

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



HMIC Inspection Report

Cheshire Constabulary Major Crime

July 2008



Cheshire Constabulary – HMIC Inspection Report

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Introduction to HMIC Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

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

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;
- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of neighbourhood policing.

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

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

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

Programmed Frameworks

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

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

Major Crime

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

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

- Intelligence – Compliance with the 2005 ACPO National Intelligence Model guidance on the shared understanding of and response to the risks and demands of the major crime threat, with effective intelligence and data sharing internally, with neighbouring forces and with key partners.
- Prevention – Effective proactive partnerships to prevent major crime in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights; this includes precursor offending and options such as Osman warnings.
- Enforcement – Compliance with the 2006 ACPO *Murder Investigation Manual* and guidance in the 2005 ACPO major incident room standardised administrative

procedures, having sufficient resources to meet and manage the predicted demand and contingency to meet extraordinary demand from major crime investigation and review.

- Performance management and resilience – Efficiency through robust performance measures linking costs/resources, inputs and outputs to goals (ie the outcomes of reduction and prevention, detection and conviction work).

Future Programmed Inspections

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

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

The Grading Process

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

Meeting the standard

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

Exceeding the standard

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

Failing to meet the standard

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

Developing Practice

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

Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

Cheshire Constabulary is responsible for policing the county of Cheshire, which includes the unitary authorities of Halton (comprising Widnes and Runcorn) and Warrington. Formed in 1857, the constabulary now polices an area covering 946 square miles. The constabulary is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

The force area is diverse in character, from the Pennines in the east through the agricultural planes to the Dee Estuary in South Wirral. To the west lies the county town of Chester, formerly a roman citadel, which attracts a significant tourism trade. In the north are the industrial towns of Ellesmere Port, Widnes, Runcorn and Warrington. Warrington is undergoing a significant redevelopment programme, attracting major new housing developments and an associated increase in its night-time economy.

Cheshire Constabulary is responsible for policing a significant sector of the nation's motorway network, including the M62, M6 and M56. Within the force area there are 28 top tier COMAH (control of major accident hazard) sites, which is the second highest concentration in the country.

Demographic Description of Force Area

Cheshire Constabulary services a resident population in excess of 1 million people. Because of the major road and motorway networks providing essential arterial routes between the two large cities of Manchester and Liverpool, the transient population is invariably much larger.

Within the resident population, 48.7% are male and 51.3% female; 1.71% of the resident population are black and minority ethnic, with the largest groups Chinese, Indian, and white and black Caribbean. Cheshire also has a significant resident and transient gypsy and traveller population, with which it shares strong historical links, and a rapidly developing Polish community.

Strategic Priorities

The force has defined its ambition to 'achieve excellence in policing', as reflected in:

- the confidence and respect of the community;
- the reputation of the constabulary within the community;
- meeting customer expectations;
- building strong and confident communities; and
- disrupting, detecting and denying criminality.

This will be achieved through a focus on public safety (policing operations), knowing what works and why (processes and use of information) and people (staff in the force).

The Chief Constable has outlined three key priorities for the year ahead:

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- to reduce crime;
- to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB); and
- to improve quality of service.

The authority and constabulary have developed a series of objectives which describe the force approach to the delivery of services over the next year. The constabulary's operational effort and operational tools, such as the national intelligence model (NIM), will be focused on positively impacting these objectives according to the needs of local communities. As well as meeting national requirements, these priorities are based on extensive community consultation and thorough analysis through strategic assessment. The policing objectives for 2008/09 are:

Crime Reduction: reduce crime to make the force's communities safer – further reduce overall crime, in particular serious violent and acquisitive crime levels, by working with local agencies to identify and solve problems; help reduce re offending; and reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on the county's roads.

Working with Others: work with others to make communities feel safer – listen, respond to and support communities and work with partners to help reduce the fear and annoyance caused by alcohol and drug related disorder.

Community Policing: increase public confidence and satisfaction – help build stronger communities through positive neighbourhood policing strategies, visible patrol, responding in a timely manner and having a citizen focus to delivering services.

Bringing Offenders to Justice: criminal justice – improve the way the constabulary and its partners bring offences to justice and increase the number of witnesses and victims who are satisfied with the service they receive.

Serious Crime: tackle serious crime – working locally, regionally and nationally to help tackle organised and serious crime and reduce the harm caused by it to ensure the public feel confident and protected.

Resources: improve productivity and efficiency, focus on the outcomes for the public and ensure all activity adds value to front line policing – challenge and improve business processes by knowing what works and why, so the force can provide customers with the best possible service and value for money.

Force Performance Overview

Force development since 2007 inspections

The force has seized the initiative and continues to develop collaborative relationships and arrangements with neighbouring forces and regionally. The constabulary has invested in staff to work on current and emerging initiatives, supported through project management, which include:

- regional strategic roads policing capability (with the Highways Agency);
- a regional level 2 crime taskforce; and
- shared services with North Wales Police, including:

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- air support;
- scientific support;
- firearms operations and training; and
- dog support.

The force is a workforce modernisation demonstration site and is managing this workstream through its change programme. The business case for change has been proposed and was presented to the police authority in June 2008. Further pilot schemes include the 'criminal justice: simple, speedy, summary' review and the 'director's guidance streamlined process' within the criminal justice process and across the all criminal justice agencies in Cheshire.

To address, develop and improve the constabulary's effectiveness in citizen focus delivery, a major reform programme has been undertaken, sponsored and driven by the deputy chief constable (DCC). In September 2006, the constabulary was ranked 43rd out of 43 forces for 'whole experience'. In response, the force introduced customer service desks within each basic command unit (BCU). The customer service desk has the responsibility for assessing and allocating crime (latest figures indicate that this happens within seven hours of the crime report being received) and for monitoring and measuring victim code compliance. This is further supported by comprehensive market research, carried out by an external company, with clear diagnostics and feedback structures to allow for continual improvement. The customer service desk also has responsibility to act as the point of contact for all existing customers, internal and external, and to update on the progress of an investigation, the aim being to provide excellent customer service.

The DCC has also given his personal commitment to the delivery of citizen focus workshops. He has attended all 25 workshops, which have seen over 1,000 staff attend from the targeted patrol teams and neighbourhood policing units (NPU's). The force is now recognised as the most improved in terms of citizen focus in the country and at the time of writing is shown as top of its most similar force (MSF) group and nationally in all areas, with the exception of treatment, which places Cheshire 15th in the country.

To develop the constabulary's intelligent deployment strategy, the force invited KPMG to assist with the design and process change phase. Operation Quest had four distinct objectives: take forward the force's ambition and policing style; support a problem solving approach in reducing crime and disorder problems which most affect the community; make policing visible and accessible; and improve the confidence and capability in neighbourhoods to be protected and to protect themselves.

Changes include staff being more empowered to make appropriate decisions regarding grade 1 and 2 incidents, and grade 3 incidents now resourced by way of a scheduled appointment at a time to suit the customer. Further developments include the briefing of call handling staff and the introduction of additional sergeants within the resource deployment centre. Significant performance gains have been achieved and customer confidence and satisfaction levels have increased.

The force is considered as 'lean' by police sector standards and operates on a challenging budget (the sixth lowest council tax precept in England and Wales). The process review and collaborative enterprises are intended to maximise the effectiveness of existing resources in order to enhance the service provided to the communities of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

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Major Crime

GRADE	Meets the standard
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Contextual factors

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

Of the offences in the major crime category, the force has limited threat from all the major crime types relative to the total population when compared with its MSF group. In particular, relative to the MSF the volume of life threatening and gun crime is low.

