



HMIC Inspection Report

Staffordshire Police

October 2007



Staffordshire 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 both of the Home Office and of 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 has 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 then 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 fewer but more probing inspections. 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 will be gathered, verified and then assessed against an agreed set of national standards, in the form of specific grading criteria (SGC). 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.

Programmed frameworks

This report contains assessments of the first three key areas of policing to be inspected under HMIC's new programme of work:

1. Neighbourhood Policing;
2. performance management; and
3. protecting vulnerable people.

Neighbourhood Policing has been inspected not only because it is a key government priority but also, and more importantly, because it addresses a fundamental need for a style of policing that is rooted in and responds to local concerns. The police service must, of course, offer protection from high-level threats such as terrorism and organised criminality, but it

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also has a key role in tackling the unacceptable behaviour of the minority of people who threaten the quality of life of law-abiding citizens.

Performance management is an activity largely hidden from public view, although members of the public are directly affected by poor performance on the part of their local force. This inspection has focused on the need for forces to maximise the opportunities for performance improvement. It also posed questions as to whether forces have an accurate picture of how they are doing and the capability to respond to changing priorities. This area was selected for inspection because it is a key factor in delivering good performance across the board.

Protecting vulnerable people covers four related areas – child abuse, domestic violence, public protection and missing persons – that address the critically important role of the police in protecting the public from potentially serious harm. In the 2006 baseline assessment this was the worst performing area and raised the most serious concerns for HMIC and others. As a result, this area was prioritised for scrutiny in 2007.

Risk-based frameworks

In addition to its programmed inspection work, HMIC continues to monitor performance across a range of policing activity, notably those areas listed in the table below.

HMIC risk-based frameworks
Fairness and equality in service delivery
Volume crime reduction
Volume crime investigation
Improving forensic performance
Criminal justice processes
Reducing anti-social behaviour
Contact management
Training, development and organisational learning

While these activities will not be subject to routine inspection, evidence of a significant decline in performance would prompt consideration of inspection. For 150 years, HMIC has maintained an ongoing relationship with every force. This allows it to identify and support forces when specific issues of concern arise. On a more formal basis, HMIC participates in the Home Office Police Performance Steering Group and Joint Performance Review Group, which have a role in monitoring and supporting police performance in crime reduction, crime investigation and public confidence.

HMIC conducts inspections of basic command units (BCUs), also on a risk-assessed basis, using the Going Local 3 methodology. Combining these various strands of inspection evidence allows HMIC to form a comprehensive picture of both individual force performance and the wider national picture.

The grading process

Grades awarded by HMIC are a reflection of the performance delivered by the force over the assessment period April 2006 to July 2007. One of four grades can be awarded, according to performance assessed against the SGC (for the full list of SGC, see <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/baseline-introduction/ba-methodology-06/?version=1>).

Excellent

This grade describes the highest level of performance in service delivery and achieving full compliance with codes of practice or national guidance. It is expected that few forces will achieve this very high standard for a given activity. To achieve Excellent, forces are expected to meet **all** of the criteria set out in the Fair SGC and the vast majority of those set out in Good. In addition, two other factors will attract consideration of an Excellent grade:

- The force should be recognised, or be able to act, as a 'beacon' to others, and be accepted within the service as a source of leading-edge practice. Evidence that other forces have successfully imported practices would demonstrate this.
- HMIC is committed to supporting innovation and we would expect Excellent forces to have introduced and evaluated new ways of delivering or improving performance.

Good

Good is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as 'of a high quality or level' and denotes performance above the minimum standard. To reach this level, forces have to meet in full the criteria set out in Fair and most of the criteria set out in Good.

Fair

Fair is the delivery of an acceptable level of service, which meets national threshold standards where these exist. To achieve a Fair grading, forces must meet all of the significant criteria set out in the Fair SGC. HMIC would expect that, across most activities, the largest number of grades will be awarded at this level.

Poor

A Poor grade represents an unacceptably low level of service. To attract this very critical grade, a force will have fallen well short of a significant number of criteria set out in the SGC for Fair. In some cases, failure to achieve a single critical criterion may alone warrant a Poor grade. Such dominant criteria will always be flagged in the SGC but may also reflect a degree of professional judgement on the level of risk being carried by the force.

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 as a strength in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit examples of its good practice. HMIC has selected three or more of these examples to publish in this 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.

Future HMIC inspection activity

Although HMIC will continue to maintain a watching brief on all performance areas, its future inspection activity (see provisional timescales below) will be determined by a risk assessment process. Protective services will be at the core of inspection programmes, tailored to capacity, capability and the likelihood of exposure to threats from organised criminality, terrorism and so on. Until its full implementation in April 2008, Neighbourhood Policing will also demand attention. Conversely, those areas (such as volume crime) where performance is captured by statutory performance indicators (SPIs), iQuanta and other objective evidence will receive scrutiny only where performance is deteriorating, as described above.

The Government has announced that, in real terms, there will be little or no growth in police authority/force budgets over the next three years. Forces will therefore have to maintain, and in some areas improve, performance without additional central support or funding. This in itself creates a risk to police delivery and HMIC has therefore included a strategic resource management assessment for all forces in its future inspection programme.

Planned Inspection areas
Serious and organised crime
Major crime
Neighbourhood Policing
Strategic resource management
Customer service and accessibility
Critical incident management
Professional standards
Public order
Civil contingencies
Information management
Strategic roads policing
Leadership

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

Staffordshire is a diverse county encompassing Stoke-on-Trent and the Peak District in the north and curving above the urban West Midlands in the south. With a total population of approximately one million and fifty five thousand, the county has pockets of high-density housing as well as large expanses of countryside. The single largest seats of population are Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme in the north, the county town of Stafford in the centre of the county, and the towns of Burton and Tamworth in the east.

Pockets of affluence exist in the commuter belt in the south, but there are also areas of extensive deprivation in the Stoke-on-Trent and Burton areas.

Staffordshire benefits from a number of key transport routes – the M6, M6 Toll, M42 and M54 motorways all pass through the county. However, while these bring prosperity they also assist cross-border crime – from the West Midlands in the south and from Manchester and Merseyside in the north – and are a source of major congestion, road traffic accidents and strategic roads policing challenges.

To address the diverse needs of such different communities, Staffordshire Police delivers its services from four basic command units (BCUs), which are, in turn, divided into a total of 23 Neighbourhood Policing units (NPU's).

Chase division

Stretching from Trentham in the north to Kinver in the south, Chase division includes Stafford, Stone, Cannock, Rugeley, Penkridge and Wombourne. The division is home to around 322,000 people, covers 419 square miles, and has three crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) which work with the police to address local concerns.

North Staffordshire division

Covering large areas of the Peak District National Park, North Staffordshire division has around 220,000 residents, mostly in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Leek, Kidsgrove, Cheadle and Biddulph. There are two CDRPs which work with the police to tackle issues of local concern. The division covers 303 square miles.

Stoke-on-Trent division

Stoke-on-Trent division covers 36 square miles, has a population of just over 238,000 and is the most densely populated of the force's four divisions, creating a major policing challenge. It covers the six historic pottery towns of Stoke, Hanley, Burslem, Longton, Tunstall and Fenton. The division is coterminous with the unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent.

Trent Valley division

Trent Valley division covers 300 square miles of East Staffordshire and has a population of around 277,000 people. With headquarters (HQ) at Burton, it is split into five NPUs providing locally based policing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These units work from five main police stations at Burton, Tamworth, Lichfield, Chasetown and Uttoxeter, each with a public enquiry office. There are three CDRPs within this area.

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Demographic profile of force area

The following table contains a breakdown of the population and households of Staffordshire. Figures are presented at CDRP, division and force levels.

North Staffordshire division	218,071	91,306
Staffordshire Moorlands	94,623	39,514
Newcastle-under-Lyme	123,448	51,792

Chase division	322,074	132,251
Cannock	93,202	38,066
South Staffordshire	105,301	42,498
Stafford Borough	123,571	51,687

Stoke-on-Trent division	238,278	103,647
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Trent Valley division	276,556	112,712
East Staffordshire	106,894	44,270
Lichfield	95,504	38,612
Tamworth	74,158	29,830

Grand total – force	1,054,979	439,916
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Ethnicity	Population	Percentage of total
White	787,620	97.63%
Mixed	4,952	0.61%
Asian or British Asian	9,406	1.17%
Black or Black British	2,625	0.33%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	2,141	0.27%
All	806,744	100.00%

Unemployment at 10/05/07	Male	Female	All	Percentage of working-age population
Staffordshire	5,815	2,336	8,151	1.6

Strategic priorities

Staffordshire Police is committed through its corporate strategy to promoting “A Safer Staffordshire”. The *Policing Staffordshire Strategy and Plan* lays down six key strands which mirror government aspirations for the police service:

- making communities stronger and more effective;
- further reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and building a culture of respect;
- preventing extremism and countering terrorism;
- creating safer environments;
- protecting the public and building confidence; and
- improving people’s lives so they are less likely to commit offences or re-offend.

