



# Black and Asian Police Association Greater Manchester

Newsletter: Issue 20

Summer 2017.

I'll Be Missing You..



*We cannot find the words*



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

# Senior Officer Behaviour in Policing

This lecture is based on the paper by Prof Hough et al on “Senior Officer Misconduct in Policing”. This paper is quite shocking in terms of the behaviours it describes and I believe accurately delineates a quiet crisis of leadership in the police service, yet it barely made an impact when published and I am unaware of much serious discussion in the service about it.

Indeed there does not seem to be the interest or discussion about a topic that I, for one, think merits debate and scrutiny.

My best guess is that there is, or perhaps *was* until the vote on Brexit, a general sense of near helplessness when one looks at the scandals involving senior leaders in the NHS, politics and other parts of the public sector; a sense that the whole body politic is aloof and self-serving. In this context the police are just seen as a small sub-set of this larger issue. I will return to this topic at the end.

But for those who are wondering what I am even talking about let's just do a whistle stop tour round the country and look at the conduct of some of the recent Chief Constables. Stuart Hyde, Cumbria. Resigned after the investigation into him criticised his lack of judgment in using the Force's credit card. Investigation found he spent about a quarter of his time away from the Force many on foreign trips. Mark Gilmore, West Yorkshire. Retired after being suspended for two years after allegations of improper behaviour in awarding vehicle contracts when he was in Northern Ireland.

Nick Gargan, Avon and Somerset. Found guilty of 8 counts of misconduct relating to unwelcome advances to female staff and retention of inappropriate images on works equipment. Sean Price, Cleveland Sacked along with his deputy for gross misconduct including nepotistic appointments and misuse of public monies. Recently the Force has been found against for spying on journalists whilst he was in charge.

Roger Baker, Essex and subsequently head of integrity issues for HMI. Still being sued by the PCC for Essex for retention of inappropriate bonuses paid to him when he was Chief. The same happened to Sean Price who paid back a tiny amount of what he had received.

These are just a few examples of Chiefs' behaviour which have recently come to light. I hope you can see some common themes which were contained in Prof Hough's paper and will come up in this lecture. There is real variation in outcomes for these Chiefs: Sean Price was sacked and Roger Baker's payment is simply a civil dispute issue but critically *all* have their entitlements intact and indeed some of the unlawful payments they received.

In his paper Hough's main thesis is that there appears to be some cognitive failures that occur when people attain senior positions that explains their behaviour. I do not disagree with this but I would take this further. I would argue those cognitive failures have been systematised and legitimised, so this is more than cognitive failure, it is institutionalised



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](#)

corruption.

My thesis is this: that the senior Command of the British Police service is structurally and systemically corrupt.

What I propose to support this contention is to talk a bit about the 'C' word, corruption and its current use in society. I will argue for a more expansive use of the term.

I then want to start to show how corruption begins in policing by creating a closed system for advancement into the senior ranks, which claims to be meritocratic, but which breeds a rotten culture of entitlement.

I hope to illustrate this eschewing descriptions of current or past misconduct cases, even though you will have already noticed many of the examples already quoted above often did not involve misconduct and did not result in any criminal or financial penalties for the individuals. I will rather concentrate on cases in my Force where the behaviour described has been accepted as normal or at the best not worthy of investigation. In other words what I will talk about are deemed acceptable behaviours and suggest that if these are acceptable behaviours then the corruption must be endemic.

I will argue that this corruption is thus hiding in plain sight with some, I hope, counter intuitive suggestions of signal behaviours of corruption.

I will finally end by delineating what appear to me to be the three consequences of corruption which should be of concern.

To start with the 'C' Word, corruption

There are essentially two understandings of the word corruption. The first is behaviour which stands clearly outside the accepted norms of

society, bribery, embezzlement, gross nepotism

To be deemed corrupt, or accuse someone of being corrupt, in this context is seen as being a very serious slur.

