

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



HMIC Inspection Report

Northumbria Police

Major Crime

July 2008



Northumbria Police – HMIC Inspection Report
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Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005, and thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking more probing inspections of fewer topics. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that neighbourhood policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/>) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;

- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of neighbourhood policing.

In addition, we are currently developing a scrutiny of strategic resource leverage, and are liaising with the Audit Commission on a methodology for the anticipated inspection of police authorities.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime and neighbourhood policing in each of the 44 forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

While this document includes the full graded report for the major crime inspection, the inspection relating to serious and organised crime is detailed in a separate thematic report.

Major Crime

This framework covers the force effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with homicide and other major crimes that will normally require a force to set up a major incident room. There is only one statutory performance indicator at present, although other indicators shown in the report facilitate appropriate comparisons of performance between forces; the indicators suggested give some context regarding the volume of such crimes, success in detections and trends over time, but they need to be interpreted with care. The assessment is primarily qualitative, with a judgement as to the extent to which the force predicts and prevents major crime as opposed to solely discovering and reacting to such crime. Major crime includes any investigation that requires the deployment of a senior investigating officer and specialist assets.

The grading system has changed this year to allow for a single ACPO threshold standard against which forces will be assessed as compliant, not compliant or exceeding compliance. It is recognised that collaborative arrangements can be used where appropriate. At a high level, the ACPO lead summarises the threshold standard as set out below:

- Intelligence – Compliance with the 2005 ACPO National Intelligence Model guidance on the shared understanding of and response to the risks and demands of the major crime threat, with effective intelligence and data sharing internally, with neighbouring forces and with key partners.

- Prevention – Effective proactive partnerships to prevent major crime in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights; this includes precursor offending and options such as Osman warnings.
- Enforcement – Compliance with the 2006 ACPO *Murder Investigation Manual* and guidance in the 2005 ACPO major incident room standardised administrative procedures, having sufficient resources to meet and manage the predicted demand and contingency to meet extraordinary demand from major crime investigation and review.
- Performance management and resilience – Efficiency through robust performance measures linking costs/resources, inputs and outputs to goals (ie the outcomes of reduction and prevention, detection and conviction work).

Future Programmed Inspections

Following these serious and organised crime and major crime assessments, HMIC plans work in the following areas:

Inspection area	Dates
Neighbourhood policing	April 2008 – September 2008
Developing citizen focus	April 2008 – September 2008
Civil contingencies	September 2008 – May 2009
Public order	September 2008 – May 2009
Critical incidents	September 2008 – May 2009
Professional standards	June 2009 – December 2009
Information management	June 2009 – December 2009
Leadership	June 2009 – December 2009

The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to meet the standard, exceed the standard or fail to meet the standard.

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the ACPO agreed standards as the starting point for its SGC. The standards against which forces are measured are communicated to all forces and police authorities some time before the inspection starts. The standards are set at a level that ensures that risk to the public is identified, managed and mitigated as far as is feasible; all forces should find the standards achievable.

Exceeding the standard

Where a force can demonstrate capacity and capability that exceed the agreed national standards, it is expected that risk assessment and business cases justify the availability of 'additional' resources, and that they are deployed appropriately. For example, some forces require a higher level of capacity/capability to counter extraordinary threat levels or to discharge a regional or lead force remit. Without such a rationale, an over-investment would almost certainly represent poor value for money and thus attract criticism.

Failing to meet the standard

This assessment is appropriate when a force cannot provide evidence that it meets a number of significant criteria that correlate with the ACPO national standards. Where evidence is provided to confirm that the particular issue has been properly risk assessed and the risk is being managed, then the report may not necessarily draw an adverse conclusion. The assessment may also give some credit in situations where a force has the ability to remedy any deficiencies promptly, in terms of time and investment levels needed.

Developing Practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected (described as a 'strength') in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces; each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required. HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

Northumbria Police is the sixth largest police force in the UK. It covers an area of 2,150 square miles, which includes the major conurbations of Tyne and Wear and the rural county of Northumberland, with a total population of 1.4 million people.

Structural Description of Force

Chief Constable Michael Craik is supported by a deputy chief constable, three assistant chief constables and two assistant chief officers.

Policing is provided through six area commands, which match local authority boundaries, supported by 11 specialist headquarters departments. Each area command is headed by a chief superintendent who works at a strategic level and is supported by a senior management team, with a minimum of two superintendents. Staffing levels range from 440 to just over 1,000, including between 360 and 800 police officers. The force currently employs more than 430 community support officers (CSOs), of whom more than 250 take part in patrol and reassurance duties. Currently 53 (1.3%) of police officers are from minority ethnic communities and 933 (23.3%) of police officers are female.

Strategic Priorities

The force vision of 'Total Policing' commits it to delivering a customer-focused service with the capability, capacity and resilience to combat crime and disorder at all levels.

Total Policing encompasses every aspect of the service, enabling neighbourhood officers to work with communities and partner agencies to address local issues, while maintaining the capacity to tackle serious and organised crime that crosses area command and regional boundaries. The aim is to ensure that more crimes are brought to justice, create safer stronger communities and increase public confidence in Northumbria Police.

Northumbria Police has a 2020 Vision 'to build trust and confidence in the community and reduce crime and disorder' delivered through the values of leadership and communication and the strategic aims of people, communities, information and intelligence, justice, partnerships, innovation and technology, sustainable development and value for money.

Force development since 2007

Business Process and Change Management

In February 2007, Northumbria Police embarked upon a programme of change with an assessment of corporate processes at the highest level in the organisation. A corporate decision making review (CDMR) examined decision making structures to ensure they were effective, appropriate to the strategic direction and enable the delivery of business change. The force has developed a programme board structure to drive this change in the organisation.

Communications Strategy

A corporate communications strategy has been developed and covers the areas of internal communications, media relations, external communications, marketing and corporate

identity. Individual area commands and departments will each have local communication plans that are aligned to the delivery of the objectives outlined in the corporate communications strategy.

Leadership Strategy

The force has implemented a leadership strategy governing all leadership activity within the force and delivered via specific leadership objectives.

Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus

Neighbourhood Policing is the means by which policing services will be delivered by Northumbria Police and complements the 'Total Policing' concept. The force has 38 sector based neighbourhood policing teams, each headed by a neighbourhood inspector with a team of sergeants, constables, community support officers, special constables and police staff. The force area command boundaries are coterminous with those of local authorities and thus maximise opportunities to adopt a 'neighbourhood management' approach.

The head of communications department has been appointed the strategic lead for citizen focus.

A number of key initiatives have been progressed:

- Expansion of the contact management unit and call handling capacity to enhance the single call resolution model;
- Introduction of a diary system for non urgent incidents, including neighbourhood officers;
- Redesign of public information form used at incidents to include a mechanism to give feedback on service provision;
- Enhancement of the consultation unit; and
- Development of Community Engagement and Citizen Focus strategies that seek to ensure the force develops a 'service' focus alongside a more traditional 'operational' focus.

Protective Services and Collaboration

In March 2008, following a stock-take of its Protective Services capability, the force developed a Protective Services Capabilities Improvement Plan. This is the vehicle by which the force will develop its protective services capability in accordance with the ACPO Protective Services Minimum Threshold Standards.

Of the 436 ACPO Protective Services Minimum Threshold Standards, Northumbria Police was performing to an acceptable standard in 389. Of the 47 remaining areas 30 are identified 'high need' (high priority) and 17 identified as 'other' (standard priority).

The regional collaboration project that includes Northumbria, Cleveland, Cumbria and Durham Constabulary was established in July 2007. Business cases are well advanced that will detail operational benefits and efficiency savings in public order training and recruitment.

Force Performance

All crime reduction targets have been met for 2007/08. Total recorded crime fell by 15.4% in 2007/08. Other reductions included criminal damage which fell by 17.6%, vehicle crime

which fell by 14.1%, burglary dwelling which fell by 21.3% and violent crime which fell by 18.7%.

Sanction detection rates also improved in 2007/08. The total sanction detection rate increased from 37.5% to 38.4%.

Satisfaction levels improved substantially compared to 2006/07, reflecting the priority that the force has placed on citizen focus. The percentage of users satisfied with the overall service provided has risen by 4.5 percentage points compared to the same period in the previous year and, at 87.3%, has recorded the highest level in the country. There has also been a substantial improvement in satisfaction rates for follow-up, with an increase of 10.7 percentage points. Improvement has also been made in the level of satisfaction for treatment by staff, action taken by the police and making contact with the police.

Major Crime

GRADE	Meets the standard
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Contextual factors

This element of the inspection report details Northumbria Police's capacity and capability to identify and assess the risks from major crime, as well as its response in preventing and investigating these crime types, prioritising those which pose the greatest threat to individuals or communities.

