



Summary Report

Professionalising criminal investigation – an examination of an early attempt to support specialisation in criminal investigation.

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1. Introduction

In 2000 Kent Police developed a Strategic Policing Doctrine. This doctrine incorporated everything from approaches to policing, the challenges of the evidence base and the importance of a learning culture in Kent Police. These ideas resulted in a partnership between Kent Police and Canterbury Christ Church University that produced the Advanced Detective Training programme (ADT) including a university qualification, the BSc (Hons) Applied Criminal Investigation delivered from 2001-2006. The ADT partnership pre-dated the national Professionalisation Investigation Programme (PIP) and Core Investigative Doctrine launched in 2005, and the current Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF), representing an early attempt to improve investigative practice through professionalization.

Police education and training has received little attention in terms of research identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to transforming learning into practice. There are a few studies in relation to initial police training and the award of higher education qualifications but similar qualifications in criminal investigation have not been available until relatively recently. This research focuses on an initiative that was introduced at a time when the quality of criminal investigation training was questioned and ideas around enhancing criminal investigation skills explored.

This research was aimed at collecting the experiences of detectives on the ADT programme, from their initial development and education in criminal investigation through to their post-ADT career to date. Trainers and academics contributing to the programme and Sir David Philips (Chief Constable of Kent Police at the time) were also interviewed as part of the research.

2. Methodological approach

- 2.1 The research intended to gain a range of perspectives from the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ADT programme. A number of former trainers (4), academic staff (2) students (20) and Sir David Philips agreed to be interviewed. All participants were granted anonymity, although Sir David Philips agreed to talk 'on the record'. Where contact details were available, as many potential participants as possible were approached to take part in the research. Only two of those contacted declined to participate.
- 2.2 The research included collecting biographical information from each officer to gain an understanding of their career path before and after the ADT programme. All participants were interviewed using a semi-structured approach to gain a balance between relevance of responses and flexibility for individual comments and perspectives. The analysis was conducted using analytical software (NVivo).

3. Summary of key findings

Establishing the ADT programme

3.1 Aims and structure of the ADT programme

The ADT programme intended to train and educate investigators to a higher level than previous training arrangements. The purpose was to create a pool of detectives with sufficient knowledge and expertise to enable them to effectively investigate crime, advise peers, and rival other professionals within the Criminal Justice System, who have an educational base to their professional development (i.e. solicitors, barristers, CPS). A role was developed to ensure that a 'common ideas of purpose' was identified.

The ADT programme consisted of two complementary streams. Firstly, students undertook six three-week courses within the first two years of the programme. Some of these courses (such as the SIO modules) were only usually attended by senior detectives. In addition, new courses were designed to ensure effectiveness in key areas of practice, such as police disclosure. The courses were as follows:

- (1) CPIA and the HRA in detail,
- (2) investigative interviewing (the old tier three advanced interviewing course),
- (3) law, evidence and procedure,
- (4) intelligence and proactive investigation,
- (5) investigating sexual offences, and
- (6) the existing SIO modules.

Each course of study had its own assessments, usually by way of multiple choice examination plus written examination.

Students were also required to complete a portfolio of evidence in order to prove workplace competence. Unlike modern incarnations requiring evidence from the workplace, ADT students were required to demonstrate each competence across the range of criminal investigation phases on six separate occasions. The individual courses and the workplace competency elements made up the police stream of investigator development. The academic delivery involved students completing six complementary academic modules (delivered by CCCU) in the first two years of the programme. In the third year students were required to submit an 8000 word dissertation on an aspect of criminal investigation. The modules undertaken are illustrated in the table below.

Level 4	Policing, Social Control and Crime	Law, Evidence and Procedure	Investigating Volume and Serious Crime
Level 5	Issues in Law and Policing	Managing Crime	The Science and Technology of Criminal Investigation
Level 6	Dissertation		

Biographical data

3.2 In total, 40 students enrolled onto the programme in 2001 (22 students), 2002 (8 students) and 2003 (10 students). The sample of former 'student' participants was therefore 50% of the total intake for the programme over the total duration of the ADT programme. Respondent students included officers currently at the rank of constable through to senior policing roles. Interviewees had a wide range of qualifications at the beginning of the ADT programme ranging from 'O' levels, 'A' levels through to higher education qualifications. Level of qualifications at the start of the programme appeared to have no correlation with the outcome of the degree award for the BSc (Hons) in Applied Criminal Investigation or successfully passing the ADT programme as a whole. Other biographical data is listed below:

Average age (at time of programme)	33.4 years
Gender balance	11 female, 9 male
Average length of police experience prior to ADT programme (including probation period)	6 years
Average operational police experience since ADT	11.6 years
Average amount of time spent in investigative role since ADT	9.6 years

Application and selection

3.3 The reasons for applying to the ADT programme varied with students providing a variety of reasons that influenced their decisions. These reasons included (out of a sample of 20): the opportunity to pursue a detective career (20), the offer of enhanced training (15), the opportunity to become highly skilled (10), the opportunity to obtain a degree (10), the perception that ADT was a good opportunity (10), the enhanced development offered (9), and the potential for enhancing future opportunities (7).

