



Redefining Police Oversight: A Call for Collaborative, Trauma Informed and Data Driven Approach

The inaugural Hon. Oliver F. Clarke Memorial Lecture on Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement spotlighted the need for collaborative, trauma-informed and data driven approaches to police oversight. Held at the Jamaica Pegasus in New Kingston, the event brought together international experts in the field of civilian oversight of law enforcement and local stakeholders including members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force and civil society, to honour the legacy of the Hon. Oliver Clarke, a founding member of the PCOA and a champion of police oversight.

Themed “Partnership for Progress: Improving Policing through Effective Oversight for a Safer Jamaica,” the lecture featured keynote speakers, Marcia Thompson, attorney-at-law and Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Aurora University in Illinois (USA) and Dr. Shon Barnes, Chief of the Seattle Police Department in Washington (USA).

In her thought provoking presentation, Thompson challenged police oversight bodies to be open to self assessment if their intended purpose ceased to be relevant.

“Who said we needed to start something different here in Jamaica and is that mindset relevant today? Have you had an opportunity to revisit what



Presenters at the Inaugural Hon. Oliver Frederick Clarke Memorial Lecture—Mrs. Marcia K. Thompson, Esq. Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice Department at Aurora University in Aurora, Illinois (USA) and Seattle Police Chief, Dr. Shon Barnes, Washington (USA) answering questions from the audience.

you started out to be and you still want to be?” she posited. She also underscored the vital role of respectful relationships and collaboration between oversight bodies and police organizations, warning against the pitfalls of isolation, which can lead to non-acceptance and strained dynamics. “If done in isolation, it will not be accepted by your police organization, and then you are going to have that strain,” she added. Thompson also focused on the profound impact of trauma both historical and generational on police-community relations. Citing the global reverberations of incidents like the George Floyd tragedy, she highlighted that mistrust often stemmed from deeply ingrained experiences. “In order for us to address some of these issues, we have to address the trauma,” she stressed.

“What do we do when we talk about historical and generational trauma that has impacted our communities that have led them to have mistrust of the police?” she asked. Thompson argued for the recognizing dual trauma -in both community members and police officers - as a key factor in escalating tensions and decreased critical thinking in stressful interactions.

In response to this issue, she mentioned the need for trauma-informed

training for both the police and community to address both police trauma and community trauma. This, she said, went a long way in alleviating negative perceptions and foster healthier interactions. Best practices, Thompson said, included the use and sharing of data through mechanisms like public dashboards, where communities can access vital information on calls for service, officer responses and trends. “Data is a great neutralizer,” she asserted, emphasizing that readily available data empowers communities to hold police accountable and reduces anxiety.

For his part, Chief Barnes underscored the importance of gaining buy-in for police oversight from the line-level supervisors and officers. He said that the resistance to change often stemmed from a fear of loss, whether of authority or legitimacy. “People are not afraid of change. They are afraid of loss,” he stated.



Mrs. Monica Ladd, widow of Oliver Clarke and their daughter, Alexandra were among the scores of attendees at the lecture.



PCOA Chairman, Jacqueline Hinkson (left) greets fellow PCOA member, Norman Heywood (right) as the trio of (from second left) Police Chief of the Seattle Police Department, Dr. Shon Barnes; PCOA CEO, Otarah Byfield-Nugent; and David West, Director of the Police Complaint Authority in Trinidad and Tobago, look on.

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Inspection Reveals Areas for Improvement at Stations Under Ports Division

A recent thematic inspection of five locations operating under the Jamaica Constabulary Force's (JCF) Ports Division has identified a number of infrastructural challenges and resource limitations that require attention.

The inspection focused on locations critical to national security and international trade - Freeport Police Post and Sangster International Airport Police Station in St. James; Ian Fleming International Airport Police Station in St. Mary; and Norman Manley International Airport Police Post and Newport West Police Station in Kingston.

While two of the locations, including a relatively new facility, were found to be in good condition with no major issues, the inspection highlighted significant concerns at the remaining three, requiring urgent intervention.