	2006	2007	Change	MSF** group mean
Life-threatening and gun crime per 1,000 population	0.393	0.358	-8.91%	0.754
Number of abductions per 10,000 population	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.003
% of abduction crimes detected/convicted	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Number of attempted murders per 10,000 population	0.021	0.028	+33.33%	0.179
% of attempted murder crimes detected/convicted	66.67%	125.00%	+58.33pp*	72.25%
Number of blackmail offences per 10,000 population	0.142	0.071	-50.00%	0.194
% of blackmail offences detected/convicted	70.00%	90.00%	+20pp*	36.57%

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Number of kidnappings per 10,000 population	0.235	0.242	+2.98%	0.391
% of kidnapping crimes detected/convicted	69.70%	76.47%	+6.77pp*	47.31%
Number of manslaughter per 10,000 population	0.036	0.028	-22.22%	0.021
% of manslaughter crimes detected/convicted	60.00%	50.00%	-10pp*	Not Applicable
Number of murders per 10,000 population	0.185	0.142	-23.24%	0.162
% of murders detected/convicted	100.00%	85.00%	-15pp*	88.97%
Number of rapes per 10,000 population	2.560	2.019	-21.13%	2.439
% of rapes detected/convicted	30.28%	29.58%	-0.7pp*	28.20%

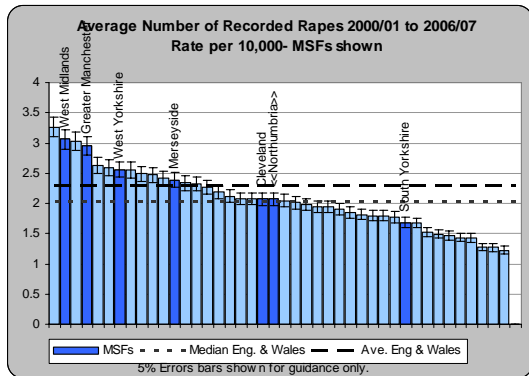
**pp' is percentage points.*

***Most similar forces (MSF) for Northumbria are: Cleveland; Greater Manchester; Merseyside; South Yorkshire; West Midlands and West Yorkshire.*

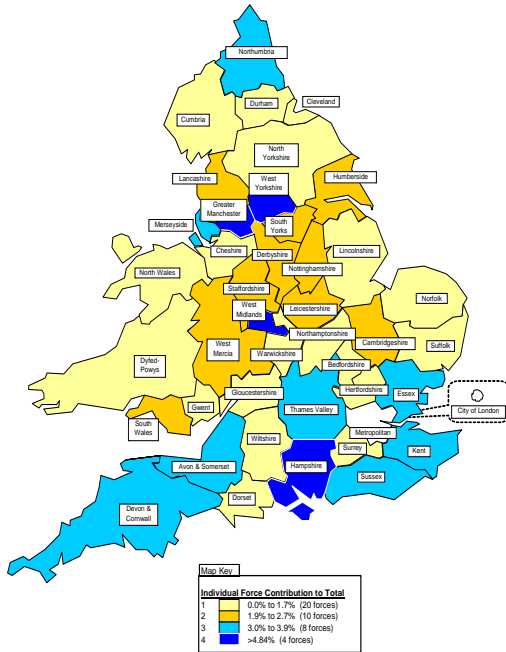
From the statutory performance indicator (SPI) data contained in the table above, it can be seen that Northumbria Police is not under a significant threat from any of the crime types mentioned. The rate of offences (per 10,000 population) for manslaughters are above the MSF average (despite a decrease in 2007) but are not significantly high when considering the rest of England and Wales.

The SPI data also indicates that major crime investigation in Northumbria is strong. Northumbria Police is performing at a level above the MSF average for attempted murder, blackmail and kidnapping, with all three sanction detection rates improving in 2007.

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool (NPSAT) released on 25 September 2007 revealed that Northumbria Police faces a high level of demand in respect of the policing response to rape offences.



Rape (2001/02 to 2006/07), Contribution to Total, Excl. MPS



In the long term the force is below the national average and, after a significant decrease in 2007, is also below the MSF average.

Northumbria is bordered by no other forces which indicate raised demand for policing response to this type of crime.

Intelligence

Northumbria has sufficient dedicated analytical resources to meet identified demands from major crime, supplying dynamic intelligence products that drive activity. The force has committed to major crime investigation.

Strengths

- Northumbria has dedicated analysts and researchers providing support to the investigation of homicide and major crime on the major investigation teams (MITs). This enhances previous analytical capability and ensures dedicated support for the force strategic assessment and major crime types. Following the protective services review (PSR) investment in analytical capacity, dedicated analysts can be immediately deployed to major crime operations and remain with the enquiry throughout.
- At a strategic level there are analysts and researchers within the force information and intelligence department (FIID) with dedicated responsibility to assist the strategic assessment and national intelligence model (NIM) processes. The intelligence section of the FIID is structured in distinct units reflecting functional responsibility for intelligence management, intelligence analysis and drugs co-ordination.
- The intelligence management unit has a range of directional (ie policy, guidance, NIM) and liaison (eg prisons) responsibilities that combine to ensure an effective flow of timely and quality intelligence to underpin effective NIM processes.
- The intelligence analysis unit sets corporate standards for the recruitment, selection, training and deployment of analytical and research staff and delivers analytical products (eg strategic and tactical assessments, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and violent crime strategies) in support of force NIM processes.
- Northumbria's commitment to intelligence development is reflected in growth funding for an additional 30 analyst and researcher posts to meet demands arising from emerging threats and opportunities, primarily in relation to serious and organised and major crime (eg MITs).
- As a result of the NIM review, 'out of hours' intelligence capability is provided by appropriate on-call staff from the FIID. In addition, critical incident managers (CIMs) can provide access to level 7 intelligence. The overall number of analytical staff and balance between researchers and analysts are considered sufficient to meet major crime demands.
- There has also been an investment in additional analytical capability in the area commands. A senior analyst has been appointed to sit alongside the detective inspector (DI) intelligence manager, reporting to the principal analyst in the FIID, who is responsible for all of the analysts working in area command. This situation strengthens the process for commissioning intelligence products, with proper representation at the decision-making stage.
- The force tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) focuses on preventative and enforcement activity. There are links to and between force and area command initiatives, eg the Newcastle violent crime action plan has links to the harm reduction strategy (the patterns and trends linked to the homicide problem profile were used to justify the formulation of the MITs).

Work in progress

- There have been significant developments within the force which impact on its ability to deal with serious and organised crime and to investigate major crime. The FIID, its relationship with the corporate development department (CDD) and the work with KPMG on the corporate decision-making review are all working to move the organisation forward, improving communication and seeking the benefits to be derived from empowerment. The force is seeking to strengthen its processes to achieve and communicate a better understanding of the issues, and organisational developments should be seen in this context. The NIM review forms an important part of this development. These developments provide an important background in understanding the approach adopted by the force to take forward issues such as organised crime group (OCG) mapping, harm reduction and citizen focus.
- There has been significant investment in resources to provide capability to complete OCG mapping and support major crime investigations. While much of the work is in progress, there is a clear vision and recognition of its importance in level 1 crime reduction and the tasking of resources.

Northumbria seeks and shares intelligence in respect of level 2 and level 3 major crime types through partnerships. The force's community impact assessments to evaluate risk following major crime are seen as effective.

Strengths

- OCG mapping is being developed into a far more comprehensive system. Neighbourhood policing team (NPT) staff actively seek information from, and update, communities. The process includes: community intelligence screens, which are updated by neighbourhood policing teams; specific intelligence being documented and submitted in accordance with intelligence guidelines; and intelligence being actioned via local activity or level 1 and level 2 TCG processes as appropriate.
- An internal review of homicides within the force area has been completed, presenting an overview of key issues affecting the precursors to major crime. This process was undertaken by specialist staff, prior to preparation of the homicide prevention strategy. The audit has identified key common themes that are present within homicide and makes recommendations for improvement in the areas of domestic violence risk assessment by front-line officers, problem profiling of knife crime and multi-agency partnership working. A pilot scheme utilising multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) is ongoing within the Gateshead area command.
- The force ensures it understands the drivers of homicide through the effective use of NIM problem profiles, including problem profiles by crime types. Force drug co-ordinators conduct reviews of drugs deaths within the force area. This forms part of the homicide prevention strategy. There is evidence of preventative measures including closure of drugs premises.
- The special branch (SB) section of the FIID gathers, analyses and disseminates intelligence in relation to terrorism and domestic extremism and registers overseas visitors to the force area. The section works closely with the force crime department and has strong links with key partners and other agencies.
- A case study in respect to serious and organised crime identified a licensed premises which had caused significant harm to the local community and was essentially operated by a number of level 2 criminals. Clear priorities were set, with a consideration to harm reduction and precursors to major crime. There is clear evidence of the use of specialist assets to assist in this process. Local partners were engaged with throughout the investigation, but local authorities had not provided the same level of commitment to the investigation; however, there was engagement to ensure that the problem did not reoccur. There is now an increased trust from partners in joint collaboration.
- Area command neighbourhood policing team inspectors have responsibility for preparing CIAs which necessitate substantial internal and external engagement and opportunities to market success. CIAs are used to inform and evaluate impact and inform future policing tactics. This applies to both localised signal crime and major crime investigations. The link between major crime investigations and local communities has been strengthened by CIAs and critical incident independent advisory groups (IAGs).
- There is clear evidence that Northumbria engages in regional collaboration to improve forensic intelligence, eg a regional footwear bureau has been established with standard operating procedures across the constituent forces.