There is a second definition though, that of simply a loss of fidelity or purpose in the body politic

Computer data can be described as corrupted in this context. Indeed in the ancient civilisations of Rome and Athens this concept of corruption was applied to issues of politics where public servants may be seen to have lost their sense of virtue in polity.

So are senior officers in British Policing corrupt by the first definition? There is very little concrete evidence before Sean Price was dismissed in Cleveland in 2012. You would have to go back to Stanley Parr in 1977 for a Chief Constable to be dismissed for misconduct. However, I would argue, as a society we generally do not see our police force as being corrupt in this sense.

However if you use this tighter definition, it almost completely stymies discussion and analysis of the underlying problem. It is a form of censorship. You will find people at the top of organisations invariably interpret corruption with this first concept. It permits them to be personally offended by the accusation and thereby shutdown discussion.

It is analogous to the use of the term racist and racism. By the definition of the tight term of "behaviour completely outside the accepted norms" there is little racism in British society.



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

However, in terms of systemic and structural behaviours, we are still a racist society producing unequal outcomes in employment, education, criminal justice. I hope it is obvious to all that one of the problems in tackling such systemic racism is the sensitivities around branding people or institutions racist. Indeed Trevor Philips, former head of the Commission for Race Equality, now argues strongly this is a form of censorship which blocks progress.

The very same applies to corruption in policing and, in my view, it suits senior officers to keep it like that to prevent discussion and analysis of their behaviour

This is the problem at the heart of the paper Hough presents. He clearly does not want to use the term corruption for the obvious and very good reason of avoiding controversy and being accused of being intemperate etc. However not using the term dilutes the impact of his findings and allows people to ignore or downplay the issue.

Hough, in fact, uses the device described elsewhere by Price in describing unethical behaviour of leaders into two;

*Volitional. That is the clearly corrupt by the narrow definition. The person knows full well they are breaking the rules*

*Cognitive. This is a kind of cognitive dissonance in which the sense of entitlement causes senior leaders to veer off course from the norms of society while still believing it to be correct or at the least not wrong*

This paradigm plays into the hands of those who wish to keep the narrow definition of corruption. It really does not address the issue of how to describe a mind-set that alters and legitimises

the rules to allow otherwise improper behaviour. Is that dissociative thinking or volitional corruption?

Similarly if the rules are distorted how do you describe the behaviour of someone who keeps within those distorted rules or merely further bends the (already distorted) rules?

Indeed Hough admits in the paper the thought processes of officers are not as binary as described in the paradigm but more on a continuum. I would argue further that behaviour is best viewed as being on a (corrupted) continuum

By this I mean the norm has been systemically distorted or corrupted and that senior officer behaviour is simply a product of that corrupt system. To agonise over whether such behaviour is volitional or cognitive is to miss the point in this respect. It is the system which offers so much scope for corrupt behaviour.

So what is the system that produces a senior officer in British Policing? By senior officer I mean an Assistant Chief Constable or above?

Well you have to *Be of Superintending rank i.e. a police officer Attend and pass the Police National Assessment Centre (PNAC)*

*Have the support of your Chief Constable to attend this centre Be accepted by whichever force you apply to for promotion*

Let's examine how this works in practice.

Firstly, and quite obviously, the whole system is closed to police officers only. By their nature any closed system is more likely to retain, indeed inbreed, its genetic flaws. Also keep firmly in mind this is a closed system when we look at the emoluments on offer to apply to be an ACC and



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

the justification for awarding them.

Now the support of the Chief Constable to attend is interesting. You have to toe the line to get on. Again it is trite to stress how this affects conformity, or perhaps expressed a different way, stifles dissent.

Quite interestingly, there are examples all over the country of Chiefs supporting people for PNAC but steadfastly refusing to have them in their force. They usually justify this by telling candidates they would not be a "fit" for their Force whatever that means. What is this about?

I think it touches upon the ethical test that Hough raises. He asks how did people who were known to be ethically dodgy or be sexually predatory or bullies get onto that position? Well they were often supported for PNAC by their Chief Constable and then shipped out.

