	5.5
2013	1087	60	5.5
2014	1132	63	5.5
2015	1176	65	5.5
2016	1221	68	5.5
2017	1266	70	5.5
2018	1311	73	5.5
2019	1356	75	5.5
2020	1401	78	5.5

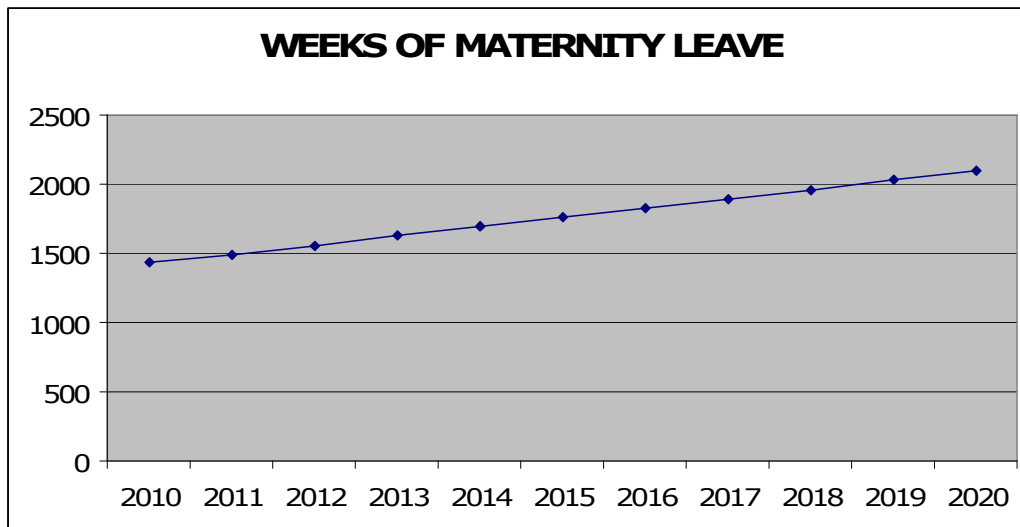
Because a fixed constant (i.e. the estimated average) is used then there is an equal interval projected incremental increase as the graph below illustrates.



#### Step 4. Calculating the average rate of maternity leave

The research force provided actual data for the number of months taken in maternity leave such that it was possible to calculate the average number of weeks taken (i.e. 26.6 weeks). This then was used to project the average number of weeks likely to be taken in maternity leave to 2020.

Projected rates of maternity leave (in weeks) 2010 to 2020





### Step 5. Calculating the approximate weekly pay of a constable in 2020.

Given the recent publication of the Independent Review of Police Officer and Staff Remuneration and Conditions, model pay rates were presented for constables. In the present report the modal rate of £36,519 was taken from the Independent Review to be the average salary. We are assuming for present purposes that this rate will remain constant to 2020. The following table presents the estimated average weekly salary.

Actual and estimated salary of an operational constable

YEAR	AV ANNUAL SALARY	AV WEEKLY SALARY
2007	£ 27,672	£ 532
2008	£ 28,406	£ 546
2009	£ 29,145	£ 560
2010	£ 29,873	£ 574
2011	£ 36,519	£ 702
2012	£ 36,519	£ 702
2013	£ 36,519	£ 702
2014	£ 36,519	£ 702
2015	£ 36,519	£ 702
2016	£ 36,519	£ 702
2017	£ 36,519	£ 702
2018	£ 36,519	£ 702
2019	£ 36,519	£ 702
2020	£ 36,519	£ 702

We recognise that this is a fairly crude estimate. It proved too complex to try and work out the relative number of officers at each rank and their accompanying rate of pay. Thus these figures are intended to provide broad brush indicators of the scale of magnitude and should not be taken as absolute values.

**Step 6: Estimating the combined potential cost (in working days lost and salary costs) from sickness absence and maternity leave to 2020**

Potential costs in terms of working days lost and salary costs were then calculated based on:-

- a) the preceding projections of numbers of officers and weeks absent due to sickness, or maternity;
- b) the potential costs of deployable days lost;
- c) sickness absence, which represents working days and does not include rest days;
- d) deployable days which are calculated at an annual rate of 208 (see appendix).