Work in progress

- The community engagement department (to be merged into the crime department) monitor any issues of community tension on an ongoing basis and the force holds a community impact group meeting every four weeks with representatives from intelligence, operations, community engagement and SB. Issues affecting community tension are also featured in the fortnightly level 2 TCG.
- The force acknowledges some weaknesses in maintaining intelligence flags from external agencies regarding OCGs. The force is therefore looking to proactively strengthen intelligence links with several agencies through a number of developments, including: memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA); draft MOU with the regional intelligence unit (RIU); and information-sharing agreements (ISAs) with the North East Retail Crime Partnership (NERCP) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The strategic assessment has analysed the trends in relation to major crime and consequently, the force control strategy is found to be similarly thorough. Problem profiles are used and there is evidence that the force understands the threat posed by other life-threatening issues.

Strengths

- There are well-defined links between the force strategic and tactical assessments, area command plans, control strategies and initiatives/operations. There are strong links between the force strategic assessment (FSA), the force control strategy and the intelligence requirement. All level 2 investigations fall within the force control strategy priority areas.
- Major crime is considered within the FSA and is linked to the development of the homicide reduction strategy. The relationships between OCG mapping and harm reduction are clearly identified, and there is an understanding of the impact of major crime on communities expressed in terms of harm and vulnerability. There is evidence that this understanding influences the development of processes aimed at informed decision-making, focused activity and better co-ordination.
- There is a NIM based structure of strategies and products, including those which relate to the precursors of major crime, eg homicide prevention. These documents represent the corporate understanding of these issues, and came about following a collection plan which involved direct consultation with members of MITs. Strategies form the basis of specific plans involving partners. All intelligence products meet NIM standards.
- The FSA has shown an increase in homicide over the preceding four years, which highlight the common precursors of alcohol, mental health and relationships. Prior to devising the homicide reduction strategy (in development), a homicide problem profile has been conducted and delivered, the key focus being upon intervention. Drugs and alcohol played a significant role in these offences, with a third linked to domestic violence; however only 12 per cent of victims had a history of domestic violence. Some 44 per cent of offences involved knives and 8 per cent involved the use of firearms. The most vulnerable groups were males aged 30 to 49 years.
- As a result of the internal review, six offences classed as ‘preventable homicides’ have been identified for multi-agency development. Further problem profiles are being developed in relation to knife crime and domestic violence. Annual review of the homicide problem profile allows continued re-evaluation of trends.

Work in progress

- Northumbria’s strategic assessment has recently combined organisational and intelligence assessments in a single document.
- The force recognises the variation of ongoing processes of change and is seeking to co-ordinate projects centrally through corporate development to ensure the strategic aims of the force are met.
- Northumbria Police no longer uses level 1 network profiles to support targeted activity, and is replacing this with OCG mapping. There is ongoing work to identify better links to intelligence products at level 1.
- The force is progressing with the development of a firearms suppression strategy led by the operations department.

Areas for improvement

- The strategic drive for the force comes via the strategic plan and the 2020 Vision, which is based on the findings of the strategic assessment. While the strategic assessment gives a comprehensive overview of crime and disorder problems in the force area, there is evidence that policing operations are driven by crime reduction and sanction detection targets. The focus of attention needs to move further towards community-focused performance outcomes underpinned by effective neighbourhood policing.

Trend analysis and problem profiles are shared with partners and area commands. The force has information sharing agreements in place with a number of agencies. Northumbria can demonstrate that it is on track to reach compliance with the management of police information (MoPI) requirements by 2010.

Strengths

- The alignment of information functions under a single line of command within the FIID has brought corporacy and clarity to the management of information and information sharing, ensuring compliance across the force with regard to the principles and standards enshrined in MoPI, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), data protection and freedom of information.
- The information section of the FIID is structured in distinct units reflecting functional responsibility for MoPI, records management, disclosure, vetting, information security, information compliance, firearms and explosives licensing, and collision records. The work of all eight units is co-ordinated under the line management of a superintendent who is directly accountable to the head of department. The MoPI unit has functional responsibility for ensuring that Northumbria complies with the national code of practice and guidance for managing information, particularly with regard to review, retention, disposal and information sharing.
- The force has in place agreements with a number of agencies with regard to information sharing including ISAs with the NERCP, Victim Support and social services.
- Intelligence officers within the force intelligence bureau (FIB) have identified single-point-of-contact (SPOC) responsibilities for agencies such as HMRC, Interpol and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). This is supported by a wide range of ISAs at a more local level with the area commands, eg a working relationship with the housing tenant enforcement team, which works closely with neighbourhood policing teams to identify problem tenants who could potentially become involved in crime in the future.
- MAPPA awareness training is provided to other agencies. There are two events per annum in each of the six local authority areas and these are directed at the 'duty to co-operate' agencies. This helps to communicate major crime issues to partners, helping with identification of risk. A member of staff from the health service will soon be working at Police headquarters with the joint MAPPA team.
- There has been an investment in MAPPA-style processes to manage non-MAPPA potentially dangerous persons. Neighbourhood policing teams support MAPPA strategies to control risks in respect of registered sex offenders (RSOs). Neighbourhood teams have access to intelligence about RSOs residing in their areas and are routinely deployed through the tactical tasking and co-ordination group (TTCG) process in support of community reassurance.
- A corporate IT database provides access to all members of the organisation, with the opportunity to share good practice, policy guidance and forms.

Work in progress

- The MoPI strategy is in place and two peer reviews have taken place. A dedicated team is to be put in place and there will be a pilot on review, retention and disposal

of information. The MoPI action plan has 300 actions and ownership for delivery has been established: delivery is on track for 2010.

- The head of training sits on the project board for the implementation of MoPI. The force is working through its action plan in consultation with the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), with training to be delivered as part of other crime-based learning.
- It is recognised that there is a lack of understanding among operational practitioners of the benefit of the serious crime analysis section (SCAS) in the identification of serious stranger offences and crime pattern analysis. Work is in progress to address this understanding and managers have been given responsibility for adhering to national performance standards. This is monitored centrally, to ensure compliance within specified time limits.

Areas for improvement

- Protocols and joint working are evident in the area of protecting vulnerable people, in particular the influx of Chinese minors to Newcastle for exploitation in the sex trade. A protocol is in place with the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) and social services, to ensure that minors entering the UK undergo identification procedures. While it is apparent that there is collaboration, there are recognised breakdowns in confidence and a lack of trust of the police by some vulnerable persons. At the present there is a lack of engagement with IAGs and key individual networks (KINs) to increase community confidence within this vulnerable group, and there is no evidence of seeking assistance from other forces that have managed similar cultural issues. Intelligence interviews do occur with persons who have nominal records, through the use of interpreters; however, increased understanding of the cultural issues would increase the quality of intelligence provided.

The force profiling of vulnerable locations and communities in respect of major crime is developing, with evidence that the impact of OCG activity is understood. Future risks and threats across the force area are identified.

Strengths

- The force uses information relating to the vulnerable localities index. The index includes a range of factors in common use to assess localities for their current vulnerability. The assessment takes the form of a scored outcome, which can then be used to rank the localities in order of vulnerability. This can be used by the area commands to form part of their strategic assessment.
- Bespoke information packs about distinct minority groups in the Northumbria Police area are made available to senior investigating officers (SIOs) in the event of a major crime or critical incident.

Work in progress

- Community profiling is an area for development in Northumbria. The force has invested in MOSAIC geo-demographic data and ORIGINS datasets to improve its understanding of the communities it serves with regard to their national, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. A significant impact of these datasets is around communicating messages in support of preventative activity to the appropriate target groups and understanding the impact of criminality within these communities.
- The force is looking at the whole issue of vulnerability, building the business to manage the situation based on the new understanding. The focus is on risk identification, assessment and management. Audit and compliance testing is built in, and all of this is seen within the context of a wider interpretation of harm reduction which needs further development as a central theme.
- Recommendations are being considered by the force with regard to CIAs and best practice.

Areas for improvement

- The force has identified that extra research capability could be enhanced through the establishment of a vulnerable groups section and the development of a vulnerability matrix.

Corporate risk is reviewed at chief officer level through the corporate planning group. Action to control, mitigate and reduce risk is progressed through force and local business plans.