Findings

National summary of judgements

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Neighbourhood Policing				
Neighbourhood Policing	6	14	21	2
Performance management				
Performance management	6	29	8	0
Protecting vulnerable people				
Child abuse	3	17	21	2
Domestic violence	1	13	27	2
Public protection	2	16	23	2
Missing persons	1	21	21	0

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing	Grade
Neighbourhood Policing	Excellent
Performance management	Grade
Performance management	Excellent
Protecting vulnerable people	Grade
Child abuse	Good
Domestic violence	Good
Public protection	Fair
Missing persons	Fair

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Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	EXCELLENT
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

National contextual factors

The national Neighbourhood Policing programme was launched by ACPO in April 2005 to support the Government's vision of a policing service which is both accessible and responsive to the needs of local people. It was anticipated that, by April 2007, every area across England and Wales would have a Neighbourhood Policing presence appropriate to local needs, with all Neighbourhood Policing teams in place by April 2008. For local communities this means:

- increased numbers of police community support officers (PCSOs) patrolling their streets, addressing anti-social behaviour and building relationships with local people;
- access both to information about policing in their local area and to a point of contact in their Neighbourhood Policing team; and
- having the opportunity to tell the police about the issues that are causing them concern and helping to shape the response to those issues (Home Office, May 2006).

By focusing on the key areas of resources, familiarity/accessibility, problem identification and joint problem solving, this inspection has identified the extent to which Neighbourhood Policing is being implemented. It has also examined forces' capability and commitment to sustain implementation beyond April 2008.

Contextual factors

Staffordshire Police aims to deliver services that enhance the feelings of safety for the people living or working in or visiting Staffordshire. The force has established Neighbourhood Policing in its communities and is successfully employing the skills of a range of officers, PCSOs, special constables, police staff and members of the wider policing family to solve problems. Through a process of community consultation, the force has identified over 500 individual neighbourhoods. All of these are serviced by an NPU, some of which cover a number of neighbourhoods, and the force has exceeded its target for the recruitment of PCSOs.

Strengths

- There is good evidence, at all managerial levels, of leadership and support for Neighbourhood Policing. The assistant chief constable (ACC) (territorial) leads Neighbourhood Policing development activity, chairs related steering groups, and receives direct reports from the chief inspector with responsibility for developing Neighbourhood Policing approaches. Neighbourhood Policing is at the heart of service delivery in Staffordshire. The force is managing the cultural change from

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Neighbourhood Policing to neighbourhood management jointly with partners and other stakeholders.

- The force has been widely recognised as a 'beacon' force and in the last 12 months has been visited on 18 occasions by other forces, ACPO research project and outside bodies, for example HM Treasury looking at real-time performance and demand management around Neighbourhood Policing.
- The force has made a noteworthy effort to develop as a learning organisation and share common problems and good practice across partnerships, within the region and with national bodies. A recent example would be the innovations fair, to showcase good practice.
- The force has integrated customer-facing functions at a variety of levels within the organisation, for example the alignment of the portfolio held by the ACC (territorial) to incorporate all territorial divisions, communication rooms and the criminal justice administration department, so that all aspects of the primary service delivery process from initial call handling through to justice are owned, managed and reviewed by the same line manager.
- Staffordshire Police has worked closely with a number of national steering groups in Neighbourhood Policing, Citizen Focus and Quality of Service. It has been the subject of a Prime Minister Delivery Unit priority review of citizen-focused policing and hosted a number of visits from other forces, resulting in recommendation and endorsement from national bodies that include the Home Office, the ACPO National Neighbourhood Policing Team, other ACPO portfolio areas, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and peers.
- The implementation phase of Neighbourhood Policing was project- and programme-managed through the work of the Building Safer Communities project, which is now in the final stages of formally reporting and being closed to an auditable standard. All key plans are fully project- and programme-managed. A Neighbourhood Policing leads meeting involves chief inspectors and divisional leads in regular meetings to share common problems and good practice and oversees the further development of Neighbourhood Policing. This meeting involves the force Neighbourhood Policing lead chief inspector, as well as the head of corporate services and the ACC (territorial).
- Significant activity to develop joint strategic assessments across all divisions has been progressed, with varying degrees of success and support from partners. For some partners, the sea change has focused on accepting accountability to address issues identified through this process.
- Processes are emerging in several areas, with shadow arrangements and assessments being worked upon collaboratively. Partners have been heavily involved in carrying out joint assessments and scanning exercises within Staffordshire.
- There has been significant engagement throughout the work of the Building Safer Communities project with a wide range of external bodies, including a specific advisory group for the project made up of key strategic partners and public representatives, identified by the police authority, the independent advisory group, other partner groups, public groups and meetings where plans in relation to Neighbourhood Policing were discussed and shaped through feedback. Significant

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local consultation and engagement takes place at divisional level through project board representation as well as specific briefings and engagement and consultation activities.

- The force has achieved 100% implementation and coverage across each BCU, with the numbers of PCSOs above the minimum stipulated number. Neighbourhood Policing project teams are in the process of being disbanded across the force and are now being adjusted to support, monitor and review Neighbourhood Policing delivery and performance.
- Partners and stakeholders are actively involved in the tasking and co-ordination process, with clear auditable links to community issues which are reported by means of the citizen contact record (CCR), Safer Neighbourhood interview questionnaire (SNIQ) and Safer Neighbourhood environmental visual audits (SNEVAs).
- Neighbourhood priorities are identified through formal structures such as problem-solving forums, local action groups and joint operations groups. At a street level, Neighbourhood Policing teams engage with the neighbourhood agents and members of the public through CCRs. Information gathered from these sources feeds into the local action group and joint operations group meetings.
- Staff can point to evidence of the outcomes from joint problem solving, including work with schools and residents, litter picks, and coffee mornings jointly hosted by housing authorities, health services and the police in school venues as an avenue to solve problems.
- Community engagement is embedded across the force. There are various means of gathering community information using the SNIQ, SNEVAs, CCRs and the Community Contact Database. The force has a volunteer programme and is using members of the public, in addition to special constables, to engage with the community.
- The neighbourhood management group draws together staff from a variety of organisations, including area implementation teams, locality managers, enforcement officers and environmental officers. These work in partnership with Neighbourhood Policing teams to deliver the Respect agenda – ie tackling anti-social behaviour. The partnership approach is delivering both community engagement and problem solving through Respect action weeks, based upon shared partnership data and linked into the National Intelligence Model (NIM) process. The partners demonstrate a cohesive approach to community safety, with each contributing specialist expertise to solve a range of problems.
- A self-assessment model for Neighbourhood Policing, based upon the ACPO national template, has been created by the force. This is used to inform the Neighbourhood Policing leads meeting which is chaired by the ACC (territorial). In addition, the force has established a Safer Neighbourhoods website and toolkit. The meetings and products are used to spread best practice and areas of improvement.
- The force is keen to learn lessons and has invited the PMDU into the force to undertake an assessment. More recently, the force has used the baseline assessment process to conduct a gap analysis.

