



## Introduction

Hertfordshire Constabulary, recently rated in the top quartile of the best performing police forces in the UK by the HMIC's Police Performance Assessment 2006/07, has become a forerunner in leadership assessment and development thanks to the pragmatic approach it adopts. As such, the 360 appraisal is not the usual type of assessment model that would be considered for selecting future inspectors and sergeants.

However, Hertfordshire's succession management manager Amanda Johnson is a keen advocate of the system: "Part of my remit was to find a diagnostic tool to assess leadership potential. Whilst we already have a Leadership Charter, which supports the delivery of 'Our Purpose', we don't measure people against it; instead we use the Performance Development Review which uses 12 transactional behaviours. Whatever we decided to use needed to underpin this Charter otherwise there would be no point in having it."

Amanda knew she would encounter some challenges when it came to introducing a new system to the police that wasn't exactly on brief: "We were told we couldn't use 360s for selection, but the research I studied said otherwise. Why couldn't I develop a system that was anonymous enough and robust enough to be adapted to the Police? In fact, it has been really well received by both the top level and the officers themselves, as I think the benefits of the system are obvious," she says.

She teamed up with assessment experts Head Light Communications who built the model around her required criteria: it had to be completely anonymous, designed for selection purposes and last no longer than 20 minutes. The resultant product is called Talent360, known internally by Hertfordshire Constabulary as 'Leadership360'. In addition to this software product, a diagnostic questionnaire was also required. This was to be based on existing and recognised competency frameworks and values sets.

Through thorough research and consultation, five areas of competence from the Police's national Integrated Competency Framework were identified as critical for effective leadership within Hertfordshire Constabulary and which underpin their Leadership Charter. The purpose of this questionnaire, also developed by Head Light Communications, was two - fold. Firstly, to help individuals evaluate their performance in their leadership role, and secondly to assist the organisation to identify those who have strong potential for more senior leadership roles. The five areas are:

- Effective Communication
- Maximising Potential
- Community and Customer Focus
- Respect for Equality and Diversity
- Personal Responsibility

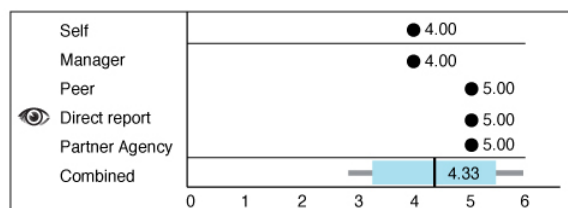
This specific questionnaire, designed to assess these Leadership behaviours, has been trialled extensively to gather benchmark data for those up and down the Constabulary.



## Police-proofing the 360 appraisals process

“During the development of the questionnaire, we consulted with Hertfordshire Constabulary to identify those behavioural indicators that are key to success in the role. We also identified which review groups might observe them more sharply. As a result, the Personal Report generated by Talent360 draws attention to the leadership behaviours that make the biggest difference to performance and draws the reader’s attention to the feedback from those who have that sharper perspective. This is a unique capability of Talent360 and is hugely valuable to those that use the software,” comments Ian Lee-Emery, MD of Head Light Communications.

Manages group discussions effectively



Amanda conducted two pilot groups, both of which have proved successful, prompting interest from other forces in the UK which are considering it as a model for their own leadership assessment programmes. “The Leadership Board had their own opinions of the officers’ behaviours in the latter cohort and on reviewing the data were impressed with how closely the data and their own impressions of the officers matched,” Amanda says.

She then chose to apply 360 to all Chief Inspectors in the Constabulary and expecting a mixed reaction, from strong reluctance to high levels of enthusiasm, she enlisted support from the Deputy Chief Constable who clearly positioned the importance of the programme to the force. In total, 30 Chief Inspectors took part and nominated their reviewers - this included people from both within and external to the force. “There are some behaviours that are better observed by those who engage with our officers from outside the force,” comments Amanda. “We have developed specific behavioural indicators from our competency framework and targeted these external groups to give us the keenest feedback possible.” As part of the questionnaire design, if it’s believed that only certain review groups will observe certain behaviours, then only these groups are presented with the questions to rate. This keeps the length of the questionnaire short making it quicker to complete and keeps the questions relevant to avoid ‘not-observed’ scores or misleading median ratings.



Each Chief Inspector was reviewed by an average of 14 reviewers totalling over 428 reviews for their entire group. “We have a huge amount of data here as a result of this review,” says Amanda. “We can quickly compare individuals against our benchmarks to see who is showing potential and identify where any development areas might be, personally or across the group.”



## Police-proofing the 360 appraisals process

Personal reports were provided to each of the Chief Inspectors and they have acknowledged that the feedback is fair though perhaps not quite what they had hoped for. They have all identified developmental areas to work on to improve their leadership skills. For some, the feedback included some difficult challenges. A further review in 18 months is planned allowing comparison year on year and between individuals.



Word has got out amongst the force and the Constabulary now has a constant stream of requests for further ad hoc 360 reviews to be performed, this time driven by individuals who were reviewers in past review programmes.

“I was genuinely surprised, and of course pleased to hear that there was an appetite driven from a personal perspective for this type of review and feedback. I now have to work out how to satisfy this need in a structured and controlled way that balances the needs of the organisation with the desire of the individual,” comments Amanda.

The Constabulary plans to continue to work with the Leadership Review Board to include the benchmark data from these review programmes as part of Succession Management. Specifically, this data will be used to assess leadership skills and potential for those looking for promotion to Sergeant and to Inspector. There are also plans to implement this 360 review programme across and with other forces where teams form part of collaboration projects.