Strengths

- Northumbria has a structure and corporate processes linked to force business planning to manage risks at force, area command and departmental levels. While the force has a corporate risk manager, responsibility for risk identification in area commands and departments rests with senior management teams (SMTs). All risks are collated on a single force database with ownership details, and there is strict guidance for scoring their likelihood and impact to determine their status. Corporate risks are regularly reviewed at force corporate planning group meetings; area command and departmental risks are regularly reviewed at local SMT meetings. Action to control, mitigate and reduce risks is progressed through force and local business plans.
- The crime department has lead responsibility for identifying risks in respect of the force's capacity and capability to tackle serious and organised and major crime. All risks identified are entered on a force risk database and have an owner allocated to progress action to control, mitigate or reduce any risk through the departmental business plan. Risk management complies with force processes for risk assessment and all risks are regularly reviewed at the crime department's performance and policy group meetings.
- A crime department business continuity plan is in place which identifies risk to departmental business (eg IT failure), and outlines contingency plans to mitigate those risks. The departmental plan is subject to inspection by the force business continuity plan adviser.
- The crime department/FIID maintains an electronic strategic risk register. Risks are graded red, amber or green. Mitigating actions to control or reduce risks are monitored each month at the departmental policy and performance group meeting.
- The MIT is incorporated within the force crime department's risk register and business continuity plans.

Work in progress

- The way in which issues on the force risk register are managed is changing due to organisational development. Following work with consultants KPMG, meeting structures have changed, including the portfolio steering group meetings where organisational risk was reviewed. A new process is required which fits the new framework.
- A local firearms intelligence database is held within the area command, which contains 200 network profiles and 4 live firearms packages. Case study investigation demonstrated how the use of intelligence has led to the disruption of OCG activity following precursor homicide activity within the area command. Firearms suppression appears successful and has a low impact upon the community, response to firearms intelligence. Disruption is low key and tactics can be escalated if the demand arises.

Northumbria is collaborating with other forces in its region. An acknowledged area for development is the existence of interoperable intelligence systems.

Strengths

- The force has a robust intelligence and data-sharing structure which encompasses a wide range of processes and meetings, ranging from the RIU level 2 TCG to internal monthly review meetings.
- Through its forensic intelligence plan all area command staff have access to intelligence held in the Socrates computer-based management system.
- The MIT has regional collaborative agreements in place in respect of HOLMES disciplines.
- The national violent and sex offenders register (ViSOR) went live in Northumbria in September 2005. As the system operates at a Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) confidential level, access to the system is tightly restricted and monitored.

Work in progress

- A self-identified area for development is the existence of interoperable intelligence systems. The withdrawal of the cross regional information sharing project (CRISP), for which Northumbria Police was the lead force, has had a significant impact (there is an ongoing project looking at an alternative to CRISP). The force is considering the purchase of Attensity Live (undertaking a proof of concept), which takes unstructured data and analyses, it enabling it to be read in a structured format. The captured data will be from Home Office large major enquiry system (HOLMES) incidents, the incident-handling system, the criminal justice system and the criminal intelligence system (CIS).
- The force has acknowledged that in the past sensitive intelligence from level 2 proactive operations, and from major crime enquiries such as gangland-type investigations, could have been captured better. The confidential unit has been introduced to capture this intelligence together with the peripheral intelligence from SOCA supported operations, to inform the level 2 intelligence picture more effectively across the force area. It is the view that the confidential unit and the OCG mapping section will complement each other.
- Policies and procedures for the confidential unit are being established. The intention is to strengthen the links and processes between the three important elements; dedicated source units (DSUs); the confidential unit; and OCG mapping activity. The force is one of 16 who have SOCA-embedded officers to improve the flow of intelligence into confidential units.
- The force works with HOLMES version 11 and is planning to migrate to version 12 early in 2008.
- There is no integrated approach to the use and management of forensic intelligence within the force. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the force forensic intelligence plan. Action is being taken to close the gap with clear accountability.
- Force IT systems are being developed to combine records of child abuse, domestic violence and missing persons (MISPER) investigations in a single, searchable

database. This will serve to improve the quality of investigations by prescribing minimum standards, enhancing the process of risk assessment and providing a firmer foundation for accountability and auditing.

- The force has recognised that improvements are needed in the submission of SCAS forms and a number of recommendations are being actioned to improve compliance and improve performance following an internal review.
- Although the force does not have an interoperable IT system with other forces, there are well established intelligence sharing processes via the RIU, IMPACT and ViSOR.
- Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) intelligence is downloaded on to local networks via the NPICCS command and control system, through which various records and data can be accessed. There is ongoing work to develop a system where information can be accessed via a number of area command terminals.
- The Police National Computer (PNC) working group is currently working on the Attensity Live Project, which will enable the PNC and CIS systems to be updated automatically from one input.

Areas for improvement

- Access to the CLUE 2 and HOLMES systems is via the corporate intelligence system; however, these are stand-alone modules to the extent that they are not accessible via a single search screen. Access to corporate systems is tiered in accordance to the corporate criteria for access control.

Northumbria has a case review policy that ensures major crime cases are reviewed in accordance with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance. The policy is seen to be effective.

Strengths

- The force carried out an internal gap analysis against the HMIC specific grading criteria (SGC) for serious organised and major crime investigation as an internal development and review process. Relevant areas for improvement from recent HMIC assessments have featured in development plans and improvement and learning cycles with clear accountability for delivery. These reviews feed into the crime departmental business planning process.
- The force has a dedicated major crime review section within the crime department consisting of a review officer and three review advisers. Staff work to the detective superintendent investigative development unit. The force review policy is in accordance with national guidelines and the ACPO murder investigation manual (MIM). The review section undertakes cold case reviews as well as ongoing live homicide reviews at both initial and progress stages. The section also has responsibility for maintaining the good practice database.
- SIOs understand the value of the review process in terms of self and organisational development. There is an acceptance of the benefits of the process, learning opportunities and forensic advancements; this work has been established within the organisation for some time.
- Debriefing is valued as a vital tool to development. Clear procedures are embedded into the investigation of major incidents; these are joint processes with the intelligence development unit and MIT. Recommendations are disseminated to SIO and area commands as required to ensure that good practice is developed.
- The confidential unit is designed to capture all intelligence from proactive operations and major crime enquiries, together with peripheral intelligence from SOCA supported operations, to inform the level 2 intelligence picture more effectively.

Work in progress

- The force recognises the gap in relation to intelligence that is contained in operational IT such as HOLMES and CLUE 2. The confidential unit will ensure intelligence from these systems is fed into the organisational memory.

The force tasking and co-ordination process delivers suitable responses to manage major crime threats. Northumbria has a good understanding of historical, current and predicted demand.

Strengths

- Tasking and co-ordinating processes have been re-examined in conjunction with the NIM review, and as a consequence adjustments have been made to raise the profile of major crime, including protective service considerations and harm reduction as headline issues.
- The MITs are fully compliant with NIM, in that a weekly minuted TCG meeting is held with mandatory SIO attendance. This process examines current demand and is forward looking in terms of force initiatives and other resourcing implications.
- Northumbria has produced a homicide problem profile and is developing a knife crime profile that will feed a strategy aimed at intelligence, prevention and enforcement.
- There is a clear understanding of the benefits of CIAs in the prevention of major crime, in recognising precursors to homicide and the effective tasking of resources. The process allows cost-effective resource management through an understanding of the key issues and tension levels.
- There are clear NIM compliant structures and processes in place to prevent firearms use within the area commands. Firearms intelligence is assessed, actioned and prioritised accordingly to the threat to the community. Firearms recovery within the area is based on proactive use of intelligence in the recovery of weapons utilised in level 2 criminality. Intelligence is covert human intelligence source (CHIS) led and reviewed weekly via the firearms intelligence review group; there is evidence of continuity to the TCG, which is attended by partners.
- Each neighbourhood policing sector in Newcastle area command has a dedicated intelligence officer accountable to the neighbourhood inspector, but under the corporate overview of the area intelligence unit. Their responsibilities include prison release profiles, the production of which is managed through the TCG. While the NPTs are given ownership of the profiles, they can be supported, where necessary, by the area public protection unit (PPU) and level 2 resources.

Work in progress

- Intelligence products and tasking and co-ordinating arrangements within the MIT comply with NIM standards and are seen to be effective. It is proposed that the dedicated SIO area command links will attend area TCG meetings to strengthen links between the MIT and area commands.
- Few items of intelligence are submitted by officers from the scientific support department. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the force forensic intelligence plan. Action is being taken to close the gap with clear accountability.
- While scientific support supervisors attend all level 1 TCG meetings, there is no representation at level 2 to ensure suitable scientific advice is provided to all operations. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the force forensic intelligence plan. It is intended that each level 2 TCG meeting should be attended

by a scientific support manager. Action is progressing to close the gap with clear accountability and timescales for completion by June 2008.

- Newcastle area command has reviewed its strategic NIM arrangements to improve role clarity, ownership and accountability for the delivery of control strategy priorities emanating from the strategic assessment. For each priority an area champion has been identified who links to the operational delivery groups of the crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP). The champions are required to compile action plans, with clear accountability and timescales that reflect prevention, intelligence and enforcement (PIE) priorities. The area command and its CDRP currently produce separate strategic assessments. The involvement of partners in the production of the area's assessment is currently being reviewed.

