Describe “authority” as it relates to the uniformed public services

Authority in the public services comes the power of position. The position and the power it carries is dictated by the hierarchy system in the public services. With authority comes responsibility to control those under your care and enforce obedience. The right to enforce obedience comes from the power of authority. In the case of the public services they can discipline members or investigate them using one of the organisations within the public services, the police for instance have the independent police complaints commission.

Authority carries power, position which carries power and status which carries both power and position. However it can be said that power corrupts and as a result within the public services corruption one of things that they prioritise in terms of what they wish to eliminate. Influence comes from power, position and status, this is not necessarily a corrupting influence though there can be corrupting influences, rather with influence the likely hood of abusing it or using it for your own ends increases. There is also obedience to authority to consider. When it is lacking disobedience will occur which is bad for the service and prevents them from operating to their optimum potential. Similarly bad is blind obedience where there is no longer any question as to whether what is being asked should be done or not and simply done. This will cause an issue if not prevented as it allows those with authority over those with blind obedience to do as they please effectively which is especially in the military very dangerous and is in affect another form of disorder. With authority to come often the final decisions as that same authority dictates that your position and status mean you have the final say on all issues. This holds true in moral dilemmas and the responsibility that comes with them, sometimes as a result of the issue many of those in authority leave it to the highest authority, one thing that separates those in authority from those that aren’t is making the final decisions in moral dilemmas in other words making hard or impossible decisions.

There are different types of authority each separate from the other by the style that is used. Authoritarian authority is taking direct control with no consideration for other opinions, this is the style most used as it fits in with the hierarchy style and the reasons why obedience is followed and puts full responsibility on the individual in charge. Dictatorial is taking full control an even more controlled style than authoritarian. Consultative is when the individual is still in charge but takes consideration for those in their command and often consults them for their opinion and ideas.

The entire public services are also subject to the laws passed the government as these dictate their powers and responsibilities and legal limitations. These acts include the armed forces discipline act 2000, police and criminal evidence act 1984, police act 1997 and the fire and rescue act. The public services must adhere to the content in these unless it is service specific. Therefore ultimate authority over the public services still and always had rested with the government.