One facility was found to be lacking a female barracks, and much of its furniture was old or damaged. This location also experienced flooding during rainfall. Additionally, several windowpanes and grills were either missing or broken, and the kitchen countertop was damaged. Another station faced similar challenges with flooding during heavy rains. There were damaged doors and a nearby rat infestation impacting the facility. The third location in need of major repairs presented issues such as cracked walls, leaks, and areas with flaking or chipped paint.



PCOA Team Member, Nichelle Duncan (third from right) sharing findings from an inspection of the Newport West Station with JCF personnel at the station.

The inspection also revealed disparities in specialized training among personnel. While officers at airport facilities received essential International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) security procedure training, their counterparts at seaports largely lacked International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) training, with the exception of two management team members at one location.

On the matter of training in the use of less-lethal weapons, an average of four personnel at each location were trained and authorized to use tasers. However, at one location not every shift had an individual authorized to use them.

As it pertained to transportation, of the nine service vehicles assigned to the Ports Division, only five were currently

operational, with the others in disrepair and awaiting maintenance. This shortage impacts mobility, delays response times, and affects the efficiency of personnel in securing these vital areas.

The availability of less-lethal weapons and defensive equipment presented a mixed picture. Most locations have adequate batons, handcuffs, and tasers; however, all taser cartridges observed were expired. There was also a general insufficiency of pepper spray across most locations.

On a positive note, the majority of facilities were well-equipped with essential medical and protective gear, including first aid kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), and luminous high-visibility traffic vests. Even so, all locations were found to have inadequate supplies of ballistic helmets and vests.

Record management was generally good, with all locations consistently maintaining three of the six inspected records in line with JCF policies: the Firearm Register, Customer Reference Form, and Duty Forecast. However, at some locations there were issues with the Station Diary, General Property Book, and Officer's Minute Book.

The Ports Division falls under the Border Security Branch and is dedicated to safeguarding the nation's points of entry including airports and seaports.

Port Division On Track to Meet Selected Targets For JCF 2025 Strategic Priorities

Findings from a recent thematic inspection of the Ports Division indicate substantial effort and progress in meeting selected targets outlined within the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Strategic Priorities for 2025.

The determination was made by evaluating the implementation of two key priorities, as outlined in the 2025 Divisional Policing Plan. The methodology involved a comprehensive review of divisional operational data, comparing current statistics with those from the corresponding period in 2024.

Pertaining to the Crime Reduction and Control priority, the policing plan established a target of a 50% increase in mobile and foot patrols within a six-month timeframe. Analysis of the data indicated the Ports Division is currently on track to achieve this objective, having



Ian Fleming Station in St. Mary was one of five locations under the Port Division.

recorded a 23% increase in mobile patrols and a 2% increase in foot patrols over last year thus far.

In addition, the Divisional Policing Plan stipulated a daily minimum of one snap raid and one vehicle checkpoint (VCP). The division's records confirmed consistent execution of at least one snap raid and an average of two VCPs per day, effectively surpassing the set requirement.

Regarding the "Improving Public Safety and Citizens' Security" priority, the plan called for weekly stakeholder meetings and monthly community engagements. The data revealed that the division had not only met but exceeded these weekly and monthly objectives.

In the meantime, the inspection also revealed that the current number of locations (5) - Norman Manley International Airport Police Post (Kingston); Newport West Police Station (Kingston); Sangster International Airport Police Station (St. James); Freeport Police Post (St. James); and, Ian Fleming Police Station (St. Mary), were adequate to effectively secure the five main ports in Jamaica.

All five major ports of entry have a police station or post assigned. With plans afoot for a fourth international airport in Negril, a future location will be necessary.

TOPS Poster Competition Winners Feted by the Police Commissioner

The three Area 2 Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Poster Competition for Secondary School winners were feted by Police Commissioner Dr. Kevin Blake and his team at his Old Hope Road offices in Kingston.

The winners, Kimmieisha Wright of York Castle High, Ebonique Wauchope from St. Mary High and Brian Levy also of York Castle High, were joined by York Castle visual arts educator, Shanique Brown Moulton and St. Mary High's art teacher Ian Johnson and their parents/ family representative.