Training helps ensure the force is aware of diverse community needs during major crime investigations; however, there remain a need for a greater understanding of the number of diverse communities present across the force area.

Strengths

- All staff within Northumbria Police receive generic training in diversity. The training package is being reviewed, with a modular training package being proposed to deliver a tailored approach. Diversity training is also facilitated through critical incident training to CIMs, SIOs and family liaison officers (FLOs).
- The theme of diversity was confidently placed as a golden thread through all detective training. Much time and emphasis is placed on understanding and supporting local diverse communities during major crime scenarios and the completion of effective CIAs.

Work in progress

- The community engagement department is active in training force personnel around completion of CIAs and diversity.

Areas for improvement

- Initial training regarding emerging communities has been delivered to managers; however, there remains a need for greater understanding of the diverse communities present in Northumbria. The level of effective community engagement remains limited.

Prevention

The force makes use of IAGs, key individuals and support groups to maximise the contribution of partners and the community in the management of major crime investigations.

Strengths

- Northumbria has an established structure of independent advisory groups, including: a strategic IAG (SIAG) offering advice about new and existing force policy, particularly those impacting on vulnerable groups; local IAGs (LIAGs), which meet at area command level and are representative of local communities; and critical incident IAGs (CIIAGs), convened on an extraordinary basis outside the LIAG meeting cycle.
- The force uses the IAG structure and supportive processes such as CIAs as mainstreamed tools supporting the management and investigation of major crime. Full guidance and procedure on the use of IAGs and CIAs is available on the force instructional information system (IIS).
- IAGs are supported by the use of a community contacts directory that stores information on key community contacts who can work in partnership with the force in providing advice and support when required.
- CIIAGs bring together key members of the community and partner agencies such as local authority, fire and rescue, refugee services, schools and the local safeguarding children board (LSCB).
- The establishment of silver meetings during critical incident management has ensured a recognised balance within area commands between community trust and the detection of crime. Critical incident management is embedded into daily business, measuring harm and formulating an appropriate response. Sectors have bespoke plans in operation and visible presence within communities, which include joint walkabouts with local inspectors and partners. Proactive use of the local media, eg 'News from the Nick' has assisted in promoting key messages and encourages community feedback.
- Neighbourhood policing and the IAG infrastructures in the Sunderland area command provide a sound foundation for local police to engage effectively with their communities, control potential tensions and enlist community support for major crime investigations. Through neighbourhood policing and partnership links the area command has developed a large network of key individuals representative of the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in Sunderland. The area command has created a local IAG membership from this network. Meetings are held four times a year to explain police policies and procedures and address local community concerns.

Work in progress

- Work is in progress to develop the community contact database to assist neighbourhood policing and major crime/critical incident management. Previously no record was available in respect of community contacts, their frequency and the reason for the contact.
- Dynamics within the local IAG in the Sunderland area command are influenced by the cultural relationship between older and younger community representatives.

Since young people tend to defer to the elders in the group, other mechanisms are also required to ensure effective engagement with them. Neighbourhood policing is seen to provide an effective infrastructure for engaging with groups such as Young Asian Voices.

- Northumbria Police is working with other regional forces to help find a solution to difficulties in respect of engaging interpreters.

Areas for improvement

- The SIAG is chaired by a member of the group, with the ACC (crime) acting in a member advisory capacity. The membership of the group is seen as an area for development.
- A further area for development is the lack of contact/integration between the SIAG and the local IAGs. Members of the SIAG felt this impacted on their ability to assist the force.

Contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of the escalation of a major crime incident. ‘Golden hour’ principles are understood by call management staff and first responders.

Strengths

- Business continuity plans exist for all area commands and departments throughout the force area. The MIT is incorporated within the crime department’s risk register and business continuity plan. The crime department’s business continuity plan met the force standard in a recent compliance test.
- The force has a structure and corporate processes linked to business planning to ensure business continuity at force, area command and departmental levels. While the force has a business continuity officer, responsibility for business continuity in area commands and departments rests with SMTs. The force business continuity plan incorporates plans for force mobilisation, disaster victim identification and the casualty bureau, and all area commands and departments are required to maintain continuity plans specific to their areas of business. Accountability is promoted through force planning processes and corporate systems exist for testing and reviewing business continuity plans.
- Northumbria has adopted a dedicated command and control structure to ensure the effective management of critical incidents. CIMs at inspector rank are based in the communications centre and provide 24-hour cover.
- There is effective command and control in Northumbria to manage the initial response to incidents of serious and organised and major crime. At least one CIM is on duty in the force communications department at all times. CIMs are trained to direct and co-ordinate the initial response to all such incidents, ensuring all required actions are carried out promptly and effectively until such time as command is passed to an accredited silver commander. Mandatory training includes pursuit management and national firearms incident handling accreditation. To assist, there are direct telephone lines between Northumbria Police’s command centres and other forces and key agencies in the North East region, eg prisons and the fire and rescue service. CIMs maintain policy logs to record decision-making in connection with managing critical incidents. Systems exist for independent quality control and ensuring organisational learning.
- All call handlers in the force communication centres receive training and mentoring for dealing with major crime incidents. During initial training (to be increased from three to eight weeks) staff are trained how to respond to major crime types. This is subsequently reinforced during a period of tutoring from an experienced colleague (this usually lasts for four weeks, but can be continued until the call handler is competent). Records of handling live incidents including suspicious deaths, firearms incidents, sexual offences and kidnap are maintained throughout this time in a workbook, and performance quality can be reviewed through dip sampling. All call handlers are closely supervised and required to refer any incident of serious and organised and major crime to CIMs in order to ensure effective response.
- Call handlers, dispatchers, supervisors and CIMs in the command centres have access to comprehensive advice and guidance for dealing with incidents of kidnap and major crime. Checklists can be copied to incident logs on the command and control system and be overwritten with relevant information to guide response staff. This ensures an audit trail for ‘golden hour’ response activity.

- On-call rotas, telephone contact details and contingency plans for responding to incidents of serious and organised and major crime are maintained in the command centres. Responsibility for updating the on-call database lies with the relevant area commands and departments. Command centre staff report that the system works well and that they have no difficulty in contacting on-call ACPO, silver commanders, SIOs, SB, telecoms SPOC, negotiators or media services. Details of any such contacts are recorded on incident logs.
- Comprehensive training for the 'golden hour' is provided throughout the force at different operational tactical and strategic levels. All uniformed officers are receiving training in respect of the Civil Contingencies Act which deals with first response at major incidents.
- Northumbria has collaborated with regional forces to agree the constituent elements of the regional contribution to the UK disaster victim identification scheme.

Work in progress

- CIMs are trained to take control of spontaneous firearms incidents in accordance with the requirements of the manual of guidance for police use of firearms. Staff have undergone an initial accreditation process and will be subject to ongoing re-accreditation.
- A workforce modernisation project is being carried out in one of the command centres to trial the business case for replacing police officer supervisors with police staff. Potential business benefits include a lower turnover of supervisors (and lower associated costs) and additional supervision to support call handlers and radio dispatchers.
- Major crime policy, procedure and staffing are areas of developing practice, ie the recent implementation of the MITs significantly increases the force's capacity and capability in terms of dedicated major crime assets.

Areas for improvement

- While all CIMs have received role-specific training, supervisors in the communication centres have not received an equivalent level of training to assist them in their support role to CIMs.

The threats from the precursors to major crime offending are analysed and understood.

Strengths

- There are well-defined links between the force strategic and tactical assessments, area command plans, control strategies and force initiatives and operations. There are strong links between the FSA, the force control strategy and the intelligence requirement, eg from February 2007 level 2 targets are linked via the level 2 network profile. All major crime types are considered within the FSA.
- An internal review of homicides within the force area has been completed, presenting an overview of key issues affecting the precursors to major crime. This process was undertaken by specialist staff prior to preparation of the homicide prevention strategy. The review has identified key common themes that are present within homicide and makes recommendations for improvement in the areas of domestic violence risk assessment by front-line officers, problem profiling of knife crime and multi-agency partnership working. A pilot scheme utilising MARAC is ongoing within the Gateshead area command. The review considered some 142 offences through the use of a bespoke questionnaire and was undertaken by specialist staff that had experience of investigating homicide offences.
- Weapons suppression in respect of firearms has been broadened to include knives. The situation with the criminal use of firearms is not a significant problem in the Northumbria Police area to the same extent that it is in other parts of the country. Steps are being taken to prevent such a position arising. Comprehensive guidance has been published to staff to promote an effective flow of intelligence in respect of firearms.
- Ownership of domestic abuse perpetrators is to be established using a tiered approach with allocation to the MIT, PPU or NPT depending on the level of risk.
- Following the review of homicide, new developments will be built around the introduction of MARAC processes in each area command. Investigators within the PPU will focus on higher risk perpetrators and partners will pick up the support requirements. The key will be co-ordination through MARACs and CPS engagement.
- Partnerships are established around shared processes such as MAPPAs, MARACs and the LSCB, which provides a hub and a framework for establishing and understanding responsibilities. Joint MAPPAs audit and inspection processes are being developed in conjunction with the probation service. Investments are being made in training, particularly in respect of risk assessment and child abuse investigators. There are 24,000 child concern notifications annually within the force area. Processes are being enhanced to provide better intelligence, to feed better risk assessments and to encourage officers to take responsibility at the first point of contact.
- MISPER processes are seen as effective. The policy lead for this business area is now with the headquarters PPU. Missing persons are consistently managed throughout the force through NIM processes.
- The force has issued instructional information in relation to Osman warnings/threats to life, on the intranet for the attention of all staff.