As a by the way, why isn't this tackled beforehand? It's an issue Hough also wrestles with- that many of the behaviours of senior officers were well known to many before they were finally exposed or caught.

Part of the answer lies in the 'blue collar' nature of the profession. We pride ourselves in this country on the fact that to be a senior police officer you have to have started as a constable. But this comes with problems.

Let's take grey area behaviours. For example can a police officer go swinging? I struggle to see why a PC can but a Chief Constable cannot? So what is the cut off? How would that be enforced? There is simply no rule that certain behaviours which may be acceptable for a constable could not apply to a Chief Constable.

Similarly Hough alludes to the standard of behaviour in the police. He seems to conclude.

that, in many respects, all behaviour is acceptable unless you can definitively prove otherwise. In some respects this is quite astonishing for a law enforcement organization

It does seem that tackling Chief Officer behaviour through a legalistic framework, with all the employment protections now offered simply does not in or cannot work. I would argue strongly that there is little concept at all of the leadership qualities and personal behaviours that an officer class has and that a potential advantage of an officer class is that it has the peer controlling qualities of shame, honour etc.

I would not be the first to argue along these lines. Indeed Trenchard, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in the 1930s introduced such a scheme and the Royal Commission in the 1960s had a graduate entry class of accelerated promotion. This current government has introduced direct entry at Superintendent and also toyed with the idea of allowing Chief Constables to come from other countries.

So far, so commonplace. Chiefs control conformity and offload their problem children. The police is a blue collar profession which those at the top of the profession could be argued to be lacking the ethical code of a professional class.

Here is the rub. The Police National Assessment Centre, PNAC

For everyone agrees that this is a scrupulous and exhaustive test of a candidate's ability. Everyone. It is repeatedly visited by external bodies and given a clean bill of health. So if the candidate passes they were clearly good enough weren't they?



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](https://www.facebook.com/BAPAGM)

They have risen through the ranks and they deserve this promotion. A scrupulous test has shown this. The police service it is thus argued does not need an officer class. It has a meritocracy that produces its own leaders.

Yet PNAC is like the 11 plus or the Oxbridge exam. It is seminal in terms of successful outcomes for people.

However it can be manipulated by preparing candidates. Candidates are in some forces given months off to prepare. Months, at the taxpayer's expense and in works time. They are often sent on courses run by ex- assessors to prepare them, again, incredibly at the taxpayer's expense.

Yet like people who pass the 11 plus or Oxbridge they don't see their pass as part of their good fortune, rather they see it as validation. They deserved this. They worked hard to get it.

They are the winners in a meritocracy.

However the concept of a meritocracy, so celebrated in the Blair years of government, started out as a satirical concept. Michael Young, an author of the Labour party manifesto in 1945 wrote a book entitled "The Rise of Meritocracy" set in 2034 in which jobs are given on the basis of merit and the ability to pass exams. The meritocracy in the book is insufferable though. They show none of the humility of an aristocracy that, at least, knows it is their by the accident of birth.

Young says, he wanted to show

"...if the powerful were encouraged by the general culture to believe that they fully deserved all they had, how arrogant they could become, and, if they were convinced it was all

for the common good, how ruthless in pursuing their own advantage"

So senior officers in the British Police service see themselves as meritocrats. They all started on the beat as constables. They have worked themselves up through the ranks. They have been validated by external assessors. In their eyes they deserved to get where they are in a modern, egalitarian profession.

And to the victor, the spoils.

And spoils are on offer because of one of the many dysfunctional effects of not having a national police force.

For PCCs in different Forces compete with each other to get candidates and offer all kinds of unlawful packages, relocation expenses, cars, school fees, health insurance, gym membership and indeed one Chief had private chefs. Unlawful, corrupt and yet it persists.

Just look at the Daily Mail's article on this only this year.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3728478/A-law-unto-pay-thousands-police-chiefs-household-bills-private-healthcare-64-days-holiday.html>

Amber Rudd has spoken out against this, yet still seems powerless to stop it.