NB: Secondments, career breaks or suspensions are not factored into these calculations. Paternity leave is also not considered

### Estimating the combined potential cost (in working days lost and salary costs)

YEAR	WOMEN	SA DAYS	SA WEEKS	PREGNANCIES	ML WEEKS	SA + ML WEEKS	AV WEEK PAY	COST SA	COST ML	COST SA+ML
2007	852	9542	1908	47	1598	3506	£ 532.15	£ 1,015,597.63	£ 850,375.70	£ 1,865,973
2008	932	10438	2088	51	1734	3822	£ 546.26	£ 1,140,416.08	£ 947,214.84	£ 2,087,631
2009	996	11155	2231	61	2074	4305	£ 560.48	£ 1,250,453.30	£ 1,162,435.52	£ 2,412,889
2010	991	11099	2220	53	1410	3630	£ 574.49	£ 1,275,275.88	£ 809,916.00	£ 2,085,192
2011	997	11167	2233	55	1469	3703	£ 702.29	£ 1,568,548.93	£ 1,031,909.13	£ 2,600,458
2012	1042	11670	2334	58	1535	3869	£ 702.29	£ 1,639,096.03	£ 1,078,320.30	£ 2,717,416
2013	1087	12172	2434	60	1602	4036	£ 702.29	£ 1,709,643.13	£ 1,124,731.47	£ 2,834,375
2014	1132	12674	2535	63	1668	4202	£ 702.29	£ 1,780,190.23	£ 1,171,142.65	£ 2,951,333
2015	1176	13176	2635	65	1734	4369	£ 702.29	£ 1,850,737.33	£ 1,217,553.82	£ 3,068,291
2016	1221	13679	2736	68	1800	4536	£ 702.29	£ 1,921,284.43	£ 1,263,965.00	£ 3,185,249
2017	1266	14181	2836	70	1866	4702	£ 702.29	£ 1,991,831.53	£ 1,310,376.17	£ 3,302,208
2018	1311	14683	2937	73	1932	4869	£ 702.29	£ 2,062,378.63	£ 1,356,787.34	£ 3,419,166
2019	1356	15186	3037	75	1998	5035	£ 702.29	£ 2,132,925.73	£ 1,403,198.52	£ 3,536,124
2020	1401	15688	3138	78	2064	5202	£ 702.29	£ 2,203,472.83	£ 1,449,609.69	£ 3,653,083

## 6. Comparison of data for 2020 projections

Computed data were compared between the force used in the Added value study and the present one

Parameters	Present provincial research force	Comparator metropolitan research force assuming incremental increase in establishment	Comparator metropolitan research force assuming steady state in establishment
Total number of officers 2009/10 2008	3649	8626	8626
Total estimated number of officers 2020	3549	10121	8524
Actual % women 2010	27.1%	28.3%	28.3%
Estimated % women 2020	39.5%	38%	36.4%
Actual Women's % share of sick absence (i.e. working days lost 2009/10 2008	37.7%	39.5%	39.5%
Estimated Women's % share of sick absence (i.e. working days lost 2020)	48%	49%	47.5%
Loss of deployable days calculated as FTE 2020 ( as a function of ♀sickness absence)	60	117	94
Estimated no of pregnancies 2020	78	184	149
Estimated weeks of maternity leave 2020	2064	4968	4015
Loss of deployable days calculated as FTE 2020 (as a function of maternity leave)	40	96	77
Estimated weekly pay of constable 2020	£702	£736	£702
Estimated annual cost due to women's sickness absence +maternity leave 2020	£3.6 million	£8.1 million	£6.2 million
Estimated annual cost of men's sickness absence 2020	£2.4 million	£4.7 million	£3.8 million
Difference	£1.2 million	£3.4 million	£2.4 million
Presented as estimate FTE	34 FTE	91 FTE	67 FTE

It is striking that whether a growth or steady state scenario is assumed, by 2020 the percentage of women is estimated to be at or just over the 35% threshold. Similarly women's estimated percentage share of sickness absence by 2020 is reaching 50%.

When the FTE estimate of lost deployable days is calculated as a percentage of the estimated work force, it is about 1% (range 1.2-0.6%).

The differences in the estimated constable salaries between the two studies are £38,260 in the earlier report and £36,519 in the later. This differential is due to the expected rationalising of police pay.

## 7. Conclusions

The research question asked in the present study addressed the implications of increasing the percentage share of women as a proportion of the police officer complement in the Service. In attempting to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the ramifications in the context of the present economic and political climate as well as considering the legal implications of equality legislation.

The recent HMIC report “Demanding Times” states

“Forces must organise their resources so that the highest possible proportion of officers and other police staff are available to meet the demands of the public. At no time in the past has this been more important than now: in this age of austerity, the police will have to make hard choices about how they use their resources” p4.