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- The SARA (scanning, analysis, response, assessment) and PAT (problem analysis triangle) problem-solving models are used across the force to analyse and resolve problems. These models take into consideration the victim, offender, location of crime hotspots and overall risk. Neighbourhood Policing staff are able to evidence the outcomes of joint problem solving.
- The Neighbourhood Policing training package covers the need to obtain community intelligence, using corporate toolkit products developed for this purpose (CCR, SNIQ, SNEVA). Training has been provided to analysts and researchers so that they can use this intelligence appropriately. Evidence of the training roll-out is available from the Neighbourhood Policing training manager and also from divisions.
- There has been a strong degree of integration of Richer Picture work into Neighbourhood Policing profiles, with targeted briefings for Neighbourhood Policing officers operating in neighbourhoods where enhanced risk exists; organised crime and counter-terrorism issues are captured and incorporated into divisional and force strategic assessments and control strategies.
- The force has a structured problem-solving process, supported by a force-level database that is able to identify elements of effective practice, details of problems using the PAT model, tactics employed and their effectiveness. Where appropriate, multiple data sources are used in the production of a problem profile, and the database incorporates different levels of problem. Problem-solving forms and guidance are also available via the force's intranet site.
- Over the last four years the force has engaged with partners to obtain data and information so that issues are understood and tasked at a strategic level. Ongoing work with partners ensures that data is more corporate. Partnership data is used to identify and target crime, non-crime and quality of life issues.
- Neighbourhood Policing 'filters' are used in the command and control system to manage demand and filter neighbourhood calls. The filters are used to tag Neighbourhood Policing issues, such as anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, to the appropriate Neighbourhood Policing team for response. Neighbourhood Policing is linked to the volume crime management model, and public service desks use an initial investigative template which can be applied to neighbourhood problems, including anti-social behaviour.
- Deployment criteria have been developed for Neighbourhood Policing teams and are used by area control rooms to determine whether an incident is a Neighbourhood Policing issue. There is a daily review of workload, including the Neighbourhood Policing filter, which ensures that incidents are dealt with effectively and by the appropriate people. In adopting this approach, professional standards department staff, Area Control Room staff and Neighbourhood Policing teams are aware of the standards that they need to deliver to meet the national Quality of Service Commitment.
- The force has realigned its computer systems to support the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing. Examples of this include the re-coding of operational computer systems to the output area level, and realignment of performance management systems.
- Neighbourhood beat officers are expected to remain in post for at least two years. Continuity is managed, not only within role, but by returning staff (for example,

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PCSOs who become police officers) to the same area. Neighbourhood Policing supervisors are required to inform the human resource manager of potential continuity problems at an early stage.

- Staff are encouraged to promote learning to support the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing. A survey of the 'top 20' PCSOs completing CCRs is used to elicit views from their colleagues on how to improve the forms.
- A comprehensive training package has been developed for PCSOs. On entry to the service, a four-week HQ-based training package is delivered, followed by a twelve-week tutorship and a six-month personal development plan. Neighbourhood beat officers receive a two-day training course based on the Yarnfield model (scenario-based training) which covers problem solving, meetings and finance issues.
- An enhanced level of joint problem-solving training has been provided by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, and other recognised national experts, to key partners working within the CDRP structures at a strategic level.
- Neighbourhood Policing managers and supervisors are held to account through various mechanisms, including daily tasking and quarterly performance meetings, the heads of Neighbourhood Policing meetings and performance development reviews (PDRs). In addition to quantitative targets, there is an increasing focus on quality through the use of policing performance assessment framework (PPAF) surveys.
- A growing focus on partnership accountability is evident through the joint operations group, with a clear emphasis on targets, especially around criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. There is also evidence of concentrated efforts being made to improve confidence and satisfaction issues.
- Each division has a Neighbourhood Policing project delivery team, which links with the HQ-based Neighbourhood Policing lead to share organisational learning.
- In providing locally tailored services, the force has not lost sight of the key links between Neighbourhood Policing, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism.
- Organised crime and counter-terrorism are linked into the force and local control strategies. The CCR forms are used to link counter-terrorism to Neighbourhood Policing, and, although this is a new concept, PCSOs and neighbourhood beat officers are aware of their role in terms of capturing community intelligence that informs the force drive around the Richer Picture project
- BCU commanders were able to give specific examples of the links between information provided by neighbourhood beat officers and community cohesion issues. These examples relate to officer awareness and sensitivity in respect of counter-terrorism issues.
- The good work of Neighbourhood Policing teams is recognised in a number of ways: staff receive letters of appreciation from communities and councillors; formal recognition is through force award processes and, importantly, regular feedback from senior managers; and neighbourhood beat officers receive special priority payments in recognition of the challenging nature of their role.

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- A force Neighbourhood Policing training package was developed through Neighbourhood Policing focus groups involving key stakeholders and has been formally monitored and evaluated. Changes to the training programme have been recorded in line with established good practices and audit logs.
- As part of the inspection process, a telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents was carried out, consisting of six questions about their experience and view of how Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered. All six survey responses were above the national average range.

Work in progress

- Work is ongoing to ensure that all members of staff are aware of counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime issues. A scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify community issues and work is under way to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with these issues sensitively.
- Dedicated partnership analysts are deployed in CDRPs; the number of such analysts is currently being reviewed with an objective to increase this capacity. Crime analysts are in place across the force, although vacancies are detracting from the force's analytical capability.
- Stoke-on-Trent division has created a photograph library specifically to promote Neighbourhood Policing. Various publications are delivered at a local level, including newsletters, crime updates and anti-social behaviour updates. Each NPU uses local access point display boards, which are placed in prominent public areas and feature literature about local work. The division is currently developing, with its partners, *Local Matters*, a publication to keep local communities updated about partnership working, which is funded by a grant from the local strategic partnership. The publication templates used by Stoke-on-Trent division are being rolled out across the force.
- The force has implemented the findings from the 2004 report by Accenture on police rostering, and the more recent HM Treasury report on the use of police resources, to develop a computer model of real-time demand management. It is envisaged that this will be used to align resources, including Neighbourhood Policing teams, more effectively to demand.
- Despite significant activity, the force experienced a significant fall in residents' confidence in the police at the end of the first quarter of 2006/07, but this has now levelled out and remains stable.

Areas for improvement

- A lack of understanding of the role of Neighbourhood Policing teams persists among some response officers working in incident management units. The force is seeking to address this through, for example, directing PCSOs to liaise with the incident management units, and student officers spend time with Neighbourhood Policing teams to encourage a two-way process of sharing information. Consideration should be given to using the internal communication strategy to foster greater understanding.

- An abstraction strategy is in place for Neighbourhood Policing but there is evidence that this monitors abstraction rates from core roles only at the NPU level, rather than at the actual neighbourhood level. Use of the available neighbourhood-level data would provide a more realistic picture of abstractions on the ground.
- Some Neighbourhood Policing supervisors have responsibility for relatively high numbers of staff and the associated PDRs. The force should consider the sustainability of adequate supervision where such high ratios exist.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Neighbourhood management structures

PROBLEM:

The integration of service delivery across partner agencies with different responsibilities, funding streams, performance accountabilities and delivery structures in a unitary authority area.

SOLUTION:

Strong strategic leadership was demonstrated by the Stoke-on-Trent divisional commander, the elected mayor and the local authority chief executive in signing up to a vision of neighbourhood management. The division was awarded national pathfinder status as a neighbourhood management model.

Significant consultation and engagement were undertaken with partners and members of the public in order to identify neighbourhoods in Stoke-on-Trent, and aggregate them into areas where joined-up delivery could be feasible.

Five areas were identified across the city, leading to a complete change in the local delivery structure: eight local policing units became six NPUs. The city centre retained its own unit status, which the council is likely to mirror. These are fully coterminous with local authority areas.

Significant resources have been, and continue to be, invested in these area-based delivery teams, such as Neighbourhood Policing officers, problem-solving teams, PCSOs and special constables, working alongside location officers, environmental officers and impact officers employed by the local authority.

Neighbourhood managers have been employed to take responsibility for the delivery of local services and are starting to work very closely with NPU inspectors and their teams, with plans being developed for co-location where possible.

Engagement through joint exercises using CCRs and SNIQs have been valuable; the findings are analysed by a jointly funded post holder working in the force's performance development team. Reports generated from this information directly feed NIM-compliant partnership meetings and Partners and Communities Together meetings, thus driving problem solving at all levels. Outcomes are recorded on an intranet-based problem-solving database.

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OUTCOME(S):

Partnership working is embedded at the neighbourhood tactical level through weekly joint operations meetings. Cross-partnership working is co-ordinated at a more strategic level through area implementation team forums.

This is supported by a Stoke-wide review of activity through responsible authority and Safer City performance groups, which will be subject to formal evaluation.

Early indications are that this approach is achieving significant success in raising local confidence in services, with concomitant increases in reports of problems (and lower level criminality) being received by agencies.