From the statutory performance indicator data contained in the table below, it can be seen that none of the offences coming under the major crime classification pose a significant threat to Cheshire Constabulary. Even where the rate of offences is above the MSF average (blackmail and kidnapping offences, for example), the force remains comparable to the rest of England and Wales. Detection and conviction rates are consistent with those of the MSF group average, which have to be considered in the context of the small numbers of actual offences involved.

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool, released in September 2007, revealed (figure 1) that Cheshire faces a medium level of demand in respect of the policing response to homicide offences. Cheshire Constabulary is bordered by Merseyside Police and Greater Manchester Police (GMP), which indicate high demand for this crime type.

	2006	2007	Change	MSF** group mean
Life threatening and gun crime per 1,000 population	0.384	0.287	-25.26%	0.357
Number of abductions per 10,000 population	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.000
% of abduction crimes detected/convicted	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of attempted murders per 10,000 population	0.131	0.070	-46.56%	0.075
% of attempted murder crimes detected/convicted	100.00%	114.29%	+14.29pp*	87.80%
Number of blackmail offences per 10,000 population	0.282	0.161	-42.91%	0.136

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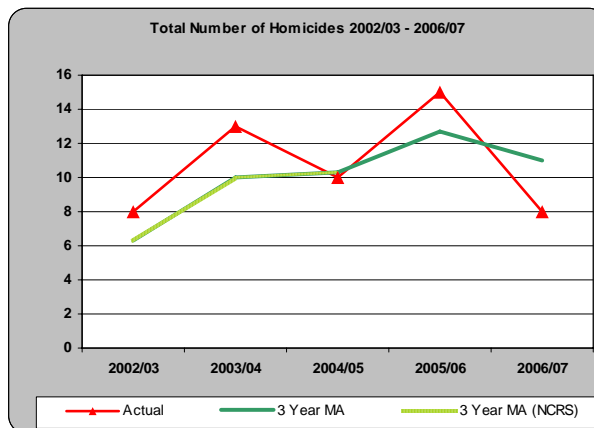
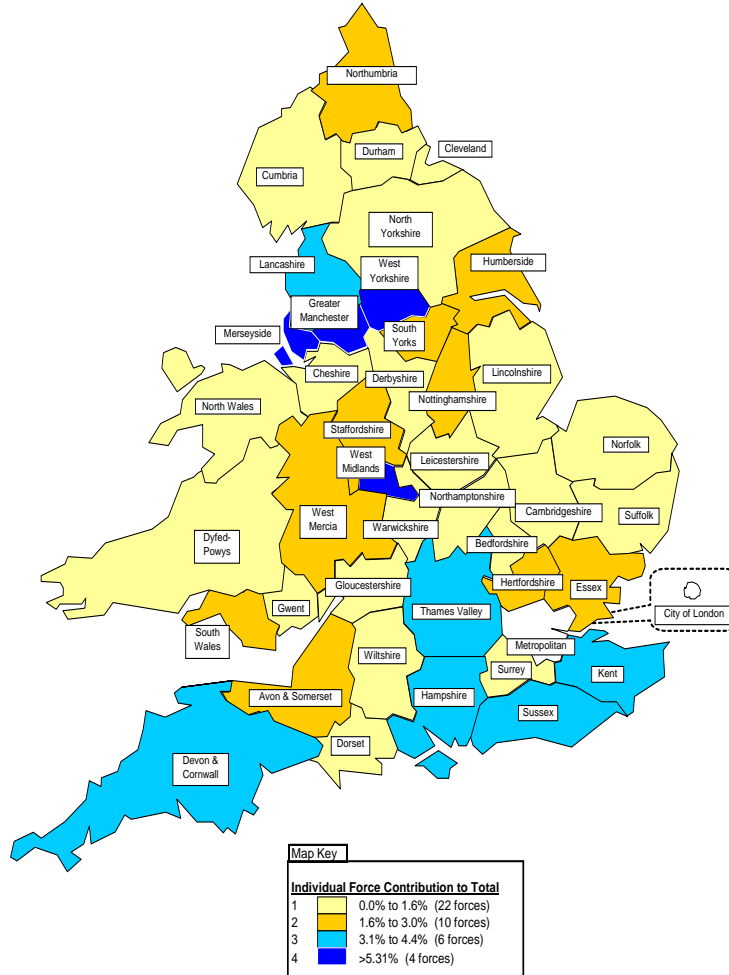
% of blackmail offences detected/convicted	25.00%	68.75%	+43.75pp*	46.61%
Number of kidnappings per 10,000 population	0.322	0.262	-18.63%	0.244
% of kidnapping crimes detected/convicted	50.00%	38.46%	-11.54pp*	54.52%
Number of manslaughters per 10,000 population	0.010	0.010	0.00%	0.017
% of manslaughter crimes detected/convicted	100.00%	100.00%	0pp*	Not Applicable
Number of murders per 10,000 population	0.081	0.091	+12.35%	0.100
% of murders detected/convicted	112.50%	100.00%	-12.5pp*	92.30%
Number of rapes per 10,000 population	1.913	1.258	-34.24%	2.073
% of rapes detected/convicted	25.26%	30.40%	+5.14pp*	23.12%

*pp' is percentage points.

**MSF for Cheshire is Derbyshire, Essex, Kent, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia.

Figure 1

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



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While organised crime group (OCG) mapping is in its infancy as a technique nationally, Cheshire Constabulary has sought to make progress and has ensured that analysis of major crime types is initially mapped. It is currently estimated that 64 OCGs impact the force area, across a wide variety of major crime types at level 1 and level 2.

The force strategic assessment (FSA) demonstrates a clear understanding of the historical, current, predicted and emerging trends in major crime and the interventions required to tackle these.

The force has identified protecting vulnerable people, sexual offences, robbery, human trafficking, paedophilia and vulnerable communities as well as dealing with terrorism as its major crime priorities within the force control strategy. The force strategic intelligence requirement has a clear focus on the continuous search for information across the full spectrum of major crime. Within the documentation overall, the issues have broadly been identified and/or addressed.

The force has invested substantial resources for interventions to maximise the return of harm reduction, minimise risks to the public and inhibit major crime.

This inspection assessment reveals that the force demonstrates a high level of sophistication in its approach to managing major crime. In making this judgement, collaborative agreements with North Wales Police and emerging agreements with other forces are recognised.

Intelligence

The force has insufficient dedicated analytical resources to meet the identified demands from major crime, to supply dynamic intelligence products that drive the energies of the force. With this exception, the force has fully committed to its major crime investigations with the requisite staff, accommodation, equipment and funding.