Work in progress

- The homicide problem profile showed that 37 per cent of homicides had a domestic abuse history. Homicide prevention strategies will provide the framework for risk identification, assessment and management. It will also focus attention on IT development to provide tools which will make these processes more efficient.
- The force is progressing a firearms suppression strategy led by the operations department. Firearms intelligence groups already operate in the Newcastle and Sunderland area commands, contributing to firearms suppression and mitigating risk to communities.
- The force recognises that there are gaps in the understanding of serious assaults and a multi-agency working approach to tackling these. The force, having previously engaged with health and social services, is developing MARAC arrangements which are being piloted in the Gateshead area command in respect of domestic violence.
- An operational intelligence assessment process is being introduced to reinforce the NIM database, providing a basis for establishing standards for analysis at area command level and a means of bidding for further development by the FIID. Area commands have people trained to do the intelligence analysis required to support this process.
- Community engagement has been incorporated into the crime department, providing an opportunity to strengthen the prevention arm to the management of crime with improved links into harm reduction. In addition, this will provide resources for the central monitoring of hate crime and the driving up of investigation standards within the area commands. Expansion into these areas needs to be scoped and the resource implications properly assessed.

Areas for improvement

- The process of testing the relevance of the issues which are highlighted in the FSA and which drive prevention strategies is not immediately apparent. The risk is that the current approach is self-fulfilling.
- A shift in emphasis at area command level following the NIM review has not necessarily been reflected in the commissioning of analytical products, which are still largely focused on volume crime issues.

Force policy covering threats to life is accessible to staff, is understood and is implemented. There are examples of joint, regional, cross-border and multi-agency operations.

Strengths

- Activity in the prevention of major crime is evident through the effective use of Osman options. Northumbria issued warnings relating to a range of potential offences during 2007. The force has issued instructional information in relation to Osman warnings/threats to life on the intranet for the attention of all staff. In cases where information or intelligence is received indicating there is a threat to life, the instructional information outlines a sequence of events to be followed: receipt of the threat by police; decision as to whether this is an allegation of crime information or intelligence; assessment of the nature and severity of the threat; response to mitigate the threat (devising and initiating a strategy for preventative or disruptive measures); and resolution (initialising an agreed strategy to remove the threat). Receipt of information relating to threats to life should be reported to an officer of the rank of inspector as soon as possible. The inspector is responsible for identifying the relevant officer (the superintendent from host area command or the on-call silver commander). The actions to be taken in respect of the receipt of the threat, action to be taken by the relevant officer and the issue of the warning are all outlined in the instructional information.
- A force problem profile has been produced to inform the development of actions to control, mitigate and reduce the number of homicides. Alcohol hotspots, domestic violence and knife crime are key areas of concern. High-profile campaigns (eg The Party's Over; Don't Spoil the Party) and targeted action in relation to high-risk domestic abuse incidents have been instigated.
- Notices are displayed in the front counter offices, eg at Pilgrim Street, to advise staff of the action to be taken in the event of receiving a report of kidnapping or extortion. Notices define the offences and emphasise the need for an immediate response and for confidentiality.

Work in progress

- Northumbria's FSA identifies the need for a harm reduction and crime prevention strategy. This is being pursued through the business planning process.
- The force has developed a homicide problem profile to inform the development of a homicide reduction strategy.
- A firearms suppression strategy is being developed by the operations department. While the broad strategic aims have been established, it remains work in progress. A knife reduction strategy is also planned.
- While there is an understanding of the CIA process among managers, there is a lack of understanding of the value of CIAs in some major investigations, eg domestic homicide, with the CIA seen as a reaction to tackling tension issues and not as a fluid tool of assessment to assist in resource management and building community trust.

Northumbria has a witness protection capability that is supported by dedicated covert resources. The force operates a policy that is promulgated to and understood by staff. Northumbria collaborates with other forces and partners in this area.

Strengths

- Northumbria Police's witness protection unit (WPU) is recognised both regionally and nationally as an area of expertise. Since 1990 the unit has managed approximately 400 people. A risk assessment process is in place. The unit is represented on the national executive board for witness protection.
- Situated within the authorities management section of the FIID, the WPU ensures the safety and security of victims and witnesses, protects them from threat or intimidation and provides support in instances where CHISs are compromised. The unit works with a number of partners including other forces, the central witness bureau, the probation service and the DWP.
- Northumbria is one of only two units in the country conducting debriefs with those entering co-operation agreements under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (SOCPA).
- The force is committed to the principles of the witness charter as part of the quality of service commitment (QoSC). For example, special measures are used at Crown Court where necessary to afford protection and maximise integrity.
- Established procedures are in place in respect of the integrity of tactics, policy books and the maintenance of CHIS identities.
- The Newcastle area command's weapons suppression group is NIM compliant but operates in parallel to the mainstream TTCG process in order to ensure a thorough review of intelligence and protect the anonymity of confidential sources.

The force has processes in place to monitor the impact of preventative and enforcement activity. There is evidence that a range of community policing assets are used to help understand levels of harm in the community; however, hate crime monitoring remains an area for development.

Strengths

- The force has identified eight strategic aims within its corporate values to deliver to the community on the themes of: people, communications, information and intelligence, justice, partnerships, innovation and technology, sustainable development and value. It has set a further seven force objectives within these themes on; people and resources, harm reduction, targeting named offenders, policing communities, serious and organised crime, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. It has recognised the importance of linking serious/major crime with traditional public service agreement (PSA1) issues; harm reduction and major crime prevention are key features of the strategy. A three-year control strategy has been developed, which is subject to annual review. From these aims and objectives key actions have been developed to focus resource performance activity.
- The defined strategy and objectives are intended to be cascaded to area commands and departments and subsequently set alongside the assessment of policing and community safety (APACS) performance framework, allowing local ownership of performance and bespoke development of business plans, to ensure service delivery in terms of PIE. As local issues are raised, new plans are developed and provide local accountability to area commanders.
- A gap analysis has been undertaken to identify potential risks to the force's performance by the establishment of the corporate planning resource committee; the committee consists of members of ACPO, intelligence, finance and human resources. There are processes in place to identify any fluctuation within performance, by utilisation of a robust review process.

Work in progress

- A vulnerability section is being planned within the force crime department to bring strategic control of Northumbria's response to vulnerable groups, child protection and persons at risk under one strategic umbrella. A better strategic understanding of communities and vulnerability will inform early intervention with a view to preventing incident escalation. This migration will be pursued through the department's 2008/09 business planning process. The outcomes sought include more effective measurement of harm, improved co-ordination for crime prevention, support for area commands and quality of service, and more and better quality intelligence.
- The force has introduced a harm reduction officer to co-ordinate strategic development of harm reduction. A pilot is ongoing, with test purchase officers working within the community to proactively understand the harm caused to communities by OCGs. The harm reduction strategy is currently in draft form. The ambition is to work with partners and the public to achieve long-term sustainable harm reduction.
- Generally CIAs are carried out by community inspectors or by the community engagement department at the request of SIOs where the incident has potential impact force-wide. Community engagement carry out quality assurance checks of assessments in order to advise area commands and monitor force-wide indicators.

- Work is in progress to develop a community contact database to record who from the community has been contacted and why. This is intended to assist neighbourhood policing teams within area commands to identify issues and key community contacts.

Areas for improvement

- Hate crime monitoring is an area for development. This is being addressed through the migration of the vulnerability functions of the community engagement department to the force crime department.
- The force has identified the need to ensure that the monitoring of race and hate crime will be enhanced by improving the recording of details relating to offenders and victims of hate crime.

Northumbria considers relevant professional standards issues in the operational planning of major crime activity. A security policy is in use across the organisation. The approach to vetting continues to develop.