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Performance Management

GRADE	EXCELLENT
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

National contextual factors

There is no single accepted model of performance management across the police service, but any such model or framework must be fit for purpose. Ideally, forces should demonstrate that individuals at every level of the organisation understand their contribution to converting resources into agreed delivery, and know how they will be held to account. On a daily basis, first-line supervisors monitor, support and quality assure the performance of their teams. At the other end of the spectrum, chief officer-led performance meetings – often based loosely on the American Compstat model – are a vehicle for accountability and improvement. Robust leadership, a commitment to improvement and reliable, real-time information systems are all critical factors in effective performance management.

There is no mechanistic link between overall force performance and the grade awarded in this framework. The grade is based on the quality of the force’s processes that enable it to identify and react to changes in performance.

Contextual factors

Staffordshire Police continues to build upon the strengths demonstrated in the baseline assessment 2006 when it was awarded an Excellent grade in this area. The chief officer team demonstrates visible and effective leadership, an example of which are the monthly Five Exec visits to divisions to identify and to acknowledge good practice. The strategic planning framework incorporates IT, finance and business processes and links these to the NIM. The framework has been developed to incorporate the tripartite performance management good practice guidance, the use of activity analysis, activity-based costing and Neighbourhood Policing performance. The force is constantly seeking new insights that will assist it in improving performance in all areas of business, and demonstrates the characteristics of a genuine learning organisation. The force has been widely perceived to be a ‘beacon’ force and in the last 12 months has been visited on 18 occasions by other forces, representatives from the ACPO research project and outside bodies, for example HM Treasury looking at real-time performance and demand management and making use of activity-based costing.

Strengths

- An integrated approach to business planning is linked to the NIM. Once the strategic threats to the force have been identified through NIM and related processes, business plans are developed to ensure that operational, financial and personnel resources are in place to address the identified threats. This process links together all strands of performance-management activity.

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- A robust performance-management regime holds staff to account for performance at all levels. Staff on divisions and in HQ departments know what is expected of them and are supported by local and force audit and inspection activities which constantly review performance. Senior management teams review and challenge staff on daily performance and, where necessary, redirect activities and resources.
- The force has established its performance framework to mirror the PPAF domains and this undoubtedly promotes greater accountability at a departmental and support level in the organisation. A robust PDR process makes an important contribution, and the corporate strategy clearly demonstrates the link of those engaged in areas such as resource use to the delivery of operational priorities.
- The *Policing Staffordshire* document demonstrates a clear link to the national community safety strategy and each of the BCU plans are actively compared with local partnership priorities through a related NIM and performance process. This is also mirrored at a force strategic level, when the strategic assessment is produced alongside CDRP documentation in order to risk-assess joint priorities. The achievement of these objectives is also developed through a fortnightly tasking and co-ordination process throughout the force, which is integrated with the joint operations group. The 'safer stronger' aspect of the local area agreement also has close scrutiny, with BCU accountability to county level and Stoke-on-Trent, managed by the ACC (territorial). This has been supported by the senior partnership advisory group and the creation of the county Community Safety Hub project.
- All key strategies and plans are subject to extensive consultation internally and externally. An example of this has been the amendment to the force corporate strategy, which involved a number of key internal partners, before finalising the strategy through a project board attended by staff associations and police authority members. The actions needed to implement the new strategy were presented to the reform and performance police authority committee and to the newly formed senior partnership advisory group for final approval. The police authority consultation panel also ensures that local feedback is turned into corporate plans and into action, with increased engagement planned through the community contacts database, CCRs and the use of the citizens' panel.
- An innovations fair was held to share good practice from across the divisions. This event engages with staff at all levels of the organisation and allows divisions to showcase initiatives. (Similar events are planned for the future which will involve partners.)
- The force has employed the skills of an international speaker on business change to help divisional commanders deal with blockages to performance.
- Survey data is used to influence the thinking of the performance management group and find ways of improving user satisfaction. The force can break down customer satisfaction into all pillars of diversity such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation, in order to identify specific reasons for dissatisfaction with services provided and consider ways of addressing issues. A variety of data, including MORI survey data, is used to influence force priorities on quality of life issues and service delivery at a community level.
- The force can demonstrate that developing people, managing money and assets, and managing knowledge and information are core to its performance strategy. The corporate strategy is similarly clear on the importance of supporting operational

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processes. The executive programme board monitors the progress of all key projects across the operational and resource arenas against key organisational priorities. This is programme- and project-managed and PRINCE2 is used to manage this process. Corporate services, together with the chief officer management meeting (COMM) and police authority members, developed a schematic version of the planning framework that was designed to align and simplify the planning processes, incorporating all resource plans and the impact of the NIM. This has been delivered through Building Safer Communities ACPO programme management, with the plan published through the senior management team and on the intranet.

- The force not only uses comparative data to identify best practice internally, regionally and nationally, but also has commissioned structured visits to investigate further learning in sectors such as the fire service and private industry, wherever performance improvements are thought to be achievable. The products used by the force performance management group clearly demonstrate the use of most similar information, and actions have been generated from force investigations.
- The police authority is actively engaged in target setting, alongside CDRPs. Training has been undertaken by police authority members in relation to PPAF who now scrutinise the force's performance through, for example, regular updates to the authority and meetings with the divisional commanders (who are aligned to police authority members).
- Activity analysis data is used at team and individual officer levels to identify trends and patterns of underperformance or high performance. The force links this data with activity-based costing and has undertaken work – in association with HM Treasury – to explore the suitability of activity-based costing as a means of assessing aspects of performance.
- The force has jointly funded a partnership superintendent to drive joint performance across the CDRPs and the local criminal justice board. A demographic software package, CACI, has been used alongside the work of the Sub Regional Observatory to share data with a range of partners.
- The force can demonstrate a clear understanding of the wider issues connected to counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime. This is apparent in its use of NIM products and Neighbourhood Policing work, and the force contributes significantly to regional joint operations. An ongoing assessment of the capacity issues within protective services and Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered through, and project-managed by, the ACPO-championed Project Liberate.
- A wide range of community-engagement strategies are in place at force and local area agreement levels and on BCUs. These are scrutinised by the police authority in the joint force and police authority consultative committee. This is complemented by a range of products generated by the Citizen Focus strategy, such as CCRs, the community contact database and the SNIQs. These issues are used to identify local problems for resolution and can be fed through the NIM process to engage resources and determine priorities
- The force uses a resource allocation model, derived from the national funding formula and applied to BCUs. The process of negotiating budget allocation and resource headcount is managed through COMM, the business managers forum, the resource working group and the human resource development group. COMM ensures that the resource allocation model and professional judgement are used,

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and balanced with force priorities, as budget allocation is finalised in each financial planning round. This is then continually assessed all year round through COMM. It is a consultative process, based on some science and a degree of professional judgement, but ratified only after consultation and agreement through the necessary forums.

- Performance recognition is an established part of the performance framework and is first developed through the BCU and neighbourhood performance comparisons at performance management group and level 1 performance meetings. Individual and team performances are acknowledged, a good example being customer satisfaction, where this process has also resulted in letters of appreciation, divisional commendations and force commendations for high-quality work. The commendation process itself is very inclusive – good performance in qualitative and quantitative work is promoted at divisional, departmental and group levels, and further at force level, for award and commendation. This process has identified nominees for national and European awards. Additionally, the PDR process is well linked to organisational priorities and has been a key factor in performance-related bonuses. Evidence that the performance culture is embedded at this level can be found in the internal staff perception survey and through the work brought forward by officers and staff to the innovations fair.

Work in progress

- The force is currently working with the National Neighbourhood Policing Team to develop a suite of performance indicators to measure Neighbourhood Policing outcomes.

Area for improvement

- A demand-management model is being rolled out across the force. The data is being used by some divisions to inform incident-management response, but this data is not fully understood by divisional managers and therefore has a limited impact on decision making. As the force develops this model, it should ensure that those responsible for resourcing decisions at divisional level are fully conversant with the techniques of demand management and the use of the underpinning data.

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Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Performance management

TITLE: Establishing real-time demand-management tools to continually assess resource use and get the right people in the right place at the right time

PROBLEM:

The challenge facing the force is to support its policing model, and the investment in Neighbourhood Policing and protective services, by the adoption of a performance methodology to promote best use of resources at all times. Also, to facilitate effective response and workload management through the provision of information to inform evidence-based decision making.