3.4 All applicants were required to complete a selection process designed to identify officers with potential to succeed on the programme. The process utilised was similar to processes used at that time for accelerated promotion within the service. A variety of selection tools were utilised, ranging from an occupational personality questionnaire, verbal and numerical reasoning tests, multiple assessment series (identifying skills such as convincing, written and oral communication, initiative, problem solving, fact finding and quality orientation), a structured interview, and references and recommendations from supervisors and managers. Many of the tests related to specific skills and qualities, and as such did not relate to policing tests or problems.

3.5 Many of the ADT officers were unfamiliar with the testing techniques used at the time to select the successful applicants. While many of the ADT officers recalled that the testing was not police focused many officers accepted this as part of the process. Psychometric selection has become a more regular selection method in policing since the ADT selection process.

Views on ADT model of investigation

3.6 The ADT Model of investigation 'borrowed' concepts from the academic world and scientific research in particular. Identifying the hypothetico-deductive method as most appropriate for investigation, the model posited a series of stages of an investigation within which investigators were expected to think through their investigation, and record decision-making, whilst having wide discretion in relation to the strategies and tactics they would employ. The theory suggested that the more complex the case, the higher the number of reviews would be necessary to ensure the focus of the investigation.

The model contained six identifiable stages:

At **stage one (INPUT)**, “*Input*” may be received from a variety of sources which makes it necessary for an investigator to begin an investigation. For example, the “Input” could include mere suspicion, intelligence, an arrest, a handover package or any number of stimuli. The investigator is encouraged to create a record of the sources of “Input” and from this point begin to create an auditable record relating to what instigated their involvement in the case.

At **stage two (INITIAL RESPONSE)**, the investigator was expected to ask a sufficient number of questions in order to ascertain what is known by the investigation at this point, and what actions have been taken by the police so far in respect of it. The answers to these questions inform the investigator so that they can identify the problem and formulate early hypotheses in the next stage.

At **stage three (IDENTIFY PROBLEM AND FORMULATE HYPOTHESES)** the investigator should be in a position to identify what the problem is and state it. This will often mean identifying the nature of the crime that an investigator thinks at an early stage they are investigating. The investigator was then expected to create a working hypothesis in relation to the perpetrator of the crime (The most likely possibility based upon the facts as they present themselves at this point). The investigator was then expected to formulate reasonable alternative hypotheses. These early thoughts did not represent the investigators final determination on the matter at issue. This was an *early determination*, which could be subject to change depending upon what the subsequent investigation revealed.

At **stage four (TEST HYPOTHESIS)**, having formulated the working and alternative hypotheses, the investigator was expected to create an investigation plan in order to test the hypotheses generated. This would take the form of generating strategies, fast track actions or other actions in order to do so. Investigative discretion determined what options to use in the circumstances of that particular case, and any particular priorities. Stage four then led the investigator to the most important stage of the model.

At **stage five (REVIEW)**, the investigator was forced to review incoming information and evaluate it in the light of the existing hypotheses. The hypotheses could then be verified, discounted or reformulated depending upon the results of enquiries. Depending upon case complexity, the investigation could either (1) go back to stage four in order to generate further actions or (2) go directly to the final stage.

At **stage six (OUTCOMES)**, the investigator should be in a position to state a case theory from discovered facts and identify an outcome. This could be that there is no crime, that there is no further action (because all possible enquiries have been conducted with no success), or it could mean that an individual has been “*brought to justice*” either by way of conviction, caution or TIC.

Note the model did not intend to represent a model of the process of investigation from start to finish (as Core Doctrine and APP does), but to provide a strategic thinking model for any investigation. All ADT students were trained to utilise the model in practice, and part of their competency related portfolio was the requirement to prove use of the model on at least six separate occasions.

- 3.7 All but one ADT officer commented positively about the ADT model of investigation as a useful approach to investigative decision making. When asked if they still used the model, ADT officers provided a variety of responses ranging from; ‘no longer working in investigation’,

'now using the National Decision Model (NDM) as a matter of policy' through 'to using modified versions of the ADT model'. Respondents declared that they still used the model (12), some didn't use it at all (3), others used it in an adapted way with other approaches (5) (e.g. NDM).

