



# International Police Association

Professional Commission



## IPA World Seminar for Young Police Officers 2019 Stirling, Scotland, UK Report

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I had an extraordinary opportunity to represent Estonia as an IPA member in the Young Police Officers seminar at Stirling University. 45 police officers from 25 different countries participated in the workshop. The week was filled with new insights, knowledge exchanges both in theory and in practice. The topics we touched on and discussed throughout the week were in many ways related to the daily work of all the participants and included new knowledge about terrorism, mental health, human trafficking, communication, tattoos and their meanings in organised crime and practical tactical activities. There was an active day-to-day exchange of practical and legal experiences that provided a good overview of what other countries are doing differently from us and what we could learn from each other.

Sergeant Laura Gibson gave us an overview of their police department in Scotland ([Police Scotland: The National Beat](#)). She talked about the need to maintain good mental health. The media and politicians love to talk about the police, which may increase the workers' stress and risk for psychological illness. Sergeant Gibson said that it is very important that people have lunch breaks during the working day, that the working day is ended on time, that there is a days off and that the holidays are what people need. There are countries that talk about maintaining mental health, but ordinary workers are so overwhelmed that they do not even have time to familiarize themselves with what they have been offered thru work. Scotland offers its staff flu vaccines, special facilities to take time off, and a chance to return to work after long periods of illness. When I talked about how we can work out certain hours per week during work, it came as a nice piece of news for everyone, except for the Finnish police, who also use this system. We were shown a video explaining the prosperity of police officers - creating the right environment is key to enabling people to lead meaningful and purposeful work lives. [Police Wellbeing](#)

Cathy MacDonald told us about communication, a very important component of our work. She reminded us that people could be more grateful – both the citizens and our colleagues, and that thanks must come from the heart. Don't just be polite, mean it. Praise should be given to the work that has been noticed, so you should learn to notice more, and the

statement of thanks should certainly be accompanied by a justification. In addition to noticing and thanking, there is also a need to focus more on listening, as people in their conversations give us clues, but to understand them, you need to listen with focus. Sometimes, when it comes to unpleasant things, one might start with something positive (because one remembers the first thing that is usually said) and then come with constructive criticism. In addition, she gave examples where people change according to the environment - strong people who have to make decisions day after day sometimes want someone else to decide for them, for example in the café. People have the same basic emotional needs: 1. Recognition (what we do is valued) 2. Independence (freedom of choice) 3. Belonging (need to belong somewhere) 4. Role (we know our purpose) 5. Status (we are valued for it, who we are) and if we know them, it's easier to understand why people are doing something. Likewise, when emotions are high, the decisions that are made may not be right, and police officers very often need to make decisions during those difficult moments. In order to understand the differences between women and men in communication, it was recommended to read Gary Chapman's book "Five Languages of Love", in addition to watching and discussing the video, "It's Not About the Nail" ([It's not about the nail](#)).

In his presentation, Mark Bullen talked and showed us various Russian mafia prison tattoos and gave us an overview of some of the factions. He has himself researched and written a book on tattoos and their meanings, which are currently helping police officers solve cases. Tattoos are an integral part of Russia's criminal underworld and their tattoos are not well known in the West. M. Bullen gave examples of thieves and their rules, they never own anything, they have no family, they have their own secret language and they do not lose self-control when they have consumed alcohol. Tattoos are not always for so-called beauty, but can also be a punishment. You can't choose where you want your tattoo; it goes where the "big boss" says it goes. Shoulder tattoos are highly valued but extremely rare (for example, killing someone). Very young people usually cannot have very high tattoos. When a cop comes into contact with a person tattooed with wolf teeth, they may be presumed to have committed a violent crime against a police officer in the past. A person with an SS-tattoo will never cooperate with the police or confess any crime. The spider's web tattoo will tell that he is a drug user, a barbed-wire and a nail indicates years spent in captivity, and may be located around the head. Madonna and Child characterises a person who was born in prison or was born a criminal. A pistol, tombstone or executioner means murderers. Prostitute tattoos are bitten apples, loose flowers. Knowing the meanings of tattoos, it gives the police officer the ability to know a person's criminal history before seeking more information.

Martyn Linton talked about gangs - an international problem. The word gang itself is nothing negative. It's a group of people (two or more) who share the same identity. Gangs are not just street gangs, but different groups of organized crime as well as different political movements. A group must have the same fundamental values. We had a discussion on why some young people choose this path, while others who study at the same school, live in the same place do not embrace this lifestyle. We came to the conclusion that those with broken homes, need for attention and unemployed are at greater risk of joining gangs. Individual risk factors include: low self-esteem, failure to attend school, previous offenses, substance abuse, insanity, aggression, anti-social behavior, positive attitude to crime. The more risk factors we notice, the higher the risk. Signs we might notice on young people: new friendships, frequent losses, unexplained injuries, increased anger, sudden and unexplained

wealth, new nickname, owning more than one cell phone, and more. Anyone who wants to discuss more or ask for more information can do so at <https://gang-cop.com/>

In addition to training, we have all been exposed to terrorism through the media. Terrorism can happen anytime, anywhere. At the seminar we initially discussed US terrorist threats and analyzed how to deal with them (as a result of the UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy), but the means of attack are globally usable. The attackers use suicide bombs, vehicles, biological and firearms, cyberattacks, Molotov cocktails, timer bombs. The purpose of preventive action is to stop a person before he or she becomes a terrorist or begins to support terrorism. The larger goal is to stop terrorist attacks by detecting, prosecuting, and otherwise disrupting those who plan the attacks. Outcomes of the Strategy: 7,318 were marked as vulnerable to radicalization in 2017-2018; more than 268 terrorists have been arrested last year; more than 800 investigations are ongoing. Even if one realizes that something is coming, one cannot prevent everything. Therefore, it is also necessary to deal with how to quickly restore the situation after the attack. The question arose whether the Westminster attack of 22.03.2017 could have been prevented or reduced if the killed police officer had had a firearm, but at the end of the discussion the answer was no. (The total duration of the attack was 82 seconds, and by the time the attacker reached the policeman, the latter could not have done anything anymore). The newest trend by terrorists is that they are starting to make fake suicide jackets, guaranteeing 100% that they are shot by the police.

Kyle Hardcastle introduced us to VR (virtual reality) for use in police training and outlined the benefits of virtual reality over traditional training methods. "If you tell me, I'll listen; when you show me, I see; but when you let me experience, I learn." Virtual Reality provides the opportunity to train in realistic scenarios without leaving the classroom; the ability to train in hazardous situations without the possibility of real danger; cheaper than real training. Sometimes it is necessary to close part of the traffic or city for outdoor exercises, but not for virtual training. In addition, resources can be accessed over the Internet, so there is no real need to bring all officials together in one place. With VR, the part of the brain that is supposed to work during attacks is developing. In addition to police officers, virtual training for rescuers and ambulances is also used for first aid training. The Metropolitan police also use it in terrorist training. Initially, buying virtual reality was expensive, but today they have trained themselves and are producing at no cost. It's more or less something like this:

[Mr Bean - funny VR scene](#)

All participants of the seminar agreed with the ideas of the changing world presented by Damian Allain. In five years, much has changed in the world and we have all been exposed to its consequences. Due to technological advances that are quite fast, crimes do not know the limits. The internet allows for anonymity, laws are always at least one step behind. Co-operation and guidance from each of us is important.

And of course, we were also able to experience the beautiful nature of Scotland, the wonderful local culture and sights. Flooding caused by the rain was also an experience - which was also reported by the BBC.