SOLUTION:

The force has established a unique tidal (2 2 2) shift pattern that has been assessed by Accenture as one of the most effective arrangements available for matching resources to demand. In an environment where efficiency targets and the optimal use of resources are paramount, continued improvement in shift systems and the facility to examine real-time demand for effective resource deployment are major priorities. The response cycle of demand can best be managed by effective problem solving and the use of demand data to give a full picture of demand, demand type, availability and use of resources. The reality that poorly managed demand will impede strategic priorities has been accepted by the force, and this work is being conducted in partnership with territorial divisions by corporate services. A series of trigger reports flow from this work and inform a historic performance view of resource use in previous weeks and the use of resources; further products provide a predictive modelling capacity to understand resource availability and demand at a strategic level and can be applied in tasking and co-ordination. This work is complemented by the CARM 3 resource-planning project and performance tools, demand simulation work on Chase division, and the use of activity analysis data to provide a true picture of work in progress. Other significant and continuing developments are the use of the automatic vehicle location system (AVLS) and automatic personnel location system (APLS) GPS data to support the effective deployment of staff, using data in 15-minute cycles. This is key work and is breaking the myths of demand, allowing informed decision making to support front-line policing activity and quality of service delivery in the long term.

OUTCOME(S): To:

- The establishment of new performance toolkits on real-time demand.
- The establishment of new performance toolkits on resource availability, including efficiency scores, by team, of staffing to demand.
- The ability to demonstrate transparent resource use efficiencies.
- Evidence-based decision making on all resource use issues, supporting health and safety considerations for staff.
- Accountability structures for effective demand management and resource use.

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

National contextual factors

The assessment framework for Protecting Vulnerable People was first developed in 2006 as part of HMIC's baseline assessment programme. It replaced two existing frameworks – Reducing/Investigating Hate Crime and Crimes against Vulnerable Victims – which focussed on hate crimes (predominantly racially motivated), domestic violence and child protection. Following consultation with practitioners and ACPO leads, a single framework was introduced with four components – domestic violence, the investigation and prevention of child abuse, the management of sex and dangerous offenders, and vulnerable missing persons. Although the four areas are discrete, they are also linked and share a common theme – they deal with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response is both life-threatening and poses severe reputational risks for the force.

This year's inspection has been carried out using similar assessment standards as those in 2006. These highlight the importance of leadership and accountability; policy implementation; information management; staffing, workload and supervision; performance monitoring and management; training; the management of risk; and partnership working.

The work carried out by forces to protect the public, particularly those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm, is complex and challenging. No single agency, including the police, has the capacity to deliver the required response on its own. Success is therefore, dependent on effective multi-agency working and there are a number of established partnerships, involving a wide range of services and professionals, aimed at ensuring that an integrated approach is adopted to protecting those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm.

Contextual factors overview

Staffordshire Police achieved a Fair grade in this area in the baseline assessment 2006. The 2007 inspection provided assessment grades for the four individual elements of child abuse, domestic abuse, public protection and missing persons.

The force has conducted a self-assessment on protecting vulnerable people work, and is keen to improve service provision in areas of potentially high risk for victims, families and communities.

The force strategic assessment provides a comprehensive risk assessment of the types of harm captured by the protecting vulnerable people framework, and links are made across the individual elements with the NIM process.

Strengths

- The elements of the protecting vulnerable people framework (and others, such as vulnerable adults) have been realigned within the new public protection department, led by a detective superintendent. This recognises the cross-cutting nature of this business area.

Work in progress

- Performance indicators in relation to child and domestic abuse investigation are being developed; this work could usefully be extended to public protection.

Areas for improvement

- The force has a devolved structure, one result of which is different approaches to supervision, audit and quality control on divisions. The force should consider establishing a tighter corporate framework for protecting vulnerable people.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

National contextual factors

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the police to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of children’; safeguarding children, therefore, is a fundamental part of the duties of all police officers. All police forces, however, also have specialist units which, although they vary in structure, size and remit, normally take primary responsibility for investigating child abuse cases. Officers in these units work closely with other agencies, particularly Social Services, to ensure that co-ordinated action is taken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at risk of suffering, significant harm. The Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Membership of LSCBs includes representatives of the relevant local authority and its Board partners, notably the police, probation, youth offending teams, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, the Connexions service, Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, Secure Training Centres and prisons.

Contextual factors

Child abuse investigation is a strategic priority for Staffordshire Police. The force has dedicated specialist child abuse investigators who are part of the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) but are divisionally based at satellite sites. The units work closely with colleagues from local authority social services departments to safeguard the children of Staffordshire.

Between July 2005 and June 2006, Staffordshire Police received 980 physical abuse referrals, 422 sexual abuse referrals and 709 emotional abuse or neglect referrals. During this period officers used police protection powers to remove 85 children from situations where they were at risk of suffering significant harm.

The HQ-based public protection department is headed by a detective superintendent assisted by a detective chief inspector. A detective inspector is responsible for the CAIU which is staffed by the equivalent of 21 full-time detective constables (child abuse investigators), five detective sergeants and two administrative staff. The central referral unit (CRU), which forms the HQ-based arm of the CAIU, is core to the force’s response to child abuse investigation, acting as the initial point of contact for referrals and initial assessment

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and allocation of cases to divisionally based CAIU staff and also to divisional staff where appropriate.

Child abuse investigation officers deal with intra-familial abuse, abuse by professional carers and staff, and complex cases. In addition, these officers also take responsibility for investigating the sudden and unexplained death of infants, under the guidance of a senior investigating officer, following Baroness Kennedy's recommendations and in readiness for the requirement to implement child death review panels.

Divisional commanders are aware of the priority afforded to child abuse investigation and show a willingness to accept advice from the public protection unit (PPU) staff. All staff in the force have recently received communications reinforcing their knowledge of child protection procedures and the role of the CRU.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The ACC (operations) is the force lead for child abuse and sits on the board of Staffordshire Children's Trust. Child abuse allegations are graded according to a clear policy that stipulates which department will have primacy for the investigation. The CRU works closely with the county council social services department's first response unit, which was established in April 2006 as part of the county council's Children and Lifelong Learning restructuring procedures. The force has provided training to social services staff, who also undertake an attachment to the CRU.
- The force strategic assessment contains reference to the child abuse threat assessment and is comprehensive in establishing links to Operation Sorcerer (child sexual exploitation), missing children and sex offenders.
- The force has a published and up-to-date policy at force and multi-agency levels in relation to child abuse investigation and this is supported by an information-sharing protocol agreed between partners.
- The force has been proactive in managing staffing levels, with evidence of additional resources invested over recent years. Child abuse investigators are recruited through a competency-based selection process. The force has active staff management processes, with evidence of additional resources being invested in this area. No officer has a workload in excess of a benchmark of 60 cases, which allows them to achieve quality investigations. There is some evidence of abstraction from the role but not on a routine basis. Senior management teams interviewed displayed an awareness of issues relating to child abuse investigation, staffing levels and workloads.
- The CRU holds an initial strategy discussion with social services and interrogates force and national computer systems for information and intelligence. The referral is then graded, endorsed by a detective sergeant, and a package sent to a child abuse investigator for further enquiries.
- In cases of child murder or manslaughter, a meeting is held between the child abuse manager and the force's principal senior investigating officer to formulate an investigative strategy, identifying the most appropriate staff to investigate the crime.
- The Guardian IT system provides a comprehensive approach to managing child

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abuse referrals and staff workload. It links all information on the referral and investigation electronically and interfaces with other force systems. There is also evidence within Guardian of supervisory tasking and supervision.

- Child abuse investigators report that their sergeants are supportive and provide appropriate advice during the course of investigations. Effective supervision includes dip-sampling interview tapes, joint interviewing and accompanied home visits.
- Out-of-hours call-out rotas for child abuse investigators are arranged by the force control room duty officer. This officer has a role in initial assessment of the risk, having researched the force systems.
- Management information is used by the force as a diagnostic tool to improve performance in child abuse investigation. The public protection department holds monthly management meetings where performance information is discussed. Information obtained through a search facility on Guardian provides caseload information, and the units also monitor the number of calls received. Recently, performance indicators have been reviewed and, in the absence of national performance indicators, the force has implemented its own quality-focused indicators.
- A police authority lead has recently been appointed to oversee the protecting vulnerable people portfolio, who reported a good relationship with the ACPO team, which positively encourages scrutiny of performance.
- A range of performance indicators are monitored for child abuse investigation. These include the number of advice files, offenders, interviews, case conferences, strategy meetings, medicals undertaken, arrests and detections. The staff have been consulted recently about a new set of performance indicators which are not in use and capture qualitative information.
- A range of training is received by child abuse investigators, including the Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme, management of serious crime, enhanced cognitive interview and joint safeguarding training. Newly appointed child abuse investigators receive an induction pack which sets out expectations, training, tasking, health and safety, and welfare issues. Each new member of staff has a development plan and benefits from informal mentoring.
- A number of CAIU officers are also trained in sexual offences investigation and a small percentage are also family liaison officers, specifically to support the role of the CAIU. These posts are not subject to routine abstractions but are called upon to support major incidents when the need arises. There have been approximately eight such abstractions over the previous twelve months, ranging from four days to three months.
- Staff also receive safety refresher training which is tailored to the role. One training day is dedicated to dealing with personal safety issues for officers and staff from partner agencies, to reflect the potential of danger when making joint visits or attending case conferences.
- Two local safeguarding children boards operate within Staffordshire and the force crime training officer sits on the training sub-committees of both boards. Child abuse investigators have access to the multi-agency training provided through the local safeguarding children boards.
- Staff are subject to mandatory welfare referral every three months, with the opportunity to self-refer if necessary. This gives them access to a range of services, both internal and external.