Strengths

- The force has assessed and improved its intelligence capability through a structured action plan, which has fully engaged its police authority.
- The force has in place a structure of analytical support through BCU based analysts and senior analysts to the central force intelligence bureau (FIB) based analysts, senior analysts and a principal analyst. There has been growth in the FIB and, at the time of the inspection, it was at its full establishment, with the exception of one senior analyst, with some analysts new to role and undertaking a structured training programme.
- Analytical support to the senior investigating officers (SIOs) from the force major investigation team (FMIT) is provided by the host BCU. The workload of the BCU analysts is such that it is difficult to dedicate an analyst in support of a major crime enquiry without significant impact on the BCU's capability. This has been particularly evident in the Northern BCU, which had suffered a disproportionate number of homicides in the preceding twelve months (50% of the total).
- Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) trainers, who have functional major incident room (MIR) roles within live enquiries, have been given limited training on analytical products and are able to provide basic intelligence products to support an SIO.
- There is in place an on call single point of contact (SPOC) working in the confidential unit, which provides analytical cover in extreme circumstances.
- There is a logical and structured approach to the gathering and analysis of intelligence. All activity undertaken by the FIB and BCU crime analysts is aligned to control strategy priority areas. Within the FIB, one senior analyst is responsible for delivery of control strategy analytical requirements and servicing of the NIM requirements and a second is responsible for delivery of the analytical requirements at a tactical and operational level in support of ongoing operations.

Work in progress

- Within forensic investigations, a bid has been submitted for a dedicated forensic intelligence analyst to improve the development of forensic intelligence. The outcome of the bid is awaited.

Area(s) for improvement

- A bid for a dedicated Intelligence cell for the FMIT was considered by the force in April 2007; however, this was not approved. The provision of dedicated analytical support to the FMIT therefore remains an area for close review. In one case, special branch (SB) assets have been deployed to assist due to the pressures on the host BCU intelligence unit. The force should continue to maintain an overview of

arrangements and ensure that appropriate analytical support is always available to FMIT SIOs when required.

- The force should consider the benefits of having an on call intelligence analyst 24/7.

The force seeks and shares intelligence about level 2 and level 3 major crime types through partnerships. This work is assessed to be effective. The force community impact assessments to evaluate risk following major crime are extensive.

Strengths

- There is regular and healthy contact with key partners as part of the intelligence development and sharing process, regulated by protocols on information exchange. The FIB is the established SPOC for the majority of the established external agencies and memoranda of understanding/information-sharing protocols are in place. Crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) analysts, often based within BCU intelligence units, are an integral part of the strategic and tactical assessment process.
- The importance of dealing effectively with partners in respect of domestic violence and links to homicide prevention are recognised. The force shares information on domestic violence incidents with partners in a systematic way. Through the multi-agency risk assessment conference process, there is enhanced information-sharing and joint problem solving activity delivered to reduce the risk of further offences of domestic violence by or against individuals. Additional activity includes specialist domestic violence courts, domestic violence legal advocates and joint training between inspectors, custody staff and the Crown Prosecution Service.
- The force shares information and intelligence in respect of child protection with health, children's services and voluntary partners in a systematic way.
- The force shares information and intelligence in respect of public protection with multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) partners in a systematic way. This process is enhanced by the embedding of probation staff within the strategic public protection unit (SPPU).
- There is good collaboration regionally in relation to public protection. The force is part of the North West public protection group, which includes strategic police and probation representatives.
- The force has introduced a confidential unit to receive and disseminate all sensitive intelligence, including that from covert human intelligence sources (CHISs) and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). A number of staff are attached to SOCA.
- Close relationships have developed with partner agencies through operational opportunities. For example the kidnap of a Pakistani national involved the sharing of good practice with the North West regional kidnap group and SOCA.
- There is consistent consideration and use of community impact assessments (CIAs) following major crimes. The responsibility for engagement at a community level rests with the BCUs and CIAs are an established part of policing business, managed through the problem management system (PROMS).
- Partner activity in gold groups is well practised. Independent advisory groups (IAGs) at both force and BCU level were instrumental in reality checking assessments of community tension presented to the national community tension team, and a range of local partners from existing key individual networks (KINs) were engaged to deliver reassurance messages.

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- The force has improved the alignment of race relations structures to follow the quarterly security review group meeting, chaired by the assistant chief constable (ACC) (operational support). This allows issues that impact on minority communities to be fed back speedily.
- Analysts draw on all available intelligence and provide the appropriate intelligence knowledge and products, such as problem or target profiles, network analysis, forensic profiles and RIPA authorities. Good use is made of financial profiles and partner/commercial data.
- The force has completed a threat analysis around gun crime and links are made between threats and domestic violence reduction and alcohol nuisance/disorder work through the ArcAngel initiative.
- The force recognises the definite links between the need for homicide reduction and connections to precursor offences such as domestic violence, child abuse, missing persons, violent crime etc and have made this a central part of the control strategy.

Work in progress

- In early 2008, the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington information consortium will trial systems which have been developed to apply a consistent approach to the capture of partners' data throughout the force area. This will assist in the force and partners being able to analyse this data to give a clearer understanding of threat and harm issues. This will be linked to the vision of each of the six CDRP analysts producing a strategic assessment using the same format/model as suggested by the Government Office North West.
- The local strategic partnership tasked the police and local authority to find sustainable solutions to the fact that 7% of all violent crime in one BCU is committed on a street associated with the night-time economy. The force identified the opportunity to restructure neighbourhood policing areas to create a new NPU area which encompassed the night-time economy section of Warrington town centre. Subject to police authority approval, the force will commit an inspector, three sergeants and eight constables and the local strategic partnership will commit funding of some £1.2 million over two and a half years to provide eight further police officers for that NPU area. The proactive policing response will run in parallel with multi-agency co-ordination and collaboration to address the underlying issues leading to this violent crime. The use of this local public service agreement 2 reward money will allow focused activity to reduce violent crime while providing additional support to the remaining NPUs in the town to deliver the same level of service as before the initiative, with the introduction of a co-ordinator and administrators posts to support the NPU inspectors.
- The FMIT is developing improved processes in conjunction with the FIB and the SPPU to produce data on homicides and incidents declared near miss or predictor incidents. This includes the mapping of existing threats and the review of the capability to respond to crimes involving domestic violence, vulnerable persons, MAPPAs, serious sexual offences, street violence, alcohol related violence, road death, Osman warnings and counter-terrorism. This work is ongoing with no projected delivery date.
- The FMIT is in the process of developing a formal framework for its attendance at forums and community action meetings (CAMs) to provide information regarding the force's efforts to deal with major crime and heighten reassurance to the public.

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- Homicide reduction strategies are being developed. In order to ensure connectivity with partners in this and other areas of force business, the head of the force operations department (FOD) (detective chief superintendent) is working with the stronger, safer communities unit.
- The force has in place a number of developed information-sharing agreements with partners, although there is no central oversight of these. Historically, these have required a legal services oversight to assure compliance with legislation. The force is currently in the process of drawing together all protocols to allow that overview to be maintained.
- The protective services intelligence project is to produce active intelligence products to drive the deployment of regional resources with a reactive capability to enhance the force's protective service response in the North West region. It will be developed as part of a wider change programme involving a three-force collaboration between Cheshire Constabulary, Lancashire Constabulary and Merseyside Police working in partnership with the Highways Agency to deliver effective strategic roads policing and the introduction of a North West serious and organised crime group. These collectively will offer an overt uniformed interception capability and investigative function to frustrate and challenge cross-border criminal activity in the North West region.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force has identified that partnership engagement in decision making forums, such as the tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) meetings, is more effective in BCUs than at a strategic level, which is described in some areas as piecemeal and unco-ordinated. This is in part due to the focus of partner analysts towards their own priorities and it is expected that there will be an improvement in this aspect with local area agreements. The force should identify opportunities to assist partners with a better understanding of the threats and risks associated with major crime it is managing and seek improvements in data-sharing.
- The force does not currently conduct results analysis in a systematic way, although results analysis is generally carried out at the direction of the SIO involved in the case. The force should produce results analysis for all analytical products and use it to assess the effectiveness of analytical products and the associated police/partnership responses. It should undertake results analysis as a matter of routine and this element of evaluation should be integral element within the developing level 2 performance framework.