During the luncheon, the young artists elaborated on the creative processes that led to their finished art pieces. For Wright, she interpreted the competition's theme, *'AForce4Good: A People Driven Transformation'*, as the police not being a body that dominates over those they protect but rather working alongside the community in harmony. Commissioner Blake surprised the winners with cash awards, with the



Area 2 Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Poster competition first-place winner Kimmieisha Wright (right), sixth former at York Castle High School in conversation with the Police Commissioner Dr. Kevin Blake (left). Looking on from the left are: her fifth-form schoolmate Brian Levy, who secured a third-place win in the contest; Deputy Commissioner of Police, Karina Powell-Hood (Force Development and Logistics); and St. Mary High sixth former Ebonique Wauchoupe, who was the competition's second-place winner.

First-prize winner Wright receiving \$50,000, second-place winner Wauchope \$30,000, and third-place winner Levy \$20,000. This was in addition to tumbler cups emblazoned with their artwork. Reflecting on his own aborted artistic journey, and that of his son as a child, the Commissioner joked: "I suffered a lot with my son on the wall with the markers and the pen, and his mother used to say, 'Why are you marking up the wall?' and I would say 'leave the child, we are making an artist. I wanted to give him a chance, I didn't know the boy was

going to become a soldier."

The moment resonated with Wauchope. "The event at the Commissioner's office, to me, was a celebration of art and the young people who make it. Despite there being such a stark difference between their fundamental purposes, it was beautiful to see how the Police Commissioner spoke on his connection with art as a child and his children's current artistic pursuits. It illustrated art's ability to touch individuals from different backgrounds," she reasoned.

Following lunch, the winners were bused downtown, Kingston for the Art Walk on Water Lane, which also provided the opportunity to interface with muralists, Michael Elliot and Oliver Buddington, who were incidentally at work on a commis-



The Area 2 TOPS Competition winners toured Kingston Creative Art Walk on Water Lane and its environs in downtown, Kingston. It was the first visit for all including the parents.

sioned art piece. It left a lasting imprint on Levy.

"The art walk was special to me because I've never experienced something like that before, an entire alley way of art. The paintings on the walls were so beautiful I wanted to stop and take pictures of everything," Levy recalled.



The icing on the cake for the winning trio while on the art walk tour was meeting and watching muralist Michael Elliot at work on a mural on Water Lane in downtown, Kingston.

PCOA Team Conducts PIC Inspections in Area 4

Inspection and Monitoring Officers from the Police Civilian Oversight Authority (PCOA) commenced inspections of the largest Prisoners in Custody (PIC) stations in each of the five divisions that comprise Area 4, during the quarter. The stations are Port Royal (Kingston Eastern Division); Denham Town (Kingston Western Division); Central (Kingston Central Division); Hunts Bay (St. Andrew South Division); and Half Way Tree (St. Andrew Central Division).

The main objective of these inspections is to assess the various administrative practices at PIC stations with the highest prisoner population within all the divisions in the Area. This will identify any weaknesses and deficiencies that may prevail and allow the authority



PCOA Team members—Adin Grant (centre) and Sheldon Clarke (right) assisted by Sgt. Damian Morgan wait to inspect the Central lock-up in the Kingston Central Division. The lock-up is the most populated in the division.

to propose recommendations to address the same. The scope of these inspections will include looking at the extent to which the division has been complying with the policies and procedures of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) as it relates to the maintenance of various PIC records, lock-up management, adherence to safety and security measures and resources among other areas.

Under the PCOA Act of 2005, the PCOA is responsible for the inspection of police stations, lock-ups and

other agencies of the JCF. PIC inspections form part of the annual inspection schedule.

Meanwhile, the Denham Town Station won the award for Top PIC Station in the Area 4 Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS), which was held in 2021.

Highlights from 2024: Continuing JCF Transformation Mission

Last year was a significant year for advancing police effectiveness and fostering stronger community relationships. As such, key initiatives focused on enhancing adherence to policies, boosting morale, and improving oversight, all while engaging with the public.