Strengths

- Integrity is one of the guiding principles of Northumbria Police's 2020 Vision. Following HMIC's protective services review, capacity and capability within Northumbria Police to identify and investigate the threat of corruption has been enhanced. A strategic assessment of corruption and an assessment of force vulnerability to corruption are carried out annually by the professional standards department (PSD) to inform a counter-corruption control strategy that sets priorities for the integrity unit. This provides a framework of policy and procedure to identify, control and root out corruption, dishonesty and unethical behaviour.
- The force has a robust anti-corruption policy framework, including: an intelligence-led integrity testing policy; a substance misuse policy and procedure; a lawful business monitoring policy; a management intervention procedure; and an inappropriate association policy and procedure.
- The policy on inappropriate associations is the central means by which the force seeks to gather intelligence and manage the issue of friendship and relations between staff and inappropriate persons including criminals. The policy is thought to be the first nationally and has been adopted by other forces, eg West Yorkshire.
- Within the information section of the FIID there is a distinct vetting unit with functional responsibility for vetting police officers and staff. The section also manages the ACPO national vetting policy for the police community.
- The force has a distinct information security unit with responsibility for advising on the confidentiality, integrity and availability of force information assets and ensuring compliance with the ACPO community security policy.
- The authorities section of the FIID is structured in distinct units reflecting functional responsibility for covert operations, the technical support unit (TSU), the DSU, witness protection and special crime operations. The covert authorities' bureau ensures corporate standards in relation to legislation (eg RIPA, Police Act 1997) and codes of practice (eg surveillance authorities, CHIS registration and management, surveillance within prisons) and provides support, guidance and assistance to staff involved in covert techniques at all levels. The telecommunications and internet unit ensures force compliance with legislation (eg the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), ECHR) and codes of practice (eg for acquisition and disclosure of communications data agreed with service providers) in relation to data intercepts.

Work in progress

- The approach to vetting is developing and the force is moving towards the standards embodied within the national policy. A new vetting manager has been appointed and is beginning to have an impact. Gaps have been identified and filled and process improvements are being made including reviews.
- As a result of risk assessment significant investment has been made to ensure the integrity and security of information. An external professional storage site had been identified to retain archive records, which are recorded within force and accessible to resources as required.

- The confidential unit is a new creation within the authorities management section of the FIID, capturing and dealing with level 2 sensitive intelligence from a number of sources in order to create a more comprehensive profile of serious and organised crime within the force area.

Enforcement

Governance arrangements in respect of major crime activity including investigations are effective, with use made of IAGs and gold command support groups.

Strengths

- The ACCs (crime and operations) have oversight of all operational activity. The ACC (operations) chairs the level 2 TCG. The ACC (crime) meets with the head of crime and head of FIID on a weekly basis. The heads of the force crime department and FIID report directly to the ACC (crime), who is the nominated ACPO lead for major crime and the information and intelligence functions.
- Chief officers chair gold group meetings as appropriate in respect of serious and organised crime and major crime.
- Relationships with the police authority are positive and members are briefed about major crime issues as appropriate. The authority does not have a lead member structure: this has been tried in the past and it was thought to have limited the effective exchange of information and resulted in a narrow perception of ownership and responsibility. The authority is satisfied members are well briefed.
- Sufficient information is made available to establish value for money and return on investment in line with the original intention. There is flexibility and understanding to the extent that adjustments can be made and supported by the police authority when it is appropriate to do so. The force understands that it need to take the police authority with it and is very open about sharing plans and vision.
- The ACC (crime) is actively involved in quarterly review meetings between force staff, the forensic science service (FSS) and other relevant stakeholders (eg the CPS) on all relevant matters relating to major crime.

Work in progress

- The crime and intelligence portfolio steering groups are being replaced within a new structure emerging from the Chief Constable's 2020 Vision for the force.

At the time of inspection the ACPO lead and head of crime were not trained in the management of linked and series crime. Training is part of their planned career development. These officers are supported by staff that have undergone comprehensive training and testing in criminal investigation and critical incident command.

Strengths

- Northumbria Police ACPO team is intrusive in the monitoring and management of major crime investigations. Both the ACPO lead and the head of department are experienced investigators.
- Two detective superintendents in the MIT are trained and competent in the management of linked and series crime and undertake all such investigations on behalf of the force.

Work in progress

- Neither the ACC (crime) nor the head of crime department, both of whom are recent appointments to their posts, have attended the management of linked and series crime course. The course is part of their planned career development.

Areas for improvement

- There is a difference in opinion between CIMs as to what constitutes a critical incident. In order to ensure appropriate action and understanding among staff clarity is needed.

The force's performance in the investigation of major crime is monitored through an appropriate review structure. Financial management and information relating to the costing of major crime investigations is developing.

Strengths

- Northumbria is a very high-performing force across a range of indicators; low homicide rates; high detection rates; and little evidence of the gun crime culture that blights several large cities in the UK. Results are sustained by the Chief Constable's Total Policing philosophy and the 2020 Vision, which seek to increase trust and confidence in the community and to reduce crime and disorder. Excellence and continuous improvement are bywords of Northumbria's performance culture. Operational reviews occur for all major crimes.
- Efficiency, effectiveness and quality are key drivers for improving services in the force. Within the crime department evaluation and debriefing processes ensure that lessons learnt become embedded in operational planning; support to victims and witnesses is being integrated in investigative standards; and improved systems for costing investigations generate efficiencies for reinvestment in better services.
- There is a significant investment in learning fed by: serious case reviews; single agency management reviews; major crime reviews; headquarters PPU reviews; the review of child concern notifications; and an overview of reports and recommendations from external bodies.
- Improvements have been made in terms of performance management and operational reviews through the departmental intranet, which is updated post review to improve the organisational memory and address learning points.
- Within the local resilience forum (LRF) there is a multi-agency mass fatalities sub-group chaired by Northumbria Police to manage training and exercises. All events are debriefed and there are systems in place to ensure any lessons are translated into organisational learning.

Work in progress

- The creation of the MITs will allow for better financial management and information relating to the costing of major crime investigations. A dedicated business support section has been created within the MITs to manage budgets associated with major crime investigations.
- The CDD has developed its internal inspection programme to include all departments as well as area commands. The force crime department was subject to inspection in December 2007. The departmental commander identified leadership, diversity and performance management as key areas for scrutiny. The results will be considered in the light of feedback from the HMIC inspection and any developmental requirements will be pursued through the department's 2008/09 business plan.
- There are plans to improve the financial management of major investigations. Activity-based costing (ABC) methodology will be employed to develop 'live time' intelligence flags to inform dynamic risk assessment. Related developments include a proposal to recruit a dedicated financial adviser to the force crime department.
- The review process of major crime has identified and helped to improve a more efficient and productive debrief process. The force SIOs recognise the value of this and continuous methods for improvement are being explored.

- A performance accountability factor is built into the crime review process where the learning/actions are given to the relevant area commander, who with their crime management team review and respond accordingly with actions development and completion; an example was provided of the 'golden hour'.
- Work is ongoing to improve operational debriefs.
- The introduction of the confidential unit will ensure intelligence from systems such as HOLMES and CLUE 2 are fed into the organisational memory.
- Plans to formally evaluate the MITS are set out in the 2008/2011 business plan.
- The force is creating a post for a dedicated financial adviser within the MITs to provide a firmer foundation for effective performance management by allowing closer links to be made in decision-making between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Performance Management and Resilience

Northumbria has sufficient investigative capability in force to meet the predictable major crime investigation demands. Force procedures to manage human resources provide protection for the investigative capability.

Strengths

- Following the protected services review Northumbria has positioned itself as a strategic force. The need to conduct an internal self-audit against HMIC standards generated in excess of 200 recommendations to 'Close the Gap', focusing on areas that would achieve efficiency within existing budgetary constraints by utilising workforce modernisation and reinvestment opportunities into neighbourhood policing. As a consequence 75 posts have been subject to this process, with additional support from the recruitment of police community support officers (PCSOs). The additional cost effectiveness in terms of resource has been reinvested into protected services.
- Key developments from the PSR are the increase in resources to the MITs, including: a major crime review; the computer crime unit; and analytical staff within the FIID. MIT terms of reference and extraordinary demand protocols are in place.
- To ensure the minimum disruption to area command performance following the PSR, a recruitment strategy was implemented, ensuring proportionate management of resources throughout area commands and external recruitment of candidates to specialised roles, ensuring the maintenance of skills within level 1 assets.
- Maintenance of a skills database within crime operations ensures that the force has sufficient dedicated trained staff. The database allows the force to predict training requirements and projected costs, ensuring that the requisite skills and abilities are available. The database is managed via the personal development review (PDR) process. Access to specialist skills staff to perform roles as required in the event of extraordinary demand is managed through the business planning process.
- Resources are used flexibly within the crime department to support area commands. For example, where capacity allows, the resources of the MITs are released to support area command-led investigations.
- The force has sufficient accredited SIOs who are level 3 professionalising the investigative process (PIP) trained. Succession planning is well managed. Senior managers are aiming to make all investigators omni-competent to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, underpinned by a PIP level 3 strategy and candidate tracking programme.
- SIOs from the force crime department provide specific input to critical incident management training and silver cadre courses to ensure a high-quality response to incidents.
- There is a clear understanding of the process in relation to 'golden hour' principles and forensic awareness. This is quality-assured by the major crime reviews and information sharing between area commands through use of the forensic information pack. Systems are in place to support this understanding through the CIMs.
- Northumbria has a documented forensic plan setting out the strategic framework for providing a professional service to serious and organised and major crime investigation. This links to the force 2020 Vision for maximising use of technology in

crime investigation. The force has a strong forensic partnership link with the FSS underpinned by co-location of resources.