The FSA has analysed the trends in relation to its major crime sufficiently. Consequently, the force control strategy is found to be similarly adequate. Problem profiles for commercial robbery, organised immigration crime, gun crime, Class A drugs and OCGs in general are satisfactory, with links to force and BCU level plans. There is sufficient evidence that the force understands the threat posed by other life threatening issues.

Strengths

- The FSA and other intelligence products include key applicable crime types, such as Class A drug related crime, gun crime and human trafficking, demonstrating that the force has considered the risks and threats of these crime types and others referred to in the national strategic assessment and UK threat assessment on organised crime.
- The FSA is informed by the BCU strategic assessments and takes account of all precursor offences. It includes violent crime, with a specific focus on domestic violence, the night-time economy, escalating OCG based links to the security industry, residence of registered sex offenders and knife crime.
- While there is no specific analysis of major crime as a category, a number of inferences and recommendations are made about crime trends.
- A focused level 2 control strategy sets out prevention and enforcement priorities for all level 2 units and departments. Analysts in the FIB proactively develop intelligence and identify patterns and trends around major crime, which is clearly informing preventative and enforcement activity.
- The force is improving its efforts to understand the threat posed by other life threatening issues such as kidnaps, paedophile rings or dangerous offenders. NIM profiles reflect an assessment and recognition of organised criminality.
- The force is cognisant of the threats posed by gun crime and gangs in both Greater Manchester and Merseyside and that policing activity in those areas may displace criminal activity to Cheshire. A bespoke policy is being developed to manage the flow of firearms intelligence within the force.
- The requirement for a homicide prevention strategy was identified and included in the existing control strategy, which is being progressed by the FMIT. A suite of precursors/serious harm measures selected to provide trend data will assist in the targeting of level 2 resources and underpins the development of a homicide prevention strategy.
- There is some evidence of the ongoing analysis of the current and future demand profile of major crime types, such as violent crime, and associated alcohol abuse, the use of drugs, domestic violence and rape. The force has completed a threat analysis around gun crime and links are made between threats and domestic violence reduction and alcohol nuisance/disorder work through ArcAngel.
- To ensure that all crime reports of rape receive consistent approaches, the crime registrar is the only person able to file such reports as undetected. This is linked with work with partner agencies to increase the volume of reports through sexual assault referral centres, Women's Refuge and other associated agencies.

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- ArcAngel is the constabulary's approach, in partnership, to tackling alcohol related crime and disorder in Cheshire. The campaign encourages responsible drinking and targets hotspot locations and prolific and persistent offenders of alcohol related crime. Included in the aims is the reduction of serious assaults.
- The force is contributing to a national pilot, which provides those detained at two custody areas with access to counselling in respect of alcohol abuse and this is being replicated within other custody suites through local funding.
- Domestic violence preventative strategies have been developed through the introduction of multi-agency risk assessment conferences along with robust risk assessment, review and enforcement efforts.
- The force has increased resources to support resilience in the management of sex offenders. As a result, funding for three additional staff was approved; they are now in place in areas, allowing officers to direct efforts more towards sex offender management in the community.

Work in progress

- Work is ongoing by the diversity unit in respect to both local and nationally developing trends within communities that may impact on homicide rates.
- The force aims to map the existing threats and review its capability to respond in such areas as domestic violence, vulnerable persons, MAPPA, serious sexual offences, street violence, alcohol related violence, road death, Osman warnings, counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime.
- There is currently no process which allows neighbourhood staff to access information about high risk sex offenders residing in their areas. There is limited access to the violent and sex offenders register via the control room and the force incident manager (FIM) and some tasking in relation to specific individuals, but it is recognised that improvements could be made in this area of business. The force is currently exploring ways in which nominal information can be shared without compromising the security and safety of potential offenders.

Area(s) for improvement

- Currently, BCU strategic assessments, control strategies and TCG processes do not reflect appropriately harm issues associated with major crime. In the main, the focus is on the management of volume crime and performance issues, although some consideration is given to harm issues in specific crimes such as domestic violence following emphasis being applied by the force.
- Within the FMIT business development plan, work is ongoing with the SPPU and the FIB to develop a homicide reduction strategy and benchmarking and reviews of business and intelligence processes have commenced. In support, the force is developing a suite of measures relating to potential serious harm and exploring the identification of precursor incidents. This will be used to identify trends and strategic risks and so inform the prioritisation of deployment of level 2 resources through the TCG, with performance monitoring through the level 2 performance improvement meeting (PIM). While the individuals are committed and capable, they are not dedicated to this task. The force should seek to allocate an appropriate resource to this business development within a defined project plan.

- The force does not undertake analysis to understand if the level of serious or repeat rate for domestic violence is increasing or decreasing. Equally, the force is seeking to use partnership data.

Trend analysis and problem profiles are routinely shared with partners and BCUs. There is an emerging trigger plan for 'hot briefing' when there is a significant change in either the major crime threat or where the nature of the analysis demands a fast-time response. Information-sharing protocols with key partners, such as the probation service, children's services and the drug and alcohol action team (DAAT), are highly effective. The force can demonstrate that it is on track to reach full MoPI compliance by 2010.

Strengths

- On a daily basis, there is a level 2 TCG which is joined by all BCUs through video conferencing facilities. This forum provides force overview to deploy appropriate organisational assets to managing any emerging threat in a timely manner to allow the prevention or disruption of a major crime.
- Key members of strategic and tactical partnerships meet and speak on a regular basis; this encourages effective formal and informal dialogue which allows enhanced information-sharing about changes in major crime threat levels.
- Each BCU based PPU has a referrals unit which acts as central point of contact to receive all referrals regarding child abuse, domestic violence, vulnerable adult abuse and missing persons. They are also responsible for mental health and sex offender management. Information is shared in a systematic way between the police and key partners through this referral process and out of hours the force receives urgent referrals through its control room.
- Should an agency managing an individual through the MAPPA process identify an increase in threat or risk, they contact the MAPPA co-ordinator who will call an emergency meeting to consider appropriate action to be taken to manage that situation.
- The force has effective and systematic approaches to manage prolific and priority offenders with the probation service and often arrests offenders who have had their licences breached by probation officers on the same day. Equally, there are effective relationships through MAPPA to jointly manage offenders, with work being undertaken to formalise a process to manage dangerous offenders who fall outside MAPPA criteria.
- There are three DAATs within the constabulary area. The ACC (territorial policing) is the chair of the Cheshire DAAT strategy group, while the head of the stronger, safer communities unit sits on the joint commissioning group and there are two seconded police staff. The separate Halton and Warrington DAATs are engaged by the BCU senior management team and integrate their work with that of the local CDRPs.
- The police provide data to the DAAT in a systematic manner and are involved in the development of a performance management regime for DAAT services.
- Use is made of national databases to inform investigations, for example Catchem and the serious crime analysis section (SCAS), which have been used across a number of crime areas.
- SIOs have access to Genesis and have used this research tool in enquiries, including a death in prison, and to access a medical artist. There is an awareness of the cultural web but to date this has not been required to be used.