There was the successful execution and expansion of the Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Programme. This related particularly to **The TOPS Competition**, which returned to where it first started - Area 2 (St. Ann, St. Mary, and Portland) - with 31 participating stations and, for the first time, included a non-geographical formation - the Marine Division. New awards, such as the "Top of TOPS Award" for past winners and the "PCOA Leadership Legacy Award" for leadership excellence, were introduced. The Area 2 winners were as follows: Top Station – Castleton (St. Mary); Top Division – St. Mary; Top Prisoners in Custody – Oracabessa; Top Customer Service Station – Runaway Bay; Top Station in the other divisions – Runaway Bay (St. Ann) and Buff Bay (Portland); and Top Marine Outpost – Errol Flynn Marina Post (Portland). The Top of TOPS Award went to 2021 Top Station winner, Bull Bay Station (Kingston Eastern Division), and the PCOA Leadership Legacy Award was presented to Sgt. Garfield Wallace of Above Rocks Station in the St. Catherine North Division.

The third phase of the programme - the **TOPS Performance Review Meeting** - had record attendance with 45 police personnel including the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security. In addition to the expansion in award categories and record meeting attendance, a major milestone was achieved in the **TOPS Re-inspection of Area 1**. For the first time in the program's history, one



Inspectorate and Professional Standard Oversight Bureau (IPROB), Inspector General, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Clifford Blake (right) handed over the trophy for Area 2 Top Station to Castleton Station representative, Cpl. Osbin Wilson.

division, Trelawny, achieved 100% perfection in records management, earning the prestigious Dr. the Hon. Marshall Hall Award. This remarkable achievement underscored the program's effectiveness in driving compliance.

The PCOA continued its engagement with the youth with the second staging of **the TOPS Poster Competition for Secondary Schools**, under the theme "**#AFore4good: A People Driven Transformation**." This initiative, which was held in Area 2 (St. Mary, St. Ann and Portland) encouraged artistic expression on police-citizen relationships. The winners were: First Prize – Kimmisha Wright (York Castle High); Second Prize – Ebonique Wauchope (St. Mary High); and Third Prize – Brian Levy (York Castle High). The winning artwork was featured in the PCOA 2025 calendars.

A **Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Satisfaction Survey** was conducted from September 2023 to June 2024, surveying 1022 members on job and workplace satisfaction. The survey revealed a mixed bag of results. While the study highlighted areas of pride and commitment, it also underscored significant concerns regarding leadership, trust, fair treatment, and communication within the organization. The results were shared with the JCF High Command as well as the Jamaica Police Federation to inform future policies.

As it related to the PCOA annual thematic inspection, the **Canine Division** was the focus in 2024. The inspection revealed areas for improvement despite satisfactory care for the canines. The inspection highlighted a need for more certified trainers and handlers, improved records management, and proper housing for canines at the Ian Fleming International Airport. In response, the JCF acquired more canines, and plans are underway to address housing needs at the airport. Meanwhile, the **Station Monitoring Programme (SMP)**, which involved five months of consistent inspections/monitoring at the Gold Street Station (Kingston Central Division) and Rockfort Station (Kingston Eastern Division). These stations were located in high crime areas. The program successfully demonstrated that consistent monitoring is crucial for improving compliance with JCF policies and procedures, with both stations achieving a remarkable 100% compliance by the end of the programme.

CONTACT US

Address: 5A West Avenue,
Kingston Gardens, CSO
Telephone: 754-7993, 754-7289 & 754-8901
Website: www.pcoa.gov.jm

 www.facebook.com/pcoagov

 [@policecivilianoversight](https://www.instagram.com/policecivilianoversight)

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Compiled by the PCOA Communications Unit

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The Commissioner of Police, Dr. Kevin Blake got a chance to peruse our colouring book, containing artwork from the Transforming Our Police Service (TOPS) Poster Competition for Secondary Schools in Area 1 (St. James, Trelawny, Westmoreland and Hanover). The colouring books will be distributed to early childhood institutions during Child Month in May.