Work in progress

- Resources within the crime department are configured and deployed according to risk and threat. Members of staff have been recruited to the MITs and work is currently in progress to recruit police staff to provide dedicated HOLMES support.
- The force and police authority are aware of the need to develop the estate and to support specialised departments with appropriate resources and buildings. An estate strategy with an investment plan is in place. Dedicated MIT facilities exist in each area command (three in Northumberland to address issues of geography and two in Newcastle and Sunderland to cater for demand).
- There is evidence that the MIT is providing support to area commands during periods of low demand. There is also an expectation that area commands will provide support to the MIT during periods of extraordinary demand. A formal protocol is being drafted to reflect reciprocal arrangements.
- Ongoing work includes benchmarking the financial management of major crime and options to deal with excess capacity.

Specialist and covert investigations are resourced through a robust infrastructure that is proven to be effective. The inspection found evidence of proactive and reactive use of these assets.

Strengths

- Northumbria has positioned itself as a strategic force and a robust infrastructure is in place to deliver across all specialist investigations including the areas of financial investigation, CHIS and undercover work.
- There is evidence that the force continuously reviews its capacity and capability for tackling major crime to ensure that force structures, functions, resources, systems and processes are fit to deal with emerging threats.
- Within the authorities management section of the FIID, the special crime operations unit provides CROPS support, develops intelligence in respect of level 2 and 3 target operations, upgrades intelligence, and assists area commands and other departments to implement covert intelligence-gathering tactics.
- The force has moved from a vulnerable position where major crime investigation was dependent on extracting resources from area commands to a more robust structure in which there are sufficient dedicated centrally controlled resources to meet predicted demand. The creation of the MIT was driven through an ACPO-led force project in response to recommendations arising from the protective services review of 2006.
- The MIT undertakes all homicide investigations, allowing area commands to concentrate on local control strategy priorities. An extraordinary demand paper has been agreed to cater for surges in demand.
- There are tried and tested 24-hour contingency arrangements for engaging the MIT, crime operations and scientific support staff with incidents. Knowledge levels and performance quality in relation to 'golden hour' response are high.
- New investment can lead to a better understanding of need, particularly in specialised areas. The corporate planning cycle ensures that emerging needs are identified during the implementation of the PSR project plan.

Work in progress

- Northumbria has carried out a gap analysis of its capacity and capability to meet HMIC's SGC for dealing with major crime. Performance in relation to each criterion is graded 'standard', 'exceeds standard' or 'gap', and the evidence for each provides a framework for planning and monitoring improvement in line with the crime department's aspirations for excellence and continuous improvement. It is intended that the results will be cross-referenced with feedback from HMIC's inspection and pursued through the crime department's 2008/09 business planning process.
- The head of crime department is driving cultural change within the department to build a stronger professional base for tackling major crime. Whereas past success has been predicated on a number of highly skilled, dedicated individuals, he plans to improve individual capacity and capability within the department and area commands through training and development opportunities. Key elements are empowerment and delegation to section heads in order to reduce bureaucracy, streamline processes, capitalise on individual knowledge and skills, and improve

support for area commands. This derives from the force 2020 Vision ethos and is being pursued through the department's business planning process.

- The MIT was created in October 2007 and resourcing and training remain work in progress. Workforce modernisation principles have been applied to provide dedicated analytical, HOLMES and business support to investigation teams. While major incident room standardised administrative procedures (MIRSAP) guidance was used as a framework for deciding the balance between police officers and police staff, senior managers applied their own risk-based judgement to determine the final balance.
- Location within area commands provides an effective foundation for strong links between the MIT, area command SMTs and NPTs. The MIT draws on neighbourhood staff, community representatives (through the force and area command IAG structures) and local systems for monitoring community tensions to maximise intelligence, inform decision-making and ensure community reassurance.
- Scientific support services are implementing a programme of co-location with the FSS to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This will also strengthen links with the MIT.

Areas for improvement

- Northumbria's forensic intelligence plan identifies covert forensic evidence gathering as an area for improvement. Action is being taken to close the gap with clear accountability and timescales for completion by the end of May 2008.
- There are no working protocols developed between the force and SOCA in relation to scientific support for joint operations or when unplanned arrests are made within the force area. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the force forensic intelligence plan. Action is being taken to close the gap with clear accountability and timescales for completion by the end of July 2008.

The force has a dedicated case review team to review current and historical major crime cases in accordance with ACPO guidance. Review work is seen to be effective.

Strengths

- The force has a dedicated team tasked to undertake robust and independent reviews of current and historic major crime cases. The team are proactive in using reviews to update organisational memory and promote good practice. The review team provides support and guidance to SIOs in the MIT. Northumbria Police follows the national procedure for the review of category A incidents by an independent force. The force complies with MIRSAP.
- Reviews are subjected to risk assessment in line with force policy; there is clear consideration of the impact on the victim, organisation, management of resources, cost efficiency, review of forensic technology and community impact. The process is transparent and will be subject to external audit. Terms of reference are set by the ACPO head of crime and in consultation with the IDU detective superintendent; the process is recorded and accountable.
- There is evidence that staffing levels for the MIT were informed by historic resourcing data (eg extraction rates from area commands), demand profiling (eg the number and category of homicide incidents) and consultation with area commands. A sound rationale was applied to determine the extraction of resources from area commands in order to maintain an appropriate balance between investigatory resources in area commands and the MIT. Resources were drawn from across the force and area contributions were capped in accordance with establishment levels.
- Motor patrol supervisors are trained to deal with fatal road traffic collisions (RTCs) as SIOs (predominantly where there is no crime element present).

Northumbria is compliant with relevant ACPO standards in respect of the Murder Investigation Manual and the Major Incident Room Standardised Administrative Procedures (MIRSAP).

Strengths

- Senior managers in the MIT fully comply with MIM and MIRSAP.
- All homicide investigations follow the MIM structure in terms of 'golden hour' response, with on-call specialist staff including dedicated SIOs and MIT staff.
- Policy files are completed as appropriate in line with national guidelines.
- Training has been delivered to front-line staff in 'golden hour' principles and CIMs and a silver cadre have all received training.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ABC	activity-based costing
ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	automatic number plate recognition

B

BCU	basic command unit
BIA	Border and Immigration Agency

C

CAFCASS	Children and Family Courts Advisory Support Service
CCU	computer crime unit
CDD	corporate development department
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CIA	community impact assessment
CIIAG	critical incident independent advisory group
CIM	critical incident manager
CIS	criminal intelligence system
CPG	corporate planning group
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CSE	crime scene examiner

D

DC	detective constable
DI	detective inspector
DS	detective sergeant
DSU	dedicated source unit
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions

E

ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECU	economic crime unit

F

FIB	force intelligence bureau
FIID	force information and intelligence department
FIO	force intelligence officer
FLO	family liaison officer
FSA	force strategic assessment
FSS	forensic science service

G

GONE	Government Office for the North East
GPMS	Government Protective Marking Scheme

H

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System

I

IAG	independent advisory group
IIS	instructional information system
IMU	intelligence management unit
ISA	information-sharing agreement
IT	information technology

K

KIN	key individual network
KPI	key performance indicator

L

LCJB	local criminal justice board
LIAG	local independent advisory group
LSCB	local safeguarding children board

M

MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	multi-agency risk assessment conference
MIM	murder investigation manual

MISPER	missing persons
MIRSAP	major incident room standard administrative procedures
MIT	major investigation team
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MSF	most similar force(s)

N

NCPE	National Centre for Policing Excellence
NERCP	North East Retail Crime Partnership
NIM	national intelligence model
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPSAT	National Protective Services Analysis Tool
NPT	neighbourhood policing team

O

OCG	organised crime group
OSC	Office of the Surveillance Commissioners
Osman	Osman v UK (1999) 1 FLR 193, where the court established that in certain circumstances the state has a positive obligation to take preventive measures to protect an individual who is at risk from the criminal activities of others

P

PCSO	police community support officer
PDR	personal development review
PIE	prevention, intelligence, enforcement
PIN	prison information nominal system
PIP	professionalising the investigative process
PIU	performance improvement unit
PNC	Police National Computer
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act 2000
PPU	public protection unit
PSA	public service agreement
PSD	professional standards department
PSR	protective services review

Q

QoSC quality of service commitment

R

RART regional asset recovery team
RDIU regional drugs intelligence unit
RIPA Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
RIG regional intelligence group
RIU regional intelligence unit
RTC road traffic collision
RTCG regional tasking and co-ordination group
RSO registered sex offender

S

SB special branch
SCAS serious crime analysis section
SGC specific grading criteria
SIAG strategic independent advisory group
SIO senior investigating officer
SMT senior management team
SOCA Serious Organised Crime Agency
SOCPA Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005
SOGC serious organised crime group
SPOC single point of contact
SPI statutory performance indicator

T

TCG tasking and co-ordination group
TTCG tactical tasking and co-ordination group

V

ViSOR violent and sex offenders' register
VOSA Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

W

WPU witness protection unit