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- The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is identified as a source of good practice advice. A recent case was the identification of a ‘shaken baby’ expert nationally and how to identify and retrieve all medical notes. This learning is shared with all SIOs rather than an individual SIO who developed such learning through the SIOs conference.
- The DCC is the chief information officer, supported by a dedicated superintendent as force information officer who leads a team developing a management of police information (MoPI) action plan. The force is currently awaiting a new national template for this plan but has a peer review of work undertaken so far completed by the regional co-ordinator for MoPI. The MoPI action plan is prioritised, using a risk assessment framework which includes organisational and harm to community issues. All new policy developments are subject to oversight to assure compliance with MoPI principles.

Area(s) for improvement

- Partnership activity in respect of major crime issues could be improved. It is described as unco-ordinated at a strategic level, being often based on personal relationships rather than a structured approach. The force should endeavour to engage strategic partners in a more structured way and develop memoranda of understanding to assist with information-sharing.
- There are limited formal links with partner agencies around sharing of intelligence, with the exception of financial investigation, which are good. The force has established links with the DAAT at the planning stages of proactive anti drugs initiatives to ensure joined up working with drug users; however, there is still scope for development such as in respect of the collation and sharing of questionnaire data from drug users. The force should be more proactive in its efforts to develop a systematic approach to intelligence sharing.
- The MoPI team has not had relevant oversight of the development of the confidential unit and witness protection agreement. In terms of the risk associated with these functions, they are not identified as high risk areas. The force should review the risk assessment, acknowledging the wide ranging and dynamic nature of these specialist areas of work.
- The force should introduce regular and scheduled meetings for crime managers. Currently, meetings are held on an ad hoc basis with the latest being some four months ago. This is an important forum for discussing and promulgating lessons learnt and sharing good practice.
- The force should develop a method of tracking level 2 criminals through the prison system in a systematic manner to allow the employment of disruption tactics, such as the rescinding of prison licences and breaching of probation orders for high risk offenders.
- The force should place renewed focus on the timely submission of details of serious crimes as required by national databases such as the SCAS unit of the NPIA, which received only 23% of details of serious sexual offences within the prescribed time period.

In respect of major crime, the force profiling of vulnerable locations and communities is developing, with evidence that the impact of OCG activity is partially understood. As a result, future risks and threats across the force area are identified in a timely way.

Strengths

- The force piloted the development of its neighbourhood profiles in its Eastern BCU and has rolled out this approach to other parts of the force. Community profiling and the identification of vulnerable locations is assisting the force to understand its communities and the impact of major crime.
- Profiles identify the force's most vulnerable neighbourhoods, describe the key issues for those communities and propose responses to real and perceived needs. Profiling takes place at a neighbourhood level and is linked to the intelligence unit through the local PROMS database, which includes SB intelligence requirements.
- The identification of neighbourhoods has been supported by CDRP crime analysts and local focus groups to establish if they fit with local perceptions. This approach links with the ongoing community intelligence development workstream, which is being progressed across the force.
- The dedicated area PPUs and the SPPU, together with the diversity unit, facilitate effective links with various elements of vulnerable communities.
- Work has also been undertaken with Cheshire's Polish community to assist integration.
- Police and partners are aware of the varying deprivation indices throughout the county and use these as one indicator of where to focus activity.
- The force has six school liaison officers who focus their activity within high schools to develop good citizenship. The force is now taking the opportunity to identify those schools where the catchment area includes the most vulnerable communities and are developing relationships with education welfare to maximise the focus of activity on those at greatest risk of causing future harm to communities.
- As part of a national human trafficking initiative, Operation Pentameter 2, the force developed and acted on intelligence surrounding brothels. This helped the force to better understand the potential impact of these activities on communities and those who work within these areas.
- Effective strategic and tactical links are maintained between MAPPA partners to jointly assess and, where appropriate, jointly manage those individuals presenting the greatest risk.

Work in progress

- The safer, stronger communities unit is engaged with the FIB to establish the fit with current work to determine and map vulnerable locations. SB is also closely involved. While this is in the early stages of development, good relationships have been formed with the eight local authorities and it is intended to overlay specific intelligence held by SB to develop a clearer picture of threats, risk and harm to the force. There is a good understanding of the actual and potential links to terrorism and extremist activity.

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- The performance framework will include reviewing the ACPO threat harm matrix score to establish the impact of activity to reduce harm.
- The CDRP analysts propose evidenced recommendations for problem solving, which are available to CDRP partnership meetings and the BCU TCG. Future developments aim to align BCU intelligence units to focus on priority subjects identified as active in the vulnerable areas, providing opportunities for CDRP partnership meetings and BCU TCGs to 'intervene in partnership'. A link to major and organised criminality exists, in that adoption of level 2 force targets takes into consideration criminals operating in the force's vulnerable communities. Following proof of concept, the aim of the project is to ensure the approach is adopted force wide.

Area(s) for improvement

- The FSA highlights the challenges of integrating the work of SB in the 'richer picture' with the vulnerable localities index and other studies of communities. There are no specific attempts to map or identify harm to communities in the current FSA and communities are not profiled.
- The force should take steps to develop a systematic approach to ensure analysts have oversight of all issues, activities and information affecting particular locations or relevant to individuals to help inform its assessment of harm to the community. Specifically, information and intelligence from gold group meetings, on PROMS, CIAs and the CAM and as a result of command and control logs should be available to inform analytical products.

The force strategic risk register is reviewed every quarter by a strategic risk group and the police authority. Each identified risk has an effective action plan which is monitored and controlled.

Strengths

- A strategic risk management process is in place to identify and manage key organisational risks. The force maintains a strategic risk register, which has been developed during the last 12 months and prioritises potential risks, assessing the impact of each and puts in place controls and actions required to deal with each risk, which are graded high, medium or low to assist the prioritisation process. The strategic risk group is chaired by an assistant chief officer and meets on a regular basis. There is wide representation from all aspects of the service, including key operational and support staff, police authority representatives, the business continuity manager and the head of the force crime operations unit (FCOU). This group reports to the police authority audit group on a quarterly basis.
- Each area of force business is developing a risk register and there is an expectation that risk registers will be managed locally unless risks are identified as high or corporate risk, when they will be escalated to a strategic level. At the time of the inspection, the economic crime unit and the PPU had completed risk registers and work had been undertaken to assess the risk regarding capacity and capability to deal with witness protection (raised at the strategic risk management group). The force has commenced activity to prioritise the risks faced and work is ongoing to link risks to the business planning process.
- The strategic risk register documents capacity issues in respect of level 2 resources, specifically in respect of the management of dangerous offenders (a high risk which is allocated to the ACC (operational support) as action manager). In this case, additional administrative resources have been allocated in the next financial year to increase the establishment of sex offender liaison officers.

Work in progress

- The force risk evaluation process is evolving and is being refined. All level 2 units have had input from the force risk manager in relation to identifying its own unit risks. Once risk documents have been completed, there will be a review and, where required, risks will feed into the force risk register. The force should drive this process.
- Although there is recognition of financial constraints, efforts are being made to develop a better understanding of the resource requirements for level 2 activity to maximise collaborative arrangements.

Area(s) for improvement

- The strategic risk management group relies on each area of force business consistently applying risk management principles to all areas of work and escalating issues to the strategic level. It is essential that the force maintains a robust overview. Accordingly, it should consider the introduction of a mechanism to allow the oversight by the force risk manager of subordinate risk registers in a systematic way.
- The force should continue to identify risks associated with major crime and put in place suitable control mechanisms and ensure they are captured in an action plan.