The decisions Police Forces will have to make may put pressure on preserving and advancing equality gains. That pressure is already manifest. The equalities audit undertaken as part of the Independent Review concluded that the progression freeze will have a greater adverse impact on women police officers, although the impact of the abolition of competence related threshold payments (CRTPs) will be greater for men. On the other hand, the audit concluded that the proposed expertise and professional accreditation allowances (EPAAs) which will replace of the existing special priority payments (SPPs) will eliminate the present gender disparity in payments received.

However the previous government’s oversight of recruitment, retention and progression (RRP), was underpinned by the Ministerial Ethnic Minority Steering Group and the Women in Policing Steering Group. Now these areas of work rest locally with individual Police Authorities.

Saima Afzal, Lancashire Police Authority Independent Member/Association of Police Authorities-Executive Member with Equality, Diversity and Human Rights responsibility comments (personal communication)

“There will be no national reporting structure as the current Minister and Home Secretary do not wish to have a National Women in Policing Steering Group- the group no longer exists, the current government’s wish to encourage the localism agenda- and as such any guidance issued is merely guidance as there are no national ministerial accountability structures that currently exist to hold local Police Forces and Police Authorities to account. APA due to limited capacity are not in a position to issue any further national guidance. The APA will still however continue to issue informal guidance through its internal communication structures to Police Authorities and the APA will still retain a focus on recruitment, retention and progression through Saima Afzal as the APA Executive lead member for this area of work. It will never the less be

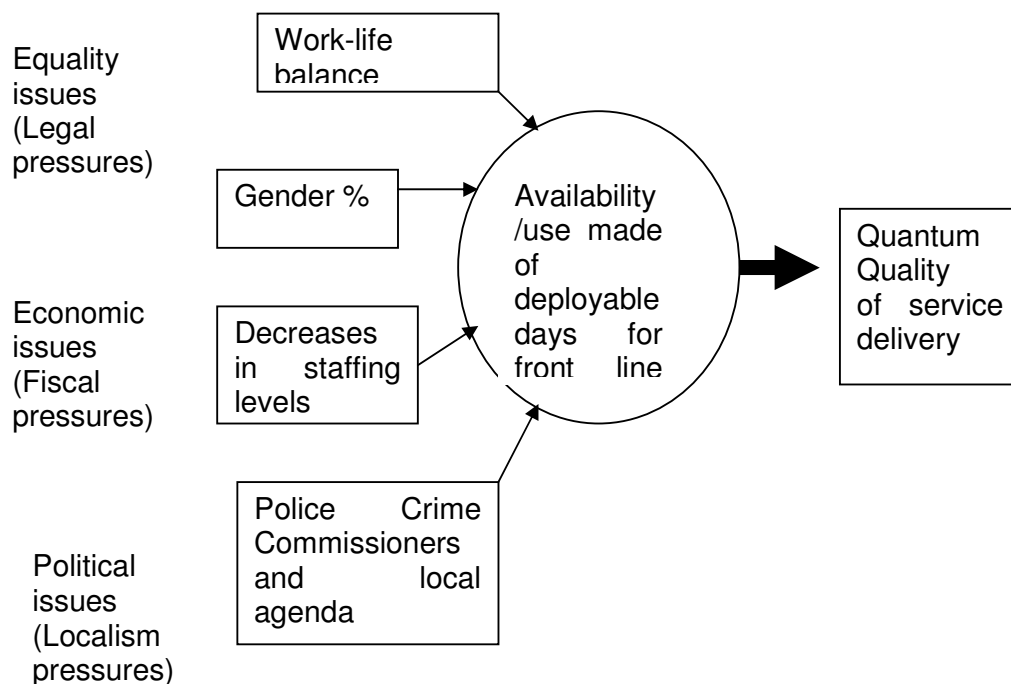
down to the new Police Crime Commissioners to determine and set local recruitment, retention and progression targets. “

As yet it is unclear what national steer will be provided, if any, from Police Crime Commissioners in relation to setting local priorities in terms of diversity and equal opportunities.

In the light of the findings of the present study it is obvious that given the present conditions, women do, on average, take more periods of sickness absence than male colleagues. As the predicted percentage of women increases this, together with the proportionately greater number of pregnancies and corresponding periods of maternity leave, will exacerbate the rate of absences from work. This in turn will put pressure on the total number of deployable days available to forces.

Thus the position of women and the ramifications of their increasing numbers within the Police Service have to be put into this broader context.

#### Decision making context for the Police Service



What this diagram represents, are the legal, fiscal and political pressures which may well be in tension when trying to reconcile their competing demands on maintaining levels and quality of policing service.