- 3.8 When asked to comment further on the model, many of the sample discussed the practicality of using it. Some officers considered it too bureaucratic and time consuming to use the model for minor crime while others made reference to resistance in the past from supervisors to the extensive detail provided on crime reports. These officers specially commented on the ADT model being inappropriate for minor investigation (7). However, a large number of ADT officers (19) interviewed commented positively in using the ADT model of investigation for serious, complex and major crime investigations.
- 3.9 A small number (3) of student respondents mentioned the ADT model of investigation alongside the Core Doctrine (now within APP). The development of the ADT model was an innovation at the time of its introduction to Kent Police. However, new developments in police practices including PIP levels 1, 2 and 3 and the introduction of investigative doctrine have changed both the curriculum and modern detective practices. Whilst APP and Core Doctrine contain elements of the Kent model (it is specifically references in Core Doctrine), the model is not present in its entirety.

Views of the ADT programme from the workplace

- 3.10 ADT officers reported some negativity (14) in relation to views of the ADT programme from the workplace, with others reporting a more positive perspective (4). ADT officers mentioned abstraction (11), special priority payment (3) and the 'special' status of the ADT as a source of negativity (6). Supportive comments and views were more likely to come from supervisors (6) and middle management (7) officers. Some experienced detectives not on the ADT did not understand the purpose of the programme, while operational demands were seen as more important than attending ADT classes, and this was made more difficult as the time required for training, away from operational duties, was seen as significant among other detectives. The lack of investigative experience of some ADT officers undermined their perceived credibility as detectives in the workplace.

Views on approaches to assessment

- 3.11 Although many officers described the frustration and time consuming nature of collecting evidence for competencies in assessment, the large majority of respondents (16) believed the use of competencies was a positive form of assessment. A small minority of officers (4) believed providing evidence of competency was overly bureaucratic and not required.
- 3.12 University assessments were seen as different to previous assessment methods experienced by the non-graduate ADT officers. While some officers initially felt concerned about the requirement for essays and presentations, these officers became comfortable with the university assessment methods as the programme progressed. Officers (10) explicitly commented on the university assessment the majority commented positively (6), and a small number of officers expressed mixed (2) and negative views (2).

Views of the University involvement in the ADT programme

- 3.13 Although the majority of ADT officers (12) enjoyed the degree programme and were positive about their experience, some officers had mixed views (4) and small proportion (4) were negative about their overall university experience. Positive views were influenced by learning new things, the opportunity to obtain a degree and enjoying the learning experience. Officers expressing mixed views pointed to strengths of some parts of the curriculum and weaknesses in others, while officers expressing a negative view were influenced by their views on relevance and content.

3.14 Slightly less officers commented positively (11) in relation to the relevance of the university contribution to the programme, with a smaller proportion (6) expressing mixed views and a small minority believing the degree was not relevant (3). Officers who commented positively mentioned the content on law modules, subject matter relating to profiling or theories relating to crime. Respondents expressing mixed or negative views pointed to issues around the lack of relevance in relation to practicality of investigation and applying what they had learned directly to the workplace.

4. Findings

4.1 A high proportion of students remained in an investigative role or had spent a large part of their police service in an investigative role since completing the ADT programme. This finding reflects an important consideration when making resourcing or investment decisions in specialist training/education.

4.2 Qualifications obtained before registration on the programme appeared to have no bearing on the outcome of the degree award.

4.3 ADT applicants were primarily motivated to apply for the programme in order to pursue a career as a detective (20). However, there were other reasons alongside this for enrolling on the programme. Other motivations included the offer of enhanced training (15), the opportunity to become highly skilled (10), the opportunity to obtain a degree (10), the perception that ADT was a good opportunity (10), the enhanced development offered (9), and the potential for enhancing future opportunities (7).

4.4 ADT officers reported some negativity (14) in relation to the ADT officers, with others reporting positive and supporting workplace (4). ADT officers mentioned abstraction (11), special priority payment (3) and the 'special' status of the ADT as a source of negativity (6). Supportive comments and views were more likely to come from supervisors (6) and middle management (7) officers.

4.5 The majority of officers (12) commented positively about the university contribution to the ADT programme with officers also expressing a mixture of positive and negative views (4) and mainly negative perceptions (4).

4.6 Although time consuming and challenging, the majority of officers (16) were supportive of the use of competencies as a form of assessment.

4.7 The majority of respondents claimed that they still used the model (12), with some officers not using it at all (3), and others applied the model with other approaches (5) (e.g. National Decision Model).

4.8 A large minority of officers (7) commented on the ADT model being inappropriate for minor investigation (e.g. too bureaucratic). However, all most all ADT officers (19) interviewed commented positively in using the ADT model of investigation for serious, complex and major crime investigations.