- The strategic risk register identifies the lack of sufficient business continuity plans as a medium risk; this has been allocated to the assistant chief officer. A business continuity manager has been appointed recently and is developing a business continuity policy for the force, with a corporate template for business continuity plans based on good practice and a business impact analysis methodology for each area of the organisation to use to allow it to prioritise and respond to issues accordingly. This work is in its very early stages and must be given support at a strategic level to ensure focus is maintained and drive is applied to embed business continuity management at an accelerated pace.

The force is creating ways of collaborating with some other forces in its region to provide the same level of access and interrogation of intelligence systems across the region. The force currently shares intelligence and data with GMP, Merseyside Police and the regional intelligence unit. Its HOLMES systems are not interoperable.

Strengths

- The force has implemented a data warehouse and Niche/Atlas intelligence system which provides a single source for searching across the main Cheshire Police IT systems.
- The force is able to extract and exchange data between some in force systems to aid investigations and identify trends and patterns around homicide; this includes drawing intelligence from systems such as command and control, crime management, custody, firearms licensing and the protecting vulnerable people database Cava (children and vulnerable adults).
- Intelligence collection includes appropriately sanitised access to information from all staff, including specialist units such as the dedicated surveillance unit, undercover, surveillance officers and departments such as forensics and technical support.
- Partner agencies such as MAPPA, the CDRP, the DAAT, SOCA, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the Border and Immigration Agency support intelligence collection through dedicated SPOCs in the FIB and PPU.
- As HOLMES 2 is unable to download intelligence data direct to Atlas, the force has introduced an effective work around approach, which includes the setting of specific targets for the submission of intelligence reports by enquiry teams in major investigations.
- Good links are available to GMP through an embedded officer working in its FIB.
- BCUs have various, well developed methods of accessing intelligence with adjoining BCUs in surrounding forces. In one BCU, there are well developed relationships with the adjoining North Wales Police BCU and Merseyside Police's intelligence databases can be accessed by another BCU, although this only identifies if intelligence is held and then requires direct contact to seek the information.
- There is a developed use and understanding of the power and benefits provided by automatic number plate recognition (ANPR). This includes maximising intelligence and surveillance opportunities.
- The ANPR database is updated on a daily basis through the Atlas system and the police national computer (PNC). This allows analysts in BCUs to identify intelligence suitable for the database and to access results through Atlas.
- The force undertakes joint working with GMP and Merseyside Police, such as supporting ANPR rings of steel and the head of the FCOU chairs the regional cash-in-transit robbery meetings.
- The force created a Bichard working group, chaired by the DCC, to audit the force's position and respond to recommendations from this enquiry. That working group closed after a number of workstreams were finalised, with other areas of work allocated to the MoPI, impact group and data quality working groups. The latter has

a system of random dip samples to ensure compliance with practices and procedures.

Work in progress

- Certain silos of information still exist across force systems and work is being progressed to bring these within the scope of the data warehouse. Intelligence from HOLMES and the professional standards department (PSD) system has been the subject of recent discussion under the MoPI sensitive intelligence project and is being progressed.
- Having introduced the Niche/Atlas intelligence system, the force is at an early stage of considering the ability to seek access to the intelligence held by other forces using the same product.
- The force recognises that there is a gap in the provision of intelligence to FMIT staff. A recent programme of training on the Atlas system, together with the introduction of performance measures for intelligence submissions, will deliver improvements in this area.
- Cheshire Constabulary is part of a regional bid to the North West development fund to site a network of fixed ANPR units around the force; this will provide significant benefits. There are also plans in place to link ANPR to the fixed CCTV cameras around the county, to identify the ongoing location of a vehicle once a hit is triggered.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force recognises the limitations currently within the Niche/Atlas system in that HOLMES is unable to download intelligence data direct to Atlas. Accepting that this is a national HOLMES issue, the force should continue to develop its IT capability to address this limitation and provide a more direct and efficient approach to accessing this crucial source of intelligence.
- While officers are aware of the proactive opportunities and post incident investigation potential of ANPR and have developed good links with the ANPR team to access this data, their knowledge is built on experiential learning rather than a systematic approach to the provision of training.

The force has a case review policy that is always applied, ensuring that current major crime cases are reviewed in accordance with ACPO guidance; the policy is highly effective.

Strengths

- The force has a dedicated major crime review team that undertakes reviews of all major crime investigations and cold cases within a defined force review policy and in line with national policy. This is in collaboration with North Wales Police.
- Peer reviews and operational debriefs are held to share good practice. There is also extensive engagement of the FMIT in regional major crime forums and evidence of sharing of good practice with other forces, such as a recent visit to GMP to observe an operational debrief. For all homicide investigations, a reciprocal arrangement exists with North Wales Police for forensic review.
- There is clear ACPO leadership with the ACC (operational support) setting the terms of reference for all reviews undertaken by the major crime review team. Actions for improvement resulting from reviews are allocated to individual senior officers or higher grade staff.
- The force works with SOCA to develop and practise its responses to kidnap and extortion events and through the North West regional negotiators' forum. The national circulations on negotiator issues are distributed to all negotiators. A recent example is a presentation to the regional kidnap group on lessons learnt from Operation Dallas, which will also be presented at the negotiators' conference.

Work in progress

- Development is ongoing for an initial assessment process of major crime investigations to identify risk and resource management issues at the earliest stage.
- Although the force has clear policies and procedures to follow, it is aware that it is more problematic to identify whether policies have been properly followed. While the profile of such precursor offences has attracted heightened awareness at daily and weekly TCG meetings, work is ongoing to conduct a quality audit around this area of business.

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The force tasking and co-ordination process operates satisfactorily to manage suitable responses to manage major crime threats. Documentation examined reveals a sound understanding of historical, current and predicted demand.

Strengths

- The ACC (operational support) chairs the monthly level 2 tactical TCG and strategic TCG meeting. The force operates to the NIM 2 standards of tasking and co-ordination and the level 2 TCG meetings are the primary means for tasking of level 2 assets in response to emerging intelligence and threats.
- All level 2 units are included in the TCG, where they are effectively and proactively tasked. The FMIT is also held accountable for all of its activity other than its response to homicide related crime.
- A tactical assessment provided by the FIB supports the process, which in part highlights historical and current criminality to identify predictable demand.
- The force assesses target and problem profiles escalated from level 1 TCG meetings to level 2 for consideration, using an agreed format on the PROMS database. Bids for resources are considered and prioritised before a decision is made as to whether it will be resourced. Ongoing operations are reviewed and, where necessary, resourcing issues discussed and addressed. All force level meetings record the outcome of specialist policing activity and decisions not to resource are documented in some form with the rationale.
- To provide an enhanced and more timely response to level 2 issues, a daily level 2 tasking meeting supports the NIM process and is held at HQ to review time-critical and emerging issues. Considerations of threat and harm are key elements in decision making. The meeting is chaired by the detective superintendent FCOU and attended by representatives from the FIB, the FMIT, call handling and the VECTOR planning team. Each BCU conducts a similar process, after which they join the level 2 meeting by video conference. Issues outside the normal operational capacity of any BCU can be escalated.
- A weekly review of major crime investigations is undertaken by the FMIT to ensure resources are effectively deployed against operational demands. There are several examples of the level 2 TCG tasking FMIT resources with 'non-homicide' investigations, eg jewellery robberies, through the NIM processes.
- The FMIT was created as part of a major restructure of the force and the establishment based on historic demand profiles for the force. This level of establishment has in general terms been appropriate for the demand experienced.
- The force has outsourced some work to private companies and drawn in additional resources to support the FMIT in the face of exceptional levels of demand during 2007.