What did the head of the senior officers union, CPOSA say about this? Chief Constable of North Wales, Mark Polin.

*"Any system must strike the right balance between fair reward and value for taxpayers, allowing us to attract and retain talent across the country"*



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

Let's unpick that statement by a Chief Constable

Well firstly it is unlawful. You can only pay a police officer what regulations allow you to pay. So a Chief Officer is defending what often constitutes, on many occasions, unlawful behaviour.

Secondly, it is a closed system. So you are not attracting talent, you are merely redistributing it, but charging the taxpayer for it. In fact many of these people getting these allowances, to attract and retain so called talent, are in fact the offloads I mentioned earlier.

So bear in mind the concept of volitional or cognitive corruption as described by Price. This is neither. This is not cognitive distortion. This is the system.

Let's see what this looks like in practice. I take GMP the force I was with as a case study.

Until this was finally scrapped last year by the PCC, GMP senior officers were among the very best remunerated in the country.

On top of a salary of they also got this. *A plain police car fitted with blue lights deemed and taxed as an operational asset that they could use all year round*

This is probably the most common benefit given and widely accepted. But it is nothing less than a tax dodge. These cars are not police cars, they are company cars. They even took these cars on holiday.

*All their petrol paid for, domestic and work trips*

*Free health care*

*Free gym membership*

*The taxable benefit of this grossed up and all paid.*

That is one hell of a pay rise from being a Chief Superintendent. It is about a 40% rise. Can you imagine the outcry if railway drivers or nurses demanded this as a pay rise?

Now this was justified on the basis that because Manchester is deemed as such a busy and difficult area to police this was necessary to get the very best candidates. Yet in the years that Sir Peter Fahy was Chief Constable, from 2009-15 GMP made 7 appointments to senior ranks; only one person did not work or live in GMP.

In fact the Chief Constable and Deputy got a salary that is already based upon being in a large Force i.e. the Deputy of GMP got the same pay as the Chief of Cheshire and obviously with all these emoluments was significantly better remunerated.

I would see such pay arrangements as being generally corrupting. Hough talks about how ACCs and above started to see themselves as 'Captains of Industry' under the Blairite target culture and paying themselves bonuses when they achieved such targets. The bullying and predatory sexual behaviour seem to me to come with the territory of this 'Master of the Universe' view of themselves.

As another "by the way", it would be a mistake to think these rewards satisfied them. I could talk for some time about the further tax dodges, expense claiming, hospitality acceptance and even a taxpayer funded house sale and move.

Rather I would want to talk a bit about how this level of reward affects the attitude to those in power when dealing with money. In GMP I witnessed this dissociative attitude, described in Price, in the years post 2008.



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

When very senior civilian staff came to be made redundant, as forces came to rationalise their resources in the light of the economic downturn, what occurred in Manchester was the most senior people were made redundant but on terms that actually came as a cost not a saving to the Force.

I repeat at a cost not a saving to the Force.

A senior civilian in the Force was made redundant in the cost saving restructure in the Force, but he was then immediately reemployed the next day on a salary that was only £10k less than he was on before.

His contract took him to 55 years old whereupon the Force had to pay him by law (because he was 55) both the redundancy from 2 years earlier but also pay him his pension as if he was 60. To add to this the Force actually paid him a figure in the region of £12k as I recall for the lack of notice in being made redundant some two years earlier. The Force would have saved hundreds of thousands if he had been made redundant two years earlier. This endeavour cost them money.

Now the cause celebre that I had involvement in referred to a contract handed out to a senior member of staff shortly before the death of the Chief Constable Michael Todd. This was far beyond the norm in terms of length of contract, pay rise, bonuses and pension entitlement but no-one was told about it including the then scrutiny body the Police Authority. It appears the Force never even informed the Sir Paul Scott Lee enquiry into Michael Todd's behaviour of this matter.