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- There is evidence of effective information sharing across the protecting vulnerable people disciplines through a variety of means, including co-location of staff and use of IT systems – in particular Guardian which links into other force systems such as STORM and the Staffordshire Police Intelligence Network (SPIN).
- Job descriptions for specialist staff are up to date and accurately reflect their current roles and responsibilities.

Work in progress

- The force is examining how to improve service around the safeguarding children agenda. This includes a proposal for the CRU to deal with all calls relating to children for initial assessment. This proposal has recently been accepted by the force executive.
- An audit of work on child deaths is being conducted with partners, in preparation for a force pilot of a child death review panel in autumn 2007.

Areas for improvement

- Child abuse investigators receive calls from front-line staff and some of these would benefit from initial assessment by the CRU. The force should consider expanding the role of the CRU to benefit front-line staff.
- The role of child abuse investigators who are on call at weekends is not widely understood, and they are sometimes required to undertake duties beyond the on-call remit, such as divisional investigative work as opposed to the initial evaluation of referrals. The force should clarify the role of the on-call child abuse investigators.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Protecting vulnerable people

TITLE: Child abuse investigation unit – bespoke officer personal safety training (OPST)

PROBLEM:

The force recognises that, while the generic force OPST addresses officer safety issues, it is primarily aimed at operational officers who attend incidents on a reactive basis. CAIU officers routinely visit offenders and injured parties at home, or in circumstances where potential conflict can be difficult to assess, and the need for a more bespoke package was identified.

SOLUTION:

The force OPST staff consulted with CAIU staff and have designed a bespoke training course to address the particular issues faced by CAIU officers, whether in people's homes, workplaces, interview suites or indeed within a multi-agency setting such as case conferences.

OUTCOME(S):

The outcome of this training is a heightening of officers' awareness of safety issues in these various situations, and also a realisation of the need to develop standard operating procedures so that the generic practices are adhered to on a widespread basis (this work is ongoing).

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic ViolenceGRADE **GOOD****National grade distribution**

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

There is no statutory or common law offence as such of ‘domestic violence’; the term is generally used to cover a range of abusive behaviour, not all of which is criminal. The definition of domestic violence adopted by ACPO does, however, take account of the full range of abusive behaviour as well as the different circumstances in which it can occur:

‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’.

As with the investigation of child abuse, responding to and investigating domestic violence is the responsibility of all police officers. Again, however, forces have dedicated staff within this area of work, although their roles vary. In some forces staff undertake a support/liason role, generally acting as a single point of contact for victims and signposting and liaising with other agencies and support services; in others, staff have responsibility for carrying out investigations.

Irrespective of who carries out the investigation in domestic violence cases, an integral part of every stage is the identification of risk factors, followed by more detailed risk assessment and management. In 2004, HMIC, together with HMCPSI, published a joint thematic inspection report on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence. At that time, risk identification, assessment and management were in the early stages of development throughout the service. Since then, there has been considerable progress in developing formal risk identification and assessment processes and - in a number of forces - the implementation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). Other improvements include the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts and the strengthening of joint working arrangements.

Contextual factors

Domestic abuse is a force priority and features within the control strategy.

Staffordshire Police has dedicated specialist staff to co-ordinate the force’s response to domestic abuse. Specialist domestic abuse officers provide a tailored response to victims and are based within the divisional PPU’s. The force has a policy of positive arrest of domestic abuse perpetrators, and has agreed a joint target with the local criminal justice board to increase the number of prosecutions for domestic abuse.

Effective management arrangements are in place that accurately identify domestic abuse incidents. The force is making progress in its service provision in this area and is promoting the concept of homicide prevention. As a matter of course, the force has carried out internal domestic homicide reviews since January 2006 and lessons learnt are incorporated into

ongoing practice and revised procedures.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The implementation of the Staffordshire Police domestic abuse policy is led by the ACC (operations). The force policy for domestic abuse is updated by the central vulnerable persons unit, which scans for best practice nationally. It is compliant with the ACPO guidance for domestic violence, police perpetrators of domestic violence, and harassment.
- Specialist domestic abuse officers operate in the BCU PPUs and are line-managed by the dedicated PPU detective sergeant. The PPU detective sergeant reports to the BCU detective inspectors, who report to the BCU chief inspector with overall responsibility for PPU matters. At strategic level, the force has a dedicated domestic violence co-ordinator who oversees policy, practice and procedures.
- Domestic abuse features as a priority within the force strategic assessment, which identifies the extent of domestic homicides and intelligence gaps.
- Witness care and witness support teams have been established to support victims and witnesses through the court process, including the county's three specialist domestic violence courts. A significant amount of guidance has been published by the force highlighting the need for, and ways of providing, assistance to victims. These incorporate the Victims Code.
- A joint protocol with the probation service on dealing with domestic abuse perpetrators has been agreed. This sets out how information will be shared and considered under the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA).
- Problem profiles for domestic abuse were commissioned to support a domestic violence enforcement campaign in each division during 2006. These identified the extent of the problem in respect of victims, offenders and hotspot locations. This information was used to direct operational activity.
- There are three specialist domestic violence courts and three multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) in operation. Staff gave examples of tangible outcomes from work undertaken with partners to protect victims of domestic abuse and bring perpetrators to justice.
- The divisional tasking and co-ordination meeting minutes provide evidence that domestic abuse is considered as part of day-to-day business; they show that actions are tasked in relation to victims and perpetrators, with subsequent follow-up.
- The force is well engaged in partnership working through various schemes – including Karma Nirvana, the Pathway Project and sanctuary schemes – to provide support to a range of victims.
- Domestic abuse co-ordinators working in CDRPs are effective in securing funding to support media campaigns, initiatives to secure evidence (such as digital cameras), and placements with women's refuges and social housing providers.

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- IT systems are readily accessible by control room staff so that they can provide front-line officers with a comprehensive history of the parties involved when attending a domestic abuse incident. Force policy is specific in its instruction that this information and intelligence must be passed prior to officers attending the incident wherever practicable.
- The force grading policy classifies domestic abuse incidents as immediate or priority. A priority response would be used where the victim was not in immediate danger, but required a timely response. The grading of incidents is subject to oversight by control room supervisors, and the incident management unit supervisors actively monitor domestic abuse incidents to ensure that a proactive approach is adopted. A positive arrest policy is adopted for domestic abuse incidents – that is, officers will always arrest an alleged offender whenever it is feasible to do so. The DIAL risk-assessment form contains a tear-off contact sheet which is given to victims, providing information on, for example, access to other services.
- Front-line officers carry out initial risk identification at the scene, using the DIAL risk-assessment form. Where victims are deemed to be high or very high risk, specialist domestic abuse officers from PPU's carry out extensive secondary risk assessments and take actions to level 1 tasking and co-ordination meetings for possible interventions to be considered.
- An offender strategy has been developed which links domestic abuse perpetrator officers to the MAPPA and the tasking and co-ordination process. Specialist officers provide advice and guidance to front-line officers on individual investigations in order to maximise the chances of a successful prosecution.
- Performance information is captured on arrests, repeat victims and detections, to monitor performance; staff confirm that there is a strong focus on domestic abuse among senior management teams.
- Job descriptions of specialist domestic violence officers and co-ordinators are up to date and accurately reflect current roles.
- Staff are subject to mandatory welfare referral every three months, with the opportunity for staff to self-refer if necessary, providing access to a range of services both internally and externally.