Work in progress

- The force is developing an initial assessment process of major crime to identify risk and resource management issues at the earliest stage. This includes benchmarking of investigation costs to assess whether effective use of resources is being made in major crime investigations and enable comparison with MSF major investigation teams and regional partners.

Area(s) for improvement

- The lack of dedicated FMIT intelligence resources currently affects the ability to deliver detailed historical or predictive information on homicide investigations.
- Currently, decisions made during the level 2 TCG meeting are based on experience and professional judgement, with no use being made of any agreed decision making matrix which could assist in the decision making process and make decisions more transparent, objective and systematic. Consideration is being given to using the PROMS database to record all tasks falling from level 2 tasking to decisions and activity to be better recorded.

Due to appropriate and adequate training, the force's awareness of diverse community needs during major crime investigations is consistent.

Strengths

- The Chief Constable is the national ACPO lead on diversity and as such, diversity is a strong influence through the force.
- All staff in the force have undertaken basic diversity awareness training and family liaison officers (FLOs) have received training/awareness inputs surrounding honour based killing.
- The diversity element of the investigative training examines the six strands of diversity, including minority communities, and has an investigative flavour. The relationships between learning and development and IAG members is effective and mature and members are actively involved in force training.
- The force diversity unit represents the force at the regional diversity group and North West policing forum. Good practice and learning are shared at such meetings. The unit undertakes a monthly input to various departments in the force on pertinent topics. In recent months, inputs have been provided in conjunction with partners on human trafficking, female genitalia mutilation and the integration of the Polish community.
- The force has an honour based violence group with IAG representation and a senior officer sits on the national honour based crime group and has hosted seminars on forced and arranged marriages. One such seminar involved partners and 90 officers.
- The FMIT has given input into a hate crime seminar to highlight issues of risk identification and information-sharing to assist in homicide reduction. Evaluation and learning opportunities from it are planned.

Work in progress

- A gap analysis in skills/awareness has been conducted by the FLO manager and a training need identified around emergent communities. A private trainer has been commissioned to develop a bespoke package for current FLOs; this is to be delivered early in 2008, following which it will become an integral part of all new FLO training courses.

Area(s) for improvement

- Diversity training is a key element in all training provision in the force. However, the focus is not on understanding communities in an operational context. The force should realign diversity training to cover not only the various strands of diversity but to include understanding of communities, vulnerability and community issues relative to major crime.
- The force should arrange and deliver specific training for FMIT officers and staff on diverse community needs during major crime investigations.

Prevention

The force has an IAG and this is always used to maximise the contribution of partners in the management of major crime investigations.

Strengths

- The force has a well developed IAG and approximately half its members have received critical incident training. Two members of the IAG are on call 24/7 to support developing incidents.
- The force has a well developed structure for assessing the community impact of major crime. The IAG contributes to the CIA process through strategic and local contacts and works on gold groups. Actions concerning community safety and public reassurance are managed through PROMS and the FMIT has access to BCU based KINS.
- There is evidence of IAG member involvement in gold groups and in pre planned events such as the Creamfields pop concert. In one operation IAGs at both force and BCU level were instrumental in reality checking assessments of community tension.
- Additionally, IAG members are involved in the gold group functions involving PSD enquiries and are utilised to review files involving allegations of discrimination.
- The force IAG has representation on the training management group, being able to question and influence diversity issues. Members of the IAG have provided training to officers and staff on issues such as female circumcision and honour killings. Input has been given by IAG members to SIOs and the FIB on its role and on Chinese cultural issues.
- IAG members, clearly viewed as independent, are welcomed by the force and feel they are adding value to policing. There is confidence in the way the force utilises the knowledge and skills of members. The IAG is able to influence policy development through a sub-committee providing advice to the force.
- Local IAGs hold BCU surgeries where officers can seek their advice. There is good awareness among staff as to what IAGs offer.
- All IAG members undergo local intelligence checks and on the PNC. The IAG and the force are considering the necessity for enhanced levels of vetting for certain functions.

Work in progress

- The force recognises that gold groups should reflect the local dynamics of populations. Currently, there is a 'one size fits all' approach but there is a need to develop both a corporate and localised approach.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force should build on its investment with IAGs, particularly their involvement in gold groups, by involving members in formal debriefs to share and disseminate learning. Although they are opportunities to share learning through IAG meetings, this approach will consolidate their integration in the major crime investigative process.

Effective contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of any escalation of a major crime incident. The inspection teams found that ‘golden hour’ principles were sufficiently understood by call management staff and first responders.

Strengths

- The force has a centralised resource deployment centre and call handling centre. These staff are trained to identify major crimes on receipt at an early stage and have access to guidance documents to assist an appropriate response to major crime incidents through the command and control system. Staff are assisted by the use of agreed trigger words and IT based drop down menus for certain categories such as kidnap.
- The FIMs have been comprehensively trained for their role, including training in critical incident identification and management by the NPIA. Training involves a six-week mentoring process. The FIMs are central to the initial force response, and review all incidents in order to assess their potential to be a critical incident.
- The force has an ACPO officer on 24-hour call with a locum superintendent on duty between 1900 and 0700 each day. There are a number of detective superintendents on a rota who provide an on call 24/7 response for overseeing all crime related incidents. A rota of DCI SIOs are on call 24/7 and there is a detective inspector, detective sergeant and three detective constables on duty who provide an initial investigative response during the night.
- Call management staff are aware of call out procedures and golden hour principles contained in the 2005 *Practice Advice on Core Investigative Doctrine*.
- There is some awareness of golden hour principles in BCUs, supported by appropriate local training to tactical patrol team staff delivered by an FMIT SIO. Additionally, a minimum standards handbook circulated to all staff is well used in the force and includes major crime checklists.
- Effective deployment plans are in place for initial and subsequent response to major crime scenes. There are clear and accessible procedures contained in both written and computerised format (drop down menus) to prompt contact. FIMs have ready access to specialist resources 24/7.
- There is a HOLMES team/indexers dedicated to the FMIT and a HOLMES trainer is on call to set up an MIR. There are clear criteria for setting up major incident rooms with minimum standards for various incident categories.
- Specialist crime scene investigators (CSIs) are on call, together with a crime scene manager and crime scene co-ordinator, to provide a forensic capability. Collaboration arrangements with North Wales Police and less formal arrangements with Merseyside Police and GMP are in place to assist with the longer term deployment of CSIs, thereby minimising impacts on BCU CSI provision.
- There is an effective FLO database which assists family liaison co-ordinators and SIOs in the management and deployment of FLOs.
- Negotiators are on call 24/7 with trained negotiator co-ordinators and red centre trained negotiators available.
- The force has a business contingency planning manager, who sits on the regional business continuity group and also the national group.

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- The head of the FMIT reviews every incident at an early stage and allocates resources according to need rather than on the basis of categorisation. In case of exceptional demand, ACPO recognises the need to support major crime investigations which, where necessary, can involve the allocation of BCU staff.