Now when she came to be made redundant a couple of years later no one in the Force even knew about the terms and conditions she was on. When she showed the Force the contract the

Force received advice that it was so ultra vires not to honour it. She then quoted the example of the other contract. The Force had the difficulty of this comparator contract but critically the potential of having to admit the Sir Paul Scott Lee enquiry was, it seems, misled. So instead it settled this contract and then, to make matters worse, failed to publish the full details of the settlement in public accounts.

The people involved in settling this matter and failing to publish the accounts were not party to the original contract but they opted to not to investigate the original contract and save embarrassment. It is a good example of how values become increasingly distorted and degraded in a closed community of senior officers.

On a personal basis to see an organisation responsible for upholding the law pay hundreds of thousands of pounds out to protect its senior officers rather than have a proper investigation into such behaviour was hugely disillusioning and in many respects personally radicalising.

It is of course critical to understand everything I have described so far in GMP has not been deemed to even be misconduct.

So I think this is where this volitional/cognitive distortion paradigm breaks down. The Sean Price cases of dismissal are few and far between not because they are aberrations but because the system is so distorted it permits all kinds of corrupt behaviours. The Sean Price case is the bits of the iceberg that have risen above the surface of pseudo-legitimacy.

This all begs the question, "how has the wolf of enquiry been kept from the door?" Well obviously the fact that many of these behaviors have the dubious stamp of legitimacy is a factor



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](#)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](#)



and I will come onto later the obstruction of journalistic enquiry later.

Instead I offer you some more acute angles of observation.

If we have learned anything in the last few years, with the revelations of systemic child abuse, is that if you are potentially under public scrutiny and have something to hide, you hide in plain sight.

You can see in Hough's report that the once favoured move from a transactional to transformative style of leadership, so beloved of liberal theorists, simply provided sheep's clothing for the wolves. There is little to be found in styles of leadership I would maintain. Just being an ostensible liberal no longer washes.

So you need to keep moving to demonstrate your integrity. So set up an Ethics Committee.

Indeed Hough reports favourably on this committee in GMP as a positive development. Alas he was the more deceived. The ethics committee discusses issues at the more philosophical end of policing i.e. right to protest v disruption to citizens, the extent of use of body worn video cameras.

Its window dressing and a diversion; by ignoring corruption at the heart of the Force it is complicit. Indeed it did not take long in Manchester for one member of the committee to be given work by the Force moderating a promotion process. Not an advertised role, just given the work. So, if you hear a Force has an Ethics Committee reach for your revolver.

Charity was Jimmy Saville's trump card. If you set yourself up as a provider of charity, especially for children, you can escape censure for a very long time. In GMP its chosen charity is Retrak

supporting street children in Africa. Who can criticise raising money for that? Indeed it makes anyone doing so feel uneasy in doing so.

Well here goes. You have to go back to first principles and ask why a law enforcement agency is spending their time supporting a charity when taxpayers expect them to be enforcing the law? It is certainly not supererogatory effort; all sorts of work based activity occurs to facilitate this fundraising.

Then there are ethical considerations beyond spending taxpayers' money on activities it was not funded to do.

So the Chief arranges a ball and charges a £1,000 a table. Who buys the tables? Those with a financial relationship with GMP. Ernst Young or KPMG pay for this whilst they have million pound arrangements with the Force and then invite senior officers to sit with them at the table.

GMP which has been involved in civil suits over payment of football costs yet invites Manchester City and Manchester United to buy a table. They then have an access when they want to move a fixture or discuss costs.

In this way charity becomes more than simply a device to distract attention, it actually becomes a means or conduit for corruption, as indeed it became for Saville.

No prizes will be awarded for guessing what job Sir Peter Fahy got when he left the police? Yes Chief Executive of Retrak at £65k per year.

Hough indeed mentions the ethical problems of Chiefs in their final years using their position in the force to obtain promotion.

So if you hear a Force is running a charity for



Follow BAPA on Twitter: @BAPAGM



Search for: BAPA Greater Manchester

children take the catch off your revolver.

The real signal sign of corruption, when to fire your revolver, is demonstrations of integrity through disproportionate internal investigations

These are internal investigations conceived and originated by the organisation itself rather than a complaint by a member of the public.