Work in progress

- Although there is a structured approach to supervision in the PPU's, some sergeants have multiple responsibilities and can find it difficult to balance their responsibilities between managing domestic abuse and dangerous or violent offenders. This has recently been addressed in three divisions with the appointment of additional sergeants to spread the workload.
- MARACs are operating in three out of the four divisions. Funding has been secured from the Government Office for the West Midlands to evaluate their implementation so that a corporate approach can be adopted when they are rolled out across the force.
- The force is currently piloting the use of hand-held devices for front-line officers at Longton. These will allow officers to complete the DIAL form electronically at the

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scene of an incident and transmit this to Guardian. This offers the opportunity for supervisors and specialist officers to access the DIAL form in real time and, additionally, reduce the time spent by officers in the station.

- Domestic abuse training is currently being delivered to staff by Centrex, the national police training organisation. This is a positive step but it does not cover risk assessment or completion of the DIAL form. There was evidence during the inspection that some patrol officers do not understand the rationale underlying risk-management criteria. The force domestic abuse co-ordinator delivers a well-received input to public service desk staff on risk assessment; the force should consider how similar inputs can be provided to front-line officers and their supervisors.

Areas for improvement

- While the force has an effective risk-assessment tool, PPU's are experiencing significant backlogs in processing those risks identified as low, due to the volume of assessments and a lack of resilience in the PPU's. The force should consider opportunities to strengthen PPU resilience.
- A sample of crime and non-crime DIAL forms was examined from each of the divisions. One finding was that while sergeants always sign the forms, they do not always endorse whether they agree or disagree with the action taken by the reporting officer. The force should ensure that sergeants clearly endorse the form, with compliance audited by divisions and/or centrally.
- Each division has in place systems to inform social services of concerns about particular children following domestic abuse incidents. The process is not consistent across the force, with differing interpretations of when a referral should be made and evidence of different means of communication – email, fax, phone, letter – and a lack of clarity about the security of information sharing. The force should consider adopting a more corporate approach to this area.
- Front-line staff are aware that they should assess the needs of any children present at domestic abuse incidents, but only where children appeared to be injured or abused. There is less understanding about wider safeguarding issues which are less obvious than visible injuries. The force should seek to raise awareness of the wider issues by, for example, publicising the CAIU website.
- The force has two designated roles for domestic abuse work – one focuses on the perpetrator and the other on the victim, although Stoke-on-Trent division has converted the perpetrator post into a violent and dangerous persons officer. The staffing levels in PPU's have not changed since the introduction of MARACs and the DIAL assessment. This is leading to backlogs in the assessment of DIAL forms by the Guardian post holders, an area that the force should review.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Domestic Abuse

TITLE: 999 web player

PROBLEM:

To tackle proportionately low levels of domestic violence prosecutions, and enhance and improve the investigation of domestic violence and support for the relevant criminal justice processes.

SOLUTION:

A pilot on Trent Valley division has now been rolled out across the force whereby every trained custody officer, domestic violence officer and those with key supervisory roles have access to Web Player. This allows them to play to the complainant or witnesses the initial 999 call to Staffordshire Police and then copy it onto disk. All domestic violence investigations can now include the initial call evidence contained on Web Player before any case decision is reached. This facility can help secure convictions and support victims of crime by:

- providing corroborative evidence in support of initial allegations;
- providing evidence to encourage victims to continue with a complaint;
- helping officers present a more persuasive case to the Crown Prosecution Service in order to secure a charge; and
- assisting domestic violence officers in PPU's to make more informed secondary risk assessments, and thus better protect vulnerable victims.

All divisional custody websites have direct links to Web Player, and to detailed, simple guidance on how to use the system (which has a printable pre-written statement for continuity purposes).

The custody officer copies the call onto two disks: a master copy with a security label and a working copy.

A laptop computer is available to allow an officer to play the call during interviews with suspects.

No domestic violence handover should be completed without access to Web Player to assess the initial call, the starting point of the investigation.

OUTCOME(S):

An online monitoring form is completed by custody sergeants, who access the system to show that they have considered the available evidence on Web Player. This information is forwarded to domestic violence officers in the PPU's, who monitor compliance via daily reviews of incidents. The online monitoring form has two yes/no questions and takes just seconds to complete.

Although timescales for the pilot and roll-out are very short, current monitoring of the responses has seen an increase in charges brought, and in 40% of occasions where Web Player is used, it is acceptable as corroborative evidence available to support prosecution.

Force domestic violence policy is currently under review and this change in working practice will be included in the final document.

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

National contextual factors

The Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 led to the formation of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, commonly known as MAPPA, requiring the police and probation services to work together as the Responsible Authority in each area of England and Wales to establish and review the arrangements for the assessment and management of sexual and violent offenders. Subsequent legislation brought the Prison Service into the Responsible Authority arrangements and also requires a range of social care agencies to co-operate with the Responsible Authority in the delivery of the assessment and management of risk in this area. These agencies include health, housing, education, social services, youth offending teams, Jobcentre Plus, and electronic monitoring services.

Under MAPPA, there are three categories of offender who are considered to pose a risk of serious harm:

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

Category 3 – other offenders (with convictions that indicate they are capable of causing, and pose a risk of, serious harm).

To be managed under MAPPA, offenders must have received a conviction or caution. However, there are some people who have not been convicted or cautioned for any offence, and thus fall outside these categories, but whose behaviour nonetheless gives reasonable ground for believing a present likelihood of them committing an offence that will cause serious harm. These people are termed Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDPs).

Following risk assessment, risk management involves the use of strategies by various agencies to reduce the risk, at three levels:

- Level 1 offenders can be managed by one agency;
- Level 2 offenders require the active involvement of more than one agency;
- Level 3 offenders – the ‘critical few’ – are generally deemed to pose a high or very high risk and are managed by a multi-agency public protection panel (MAPPP).

In 2003, the Home Secretary issued MAPPA guidance to consolidate what has already been achieved since the introduction of the MAPPA in 2001 and to address a need for greater consistency in MAPPA practice. The guidance outlines four considerations that are key to the delivery of effective public protection.

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- defensible decisions;
- rigorous risk assessment;
- the delivery of risk management plans which match the identified public protection need; and,
- the evaluation of performance to improve delivery.

Contextual factors

Public protection, by its nature, is a high-risk area of policing. However, the police alone are not responsible for managing this risk in its entirety. The force works closely with the probation service to manage those offenders who pose the greatest risk. Staffordshire Police has dedicated public protection officers, based in divisional PPUs, who manage sex and violent offenders. These offenders are managed under MAPPA in three categories: Category 1 (registered sex offenders); Category 2 (other sex and violent offenders); and Category 3 (dangerous offenders and potentially dangerous persons).

Public protection officers conduct regular visits to monitor the behaviour of registered sex offenders and use the national computer system, the Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR), which allows information sharing between forces, to record information and manage visits. The centralised PPU is based at force HQ, with police officers and staff from the probation service co-located. The unit is managed by a senior probation officer and is responsible for the oversight of MAPPA in the county.

Strengths

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

- The ACC (operations) is the force lead for public protection and chairs the strategic management board. Links across the frameworks have been derived through strong accountability mechanisms at ACPO and BCU levels, through to the realignment of the frameworks within the PPU portfolio.
- Responsibility and accountability for strategic direction and policy across this area of business are retained centrally by the HQ crime support department and managed through the PPU detective superintendent.
- Divisional public protection teams operate within the PPUs and are responsible for relevant protective services matters – eg domestic violence, hate crime, and vulnerable persons. Central support for the PPUs is provided by the HQ-based PPU, which develops strategy and policy and offers a single point for training, professional reference and case referral.
- A jointly funded, experienced probation officer is deployed in the central PPU to assist monitoring officers in jointly managing serious offenders.
- The force review and monitoring process operates on a monthly basis, whereby offender managers and supervisors complete risk information management plans. An electronic copy is forwarded to the HQ-based PPU and also retained by the division.

