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INDEPENDENT REPORT DEMANDS SHAKE-UP OF POLICE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

As confidence in policing declines in the UK, the Government and the Home Office respond with a series of new proposals, targets and directive, to change how we are policed. But the problems, Politeia's latest study suggests, are more fundamental: low level recruitment, poor training, and a system of employment which fails to encourage good policing. The detailed evidence is assembled by Anthony Howlett Bolton, former Deputy Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police.

Howlett Bolton provides a full and dismal picture. Recruitment is pitched at a low level, with no formal educational qualifications required. There is no separate scheme to attract the high fliers, good graduate entrants to the force. Though pay and employment conditions are good, they do not provide the necessary incentive: the measures and targets imposed by the Home Office are often irrelevant to the proper functions of the police and to what the public believes the police ought to do.

Politeia's distinguished Police Commissioners* consider the lessons for the future. They warn that the police fail to compete with other employers for the able applicants, including graduates, needed to provide future leaders, and that the wrong qualities and skills are sought. The focus of training, they suggest, is misplaced; moreover, insufficient emphasis given to IT and on-the-job training. Once working, police officers are not encouraged and developed by a system designed to reward those who do their job their well. Rather, the police suffer, like other public services, from the triple scourge of an inflated bureaucracy, rigid targets, and initiatives designed to serve the purposes of their political masters rather than the end of good policing. They are not allowed to do their own job, and have many other jobs, which should not be theirs, thrust on to them.

The Report concludes with a series of clear recommendations by Politeia's Director, Dr Sheila Lawlor. Poor entrance standards must be raised, and training prioritised. Poor leadership must be tackled by introducing fast stream entry and encouraging new blood at each level. The bad structure must be tackled so that good officers can succeed and are rewarded for doing so. For this, the balance of accountability and control must lie with the individual forces and not the Home Office or its quangoes. Individual forces should encourage officers to specialise and excel. The lessons from the New York Police Department show that such reforms work and can transform the quality of policing, rapidly. And for the future, greater specialism by individual forces should be complemented by a national force with responsibility for national and international crime.

**Policing Matters: Recruitment, Training and Motivation* is published by Politeia on Thursday 3rd November (To be confirmed), and is available from Politeia, 22 Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0QP at £7.00.

The text will be available journalists on application by response to this message. Enquiries to Politeia on 0207 240 5070, e-mail, info@politeia.co.uk, the author Part I, Anthony Howlett Bolton 07802431533, and the editor of the Report Dr Sheila Lawlor, Politeia (Director).

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Part II (pp 95-115) by Anthony Burden, Chief Constable, South Wales Police (1996-2003), Tony Caplin, Chairman, Durlacher Plc, Lord Ramsbotham, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (1995-2001), Kate Rutherford, former Partner at Accenture, Chris Woodhead, HM Chief Inspector of Schools (1994-2000).
Part III (pp 119-143) edited by Sheila Lawlor, Politeia (Director).