A psychologist could express this better than me but there seems to be an unconscious working through of the anxieties people at the top feel about their own corruption by trying to demonstrate to the world and themselves that they have the highest integrity.

On a more practical level what is going on is that the people at the top do not have the moral credibility to call off or limit such investigations when investigators are getting carried away. The examples of this in Greater Manchester are manifold.

GMP sacked a Chief Inspector regarding his financial arrangement in having two properties when it took a jury at the criminal court twenty minutes to clear him of mortgage fraud. In this case he was investigated, in all seriousness, about his non declaration of income gathered from playing the organ at his church.

In another case a Chief Superintendent was investigated and prevented from retiring for over a year because he sent an email to the head of CPS asking for him to oversee a shoplifting case which he considered of dubious merit involving a serving Sgt. He copied in his superiors to this memo. Yet he was still investigated for attempting to pervert the course of justice in sending this memo.

Interestingly after 18 months the disciplinary case against him was immediately dropped when

the disciplinary panel agreed that the Chief Constable Ian Hopkins, who had directed the overseen the enquiry, should give evidence.

Perhaps you are thinking better to be zealous than not. It's a harmless by-product, after all isn't the argument that police should have the highest standards?

Well apart from the damage it does to individuals and the waste of public money and police time, what this zealous approach does is, by its very nature, to pick on the outsiders in the organisation, organisational witches.

Inevitably, Black and Asian officers are thus investigated far more often than white officers. As just one example of many in GMP when I was Chair of Superintendents' Association we had only one investigation into staff exaggerating or making false claims in their applications for promotion which, by the way, many did. The only one ever investigated? The first Asian Superintendent we had had.

Third generation BME officers are still routinely suffering this discrimination. It puzzles people that this is still going on. It is simple, as most explanations are, racism and corruption.

Whistleblowers are picked on. Now this may be a commonplace in most organisations, however this attracts a new zeal in corrupt forces. A common factor in Forces with ethically dubious leadership is the desire to protect their 'integrity' leads them to grossly disproportionate snooping on officers. Cleveland spent millions investigating officers' links with journalists.

GMP bizarrely looked at the phone records of a black officer who was taking them to employment tribunal to see if he had rung the Force's confidential hotline. It even publicly tried



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](https://www.facebook.com/BAPAGreaterManchester)

to justify this by claiming they had searched his phone records not the records of the confidential hotline. This is through the looking glass stuff.

I, myself, had all my emails and phone records searched two months before I retired on a discredited enquiry.

Yes when you hear a Force defend its investigations with the Martin Luther they could 'do no other' because they apply the highest standards of integrity I suggest to you the very opposite may well be the case.

To recap if you see a force with extensive links to charity, an Ethics Committee and a number of high profile cases showing a zealous approach to integrity with junior officers, doubly determined to ensure there is no unethical contact with the press, then you have all the signs of a corrupt force.

I wish I was trying to be funny.

I think consideration of the consequences of corruption is a useful exercise as corruption triggers very different responses in people. Many people shrug their shoulders and point to corruption in other countries or institutions and get relativist about the matter. I think all this matters in a quite absolute way.

I think it matters in three ways.

Firstly, it matters in the sense that it does have an effect on the quality of policing the public receive. Corrupted leadership leads to a diversion of resources away from the objectives of the organisation as I believe I have alluded to. My basic premise for this assertion is that if the senior command of the police service are so successful at arrogating monies for themselves they will probably have an improper, permissive

attitude to expenditure of monies generally.

This is not as easy to evidence as you may imagine. I have been only able to find the examples of financial impropriety in the Force after much protestation, and sleepless nights, as Head of Superintendents' Association in Manchester.

I know GMP quite deliberately never made clear exactly how much it was spending on consultants and contractor workers but it was of real concern to many officers including GMP Federation.

On a national scale there has been great disquiet about the way the now disbanded Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) set itself up as a limited company and then set up income generating companies.