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- The force has published a detailed memorandum of understanding setting out partners' responsibilities to protect the public.
- Front-line staff receive relevant briefings on public protection issues through the briefing system and open and confidential tasking.
- Neighbourhood beat officers and local policing teams have appropriate access to information about registered sex offenders in their area. This is achieved by placing sanitised information onto the Guardian and SPIN systems.
- The force makes a significant contribution, in a consultative capacity, to the NPIA in developing a national training package around MAPPA. Joint training is undertaken with partner agencies in order to ensure a consistent and effective approach to public protection. This significant investment in training ensures that good practice is shared both nationally and locally.
- Job descriptions of specialist officers are up to date and accurately reflect current roles. The force has also made a significant contribution in developing a national post profile with the NPIA and Skills for Justice.
- Staff are subject to mandatory welfare referral every three months, with the opportunity for staff to self-refer if necessary, providing access to a range of services both internally and externally.
- Management information is used by supervisors at all levels to monitor performance and identify best practice.

Work in progress

- Divisional chief inspectors chair the level 2 MAPPA meetings and are appropriately engaged at level 1. There has been recent discussion within the force about re-introducing a MAPPA chairs steering group; this would be beneficial in spreading organisational learning. A timetable for such meetings has been established and covers the next 12 months.
- Stoke-on-Trent division has appointed a dedicated dangerous and violent persons officer who monitors these offenders using ViSOR. Depending on relative workload, there could be advantages in other divisions adopting this approach.
- There is no specific ViSOR flag on the force intelligence system, SPIN. However, this facility will be available on the new force crimes and intelligence system (expected to be live in late 2007 or early 2008). Currently all MAPPA offenders are entered on SPIN and are recognised by a sex or dangerous offender marker, which provides an indication that further information is available in relation to the offender through ViSOR.

Areas for improvement

- While there is evidence of training for public protection officers, including forthcoming update training on Risk Matrix 2000, this is not corporate. The force should ensure that all staff, including supervisors at all levels, who are engaged in the assessment and endorsement of risk are trained appropriately and in a timely manner.

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- Public protection officers from two of the four divisions are using their own vehicles to conduct visits to sex and dangerous offenders, which could pose a risk to monitoring officers (and possibly their families). Where an unmarked police vehicle is not available, an assessment of risk should be recorded.
- Some public protection officers conduct lone visits to registered sex offenders, so that visit schedules are maintained. Visits should not be conducted by lone officers.
- Supervisors are trained in the use of ViSOR but do not actively endorse and review risk on the database. This information is not routinely entered onto ViSOR. The force should review its processes and ensure that all information pertaining to registered sex offenders and violent offenders managed by the police is stored on the national database.
- ViSOR is not used consistently across the force. Information relating to vehicles, visits and intelligence is routinely recorded on the activity log instead of on the associated attachments. This practice can increase the likelihood of errors when non-specialist staff are asked to access ViSOR. The force should ensure corporacy of ViSOR content so that the system is easily navigable by all authorised users.
- Officers and staff in specialist roles require vetting. The force is aware that not all officers have been vetted to undertake roles and will be taking action in relation to this.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Public Protection

TITLE:

1. **Development of a wider understanding of MAPPA**
2. **Development of a national training strategy for the police service and other agencies**

PROBLEM:

1. There was a lack of a single resource for practitioners in various agencies to raise awareness and understanding of the links between local and national MAPPA processes. Nor was there a single resource that could act as an aide-memoire to staff and strategic management board members closely involved with MAPPA on policy, procedures and guidance.
2. There is no national training framework for police staff or other responsible authorities. Training, therefore, was ad hoc and reliant on local arrangements, leading to inconsistent development and standards across the country and leaving staff feeling vulnerable.

SOLUTION:

1. A single resource was created in the form of a Staffordshire MAPPA CD-ROM offering four levels of access and detailed information on MAPPA, depending on the needs of the enquirer.
2. Dialogue was established with the Home Office and Centrex, which led to the creation of a training reference group and the development of a national training programme. Staffordshire's HQ-based PPU is currently working closely with the Centrex project board, providing ongoing subject expert guidance on the programme.

OUTCOME(S):

1. The CD-ROM was circulated to relevant agencies; feedback indicates that it is a valuable resource, particularly for the responsible authority agencies.
2. Progress has now been made towards nationally accredited training and Staffordshire Police continues to work closely with the team. The ultimate outcome will be a significant development in the public protection arena.

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

National contextual factors

Each year, thousands of people are reported to police as missing. Many have done so voluntarily and are safe from harm, whether or not they return home. But a number are vulnerable, because of age or health concerns, and the police service has developed well-honed systems to respond swiftly and effectively to such cases. For obvious reasons, missing children arouse particular concern, and many forces deploy 'Child Rescue Alert' to engage the media in publicising such cases. Key good practice in this framework are early recognition of critical incident potential, effective supervision of enquiries, the use of NIM problem profiles and other intelligence techniques to analyse repeat locations (eg, children's homes), and the use of an IT-based investigation tracking system such as COMPACT.

Contextual factors

The force has a documented policy for the investigation of missing persons, based upon ACPO guidance. Uniformed patrol officers are responsible for the initial investigation of missing persons, supported by a range of specialist resources which can be called upon where required; investigations receive good management oversight.

COMPACT is a robust IT system for supervising and reviewing missing persons investigations. It went live in the force in January 2006 and is used in conjunction with the command and control system. Procedures setting out the recording process, risk assessment, tactical options, responsibilities and review process have been published and are accessible to all on the force intranet site.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The force has conducted a problem profile on children missing from care. At an executive level this has been used to influence social services staff to exercise more *in loco parentis* responsibility for the children in their care, and adhere to the absconding from care guidelines. Care home staff use a risk-assessment process in respect of missing persons reports before contacting the police; this assessment is validated by the force duty control room officer.

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- The use of COMPACT ensures that specific tasks are completed in line with identified risks. Missing persons reports cannot be closed without regular updates and supervisory sign-off.
- The force works closely with social services, the Crown Prosecution Service, independent care homes and the youth offending services; it is supported through the multi-agency group Reduced Offending in Looked-after Children (ROLAC) to undertake preventative work in respect of missing persons.
- Missing persons are a standing agenda item on the daily territorial divisional management briefings, which are part of the NIM business process. The daily review is overseen by senior crime information department officers based at force HQ. Matters of note are routinely reported to the ACC (operations).

Work in progress

- Staffordshire Police is developing a multi-agency protocol to reduce offending by children in care. This joint protocol acknowledges the good practice and professionalism of children and lifelong learning staff, youth offending teams, youth specialist prosecutors and police staff working with children's homes in Staffordshire. It is anticipated that the standardised approaches and guidance in the protocol will act as a framework to promote good practice in children's homes in the county.
- Through the ROLAC group, the force is currently reviewing incidents involving repeat missing persons, in terms of both repeat individuals and locations, as part of the risk analysis for the force level 2 control strategy. The findings will inform the prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance priorities and will be shared with partner agencies to assist in formulating joint targets and approaches.
- Management software for COMPACT has recently been purchased which will provide an IT solution to audit and quality control.

Areas for improvement

- Risk is initially assessed by staff on the public service desk, and can subsequently be re-evaluated by the officer in the case. Supervisors and staff are not clear on how supervisors should manage an enquiry initially and stated that supervisors would not necessarily task officers via COMPACT. The force should set clear expectations on the role of the supervisor in the initial investigation stage, and on the use of COMPACT.
- Reviews do take place but these are not always completed within prescribed timescales. The force should ensure that COMPACT capability is exploited by supervisors to facilitate the continued review and risk-assessment process.
- Narrative logs maintained within the COMPACT system give evidence that actions are being recorded on both STORM and COMPACT. The force needs to be satisfied that this will not lead to any loss of information valuable to reviewing officers.
- Return interviews are conducted on the basis of a 'safe and well' check only. Other than for specialist operations, officers do not gather other information and

intelligence, or have access to guidance as to what is required. The force should consider how more information and intelligence could be gained from return interviews, and provide staff with appropriate guidance.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers

B

BCU	basic command unit
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C

CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CCR	community contact record
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
Centrex	the national police training organisation
COMM	chief officers management meeting
CRU	central referral unit

H

HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HR	human resources

M

MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	multi-agency risk assessment conference

N

NIM	National Intelligence Model
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPU	Neighbourhood Policing unit

O

O officer personal safety training

P

PAT problem analysis triangle

PCSO police community support officer

PDR performance development review

PPAF policing performance assessment framework

PPU public protection unit

R

ROLAC Reduced Offending in Looked-after Children

S

SARA scanning, analysis, response, assessment

SGC specific grading criteria

SNEVA Safer Neighbourhood environmental visual audit

SNIQ Safer Neighbourhood interview questionnaire

SPIN Staffordshire Police Intelligence Network

V

ViSOR Violent and Sex Offenders Register