## 8. Recommendations

The answer to the pressures on deployable days available to forces cannot be to restrict the number of women officers. This is untenable and also potentially illegal. The Neyroud report on police training states:

“To change the workforce profile the police service cannot afford to have a trade off in focusing on recruitment levels rather than retention issues or progression within the service. To achieve a 35% gender balance within 5-7 years, a multi track approach should be adopted include positive action at all key points of the employment cycle: attraction, recruitment, development and promotion” p212 vol 2.

In order to reach a compromise in this trade off, in other words, square the circle, then a number of initiatives may be considered;-

### 1. Improving sickness management

- a) in general
- b) of women in particular.

This may occasion further research to determine the more specific reasons for sickness absence, especially among women, and develop better practice to minimise absence from work.

### 2. Engaging a more proactive maternity policy whereby forces keep in touch with their women officers, updating them and managing their return to work effectively.

This will involve reviewing and promulgating existing good practice, receiving feedback from and responding to the needs of women returners.

### 3. At a more fundamental level, there may need to be a re-negotiation

- a) of the psychological contract between staff and the organisation
- and
- b) of the social contract between police and the public.



## Psychological contract

Millward and Hopkins (1998) discussed the changing nature of the relationship between organisations and their employees. They suggested then, that the unwritten implicit obligations in what they called old employment relationships e.g. the trade between job security and organisational commitment, were under pressure. Clearly the issuing of regulation 19 enforced retirement notices on officers and the potential for redundancies has put strain on the employee-employer relationship within the police.

Millward and Hopkins proposed the idea of the psychological contract as a way to understand this relationship. A psychological contract

“signals issues of exchange and of mutual expectation in the link between individuals and the organisations for which they work” p1531.

They argue that a central tenet to an effective psychological contract is the consistency between what is promised and what is received. They argue

“the more stable and consistent are the organisation’s requests and promises, the more likely an employee develops an unambiguous and consistent perception of his or her obligations and entitlements.” p1531.

This suggests, on the one hand, maintaining levels of trust between the individual and the force and on the other hand deconstructing the notion of entitlement.

Glenda Fisk (2009) claims that we are living in the ‘age of entitlement’ where people are increasingly subscribing to the belief that they should get exactly what they want. She goes on to propose that excessive forms of entitlement predict an array of negative behaviours such as selfishness and aggression in relationships in people’s efforts to obtain outcomes they believe are owed to them. Furthermore, if they are deprived of the desired outcome this is experienced as an unjust injury and justifies subsequent claims for compensation.

The tension between enhancing trust between the individual and their force on the one hand, and the force having, if not an actual, a perceived excessive sense of entitlement by individuals may be illustrated in attitudes towards flexible working. Thus an attitude may be expressed in terms that “women want everything” i.e. a career, promotion, and a family when consideration is being given to requests for flexible working arrangements. A Force may feel that it cannot meet the particular request and the individual can feel that they are being thwarted.

Millward and Hopkins suggest that a “relationship” psychological contract, (i.e. one involving mutuality) rather than a “transactional” one (i.e. purely an economic exchange of money for labour) provides a greater degree of identification with an organisation and encourages reciprocity. Thus for

“ transactionally oriented employees, the organisation is simply the place where individuals do their work and invest little emotional attachment or commitment to the organisation. It is a place where they seek immediate rewards out of the employment situation such as pay and credentials”. p1532.

Under conditions of a relational psychological contract

“individuals will fully internalise company values and link their identities with the organisation”p1532.

The current climate may shift more towards a transactional contract. Research summarised by Millward and Hopkins shows that employees who are relationally oriented are much more likely than those transactionally oriented to behave as

“organisational citizens, i.e. going the extra mile, pursuing corporate interest and activities, behaving co-operatively and generally contributing to organisational effectiveness.” p1533.

Greater degrees of flexible negotiation and creativity may be required in order to balance the needs of the individual, the load being carried by colleagues and the capacity of the force to fulfil its obligations of service.

Social contract

British policing relies on the notion of consent for their legitimacy (Jackson, 2009). Thus the citizen yields certain freedoms of independent action in return for the State’s protection to maintain order. As Jackson say “the police stand as symbolic ‘guardians’ of social stability and order, held responsible for community values and informal social controls.”

Under the present regime, there may be some retrenching of police involvement in activities associated with social cohesion and community engagement and a re-focussing on emergency responding. Given the pressures on deployment availability, the social contract between policing and public may need to be engaged as part of the longer term discussion about what the police are there to do.

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## Appendix

Calculation of available deployable working days for a police constable

Rest days	104
Annual leave	26
Average sickness	11
Training days	8
Bank Holidays	8
Net days	208
Available days	365
Deployable days	208