I gave examples of the kind of behaviours GMP engaged in which gave it the illusion of propriety however if you start to ask for information that hits at the transparency of behaviours of senior officers then you will experience jaw dropping obstruction and routine flouting of Freedom of Information requests. The most basic reason the wolf of enquiry is kept from the door is the sheer difficulty in finding out what is going on.

Probably the single most successful person in exposing financial impropriety and arrogation of funds by the Command of the British police service has been the local Yorkshire journalist Rob Waugh.

I quote the words of the judging panel for the Paul Foot awards for investigative journalism in 2013 stating Rob Waugh had exposed all manner of financial impropriety including "large-scale junketing" and a "jobs for the boys culture of lucrative contracts.....despite protracted battles



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](#)

and appeals to get information disclosed.”

They really don't want you to know.

The second consequence is corruption must lead to impaired operational decision making.

In contrast to the opaque nature of financial information, there is a plethora of information of IPCC enquiries and Coroners Inquests. However these invariably fail to make a concrete link to senior officer behavior or strategic failings.

In nearly all cases there are concrete findings are about junior or middle-ranking officer's shortcomings and either nothing or some passing reference to the culture they were operating in. The outcome of a junior officer disciplined and a senior officer saying "lessons have been learned" is now just a cultural cliché.

Perhaps this is the case in all organisations. Look at how the BBC management has endured despite decades of ignoring Jimmy Saville's behavior but what is so puzzling about this in the police is the very "meritocracy" concept I mentioned earlier. The people at the top are exclusively police officers who are supposed to be there because of their operational knowledge of policing yet they rarely figure in an investigation.

However I have to state I think it ineluctably must be the case that corruption at a senior level leads to impaired decision at a lower one. In fact I shall throw this out as a challenge. Is the dearth of enquiries which make a link reassuring or worrying?

Indeed my perception is that the current rottenness has seeped through to a greater extent than is generally acknowledged. If you want to get a sense of how rotten this has become check out social media out, Cabal of

Corruption in GMP for example. My sense is we may not be far away from a signal case when all this does come together probably through the forensic precision of a judicial enquiry.

The third consequence is a decline in confidence in the police as an institution. For me it is unarguable that any corruption in British policing matters in the sense that we are talking about an organisation that should be amongst the least corrupt in the world.

To have operational autonomy in enforcing the law in one of the world's most mature liberal democracy is be in charge of something very valuable and precious. Its standards should be guarded zealously. If it is in any way rotten it erodes at the body politic.

I have to admit there is certainly no golden, pre-lapsarian era of policing. As I indicated earlier there have been many attempts at improving police leadership. There was a 1960s Royal Commission into policing because of widespread concerns about the conduct of police forces. The Force I joined in 1985 had not learned the lessons of the 1981 Scarman report into the riots in Brixton and was still overtly racist and sexist.

However, we have to face the current reality. We are seeing a tide in Western politics recently termed by Jean-Luc Melenchon in the French election candidate as *degagisme* where people want to overturn the corrupt, established order.

Many reasons lie behind this but one undoubtedly is that many see an ineffectual elite of people, mainly politicians, who viewed themselves as meritocrats, but who the public view as feathering their own nests, whilst producing nothing of value. But this also applies to many public services including the police.



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](https://www.facebook.com/BAPAGreaterManchester)

The British model of policing is precious. Community focused and independent of the state it is still the envy of the world, in many respects. However unless the service can find a way of acknowledging and correcting its corrupt structures and systems, it runs the risk that its destiny may follow the *degagisme* direction of Western politics as an attempt to drain the swamp of corruption may lead to something altogether less palatable.

*This article was written by Alan Greene, Former Greater Manchester Police Superintendent and Chair of the Superintendent's Association. The views expressed in this article are his own. This article has been presented to Sheffield University and is now available to the students and in the public domain.*

A.A. Greene 2/5/17



Follow BAPA on Twitter: [@BAPAGM](https://twitter.com/BAPAGM)



Search for: [BAPA Greater Manchester](#)