Work in progress

- Many call handling staff have not had golden hour or critical incident training. This has been recognised by the force and will be included in the training plan for 2008. Currently, there is no opportunity for regular training days built in to the rota.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is a difference in the quality of the initial response to major crime incidents across teams in BCUs, due to the varying levels of experience and skill levels of supervisors on the tactical patrol team. This has been recognised and there is ongoing training on issues such as golden hour principles and scene preservation. The force should continue to drive this training.
- Although FIMs are required to take initial command for a range of critical incidents and be in a position to fully brief duty silver commanders and SIOs, there is no intelligence support for this function. It is usually only after the matter has been passed to a higher level that intelligence support is allocated. This approach is not in line with golden hour principles and has the potential to impact negatively on the early stages of the investigation.
- While there is some quality assurance undertaken in the call management bureau, particularly in respect of national call handling standards, there is no formal quality assurance process to determine whether call handling staff are identifying critical incidents and managing them appropriately.
- The force has no specific contingency plans in place to effectively manage any major investigation beyond the capability of the force. The force should develop and exercise a plan to cope with a rapid influx of staff to support a rapidly developing major crime investigation.

The policy covering threat to life is fully accessible to staff and reasonably understood and implemented. Examples of joint/regional/cross-border/multi agency operations are abundant.

Strengths

- The constabulary has a policy covering threats to life, which is available to all staff through the intranet system. Staff demonstrated a good level of knowledge of the issues surrounding threats to life and it is clear that this is part of routine business for the organisation.
- The daily level 2 TCG meeting receives reports on threat to life issues and is able to quality assure activity.
- The FIMs take an initial overview of all incidents and are conversant with the need and appropriate steps to protect life. They are supported in this regard by duty detective inspectors operational 24 hours a day and an on call rota of detective superintendents.
- Ongoing problem solving and intelligence development activity within the constabulary is managed on the PROMS computer database, which provides a framework for recording decisions and actions relevant to Osman issues. Clearly set out at the beginning of each PROM is the requirement to consider threat to life issues in a structured manner.
- The FMIT has utilised the force solicitor's department to quality assure the standard of Osman warnings and improve the format to personalise them relevant to each scenario.
- The constabulary has developed local risk management meetings through BCU based PPUs to address the threat posed by dangerous offenders, sex offenders and domestic violence offenders.
- The force provides an appropriate response to kidnap and dangerous offenders where a threat to life exists, including investigative resources and preventative actions under Osman guidelines. All relevant staff, such as control room staff, TSU, firearms and intelligence, have undertaken a facilitated table top exercise in respect of kidnap and extortion during 2006, utilising the services of the national kidnap and extortion unit.

Work in progress

- The force recognised that the threat to life policy and practices required reviewing. Following benchmarking, a new process has been introduced which provides a consistent application of policy throughout the force. All actual or potential threats to life are now managed by an officer of at least inspector rank and that individual is responsible for deploying effective strategies to ensure public safety. The Atlas intelligence system is updated using key words, so that analytical products can identify all such instances. The daily BCU TCG process receives an update on all such instances and in turn reports to the daily level 2 TCG. In this way, the force has made the management of threats a systematic process.
- A senior officer is reviewing business processes to maximise strategic and tactical scrutiny in relation to the management of threats to life. This includes processes

associated with the management of intelligence and witness protection and takes due regard of the need to consider threats emanating from domestic incidents.

- The confidential unit manager has a clear understanding of issues surrounding threat to life. A formal process of recording and assessing and then responding to such information, taking account of national good practice, is laid out in draft protocols which are awaiting final development and approval.

Area(s) for improvement

- Although the force presents a robust approach to dealing with firearms intelligence, it should continue to develop its understanding of the threat of gun crime with particular regard to threats from both the GMP and Merseyside Police areas.
- Although there are a number of examples of crime reduction/disruption initiatives, currently there is no force focus on major crime reduction through the work of the FMIT or the FCOU. The homicide reduction strategy is in the very early stages of development and should continue to be developed and focus should be applied to the development of prevention strategies for victims, offender networks, vulnerable people and locations. This will allow a more thorough understanding for partners as to their strategic fit into the wider crime reduction aims of the force.

The force has a witness protection capability that is supported by on demand covert resources. The force operates a policy that is promulgated to, and understood by staff. The force is partially collaborating with other forces and partners in this area.

Strengths

- A witness protection policy is in place and there is a good understanding among key staff of witness protection tactics and mechanisms by which tactics, covert resources and witnesses can be protected and, where appropriate, offered anonymity.
- Although there is currently no funded dedicated witness protection unit in place, the function is carried out using fully trained staff. The level of expertise in witness protection has been developed through work on a major enquiry involving significant witness protection issues in 2006 and with support received from a leading force in respect of policies, practices and procedures. The force has provided support to two other forces in this area of work.
- All witness protection issues are directed to the trained officers and, where required, services from other forces are employed. The use of the confidential unit to ensure a firewall between the tactical intelligence and operational team assists this area.
- A range of lesser 'protective measures' to disrupt criminal elements from intimidating key witnesses and disrupting trials have been used in numerous cases.
- Covert tactics are assessed pre-deployment and R-v-Johnson guidelines are in place for operations etc. All surveillance applications are subject to RIPA and are directed through the compliance unit.
- The police authority is well sighted on the threats and risks surrounding witness protection through regular updates from the FMIT to the offender management programme board and regular reports to the chief officer group.
- A health check of the function has been undertaken by another force and the management and administration structures determined to be fit for purpose.
- There is an ongoing programme to provide inputs to the initial crime investigators' development programme at constable and sergeant level and a new introduction will see the provision of training to student officers.
- The force has published a witness protection quick reference guide to relevant staff to supplement more detailed guidance already circulated to all BCU crime managers and is intended for use in the event of risk to life scenarios where access to witness protection arrangements is required.
- Witness protection issues have been placed on the strategic risk register in response to the failure to provide a dedicated resource to manage the risks present.

Work in progress

- The administration function associated with witness protection is currently paper based and the upgrading to a computerised system is seen by the force as a priority.
- There is a clear recognition of the need to formalise the force's approach to witness protection. Following benchmarking and cost benefit analysis, the force has sought formal collaborative arrangements. Plans are advanced to form a witness protection unit with other forces.

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- A menu of tactical options is being developed to support SIOs when considering lesser measures for frightened and intimidated witnesses.

Area(s) for improvement

- Although awareness of witness protection issues has been heightened through training input and circulation of new risk assessment documents, there is scope to enhance the level of knowledge by nominating champions in each BCU and holding regular meetings to promulgate good practice.
- The establishment of a funded full time witness protection unit failed following successive growth bids. The force should continue to develop alternative approaches such as that currently being progressed and in any event ensure that a witness protection capability is sustainable through appropriate funding and effectively managed.

The force has an adequate system to monitor the impact of preventative and enforcement activity. There is evidence that the broad range of community policing assets are partially used to help understand levels of harm in the community.

Strengths

- The force has developed neighbourhood profiles which, together with the identification of vulnerable locations, are assisting it to understand its communities and the impact of major crime.
- There is an established structure for assessing the community impact of major crime. The responsibility for engagement at a community level rests with the BCUs, and CIAs following major crime are an established part of policing business. SIOs liaise with local BCU NPUs to ensure CIAs are completed appropriately and co-ordinate the delivery of reassurance and local intelligence gathering. Actions concerning community safety and reassurance are managed through PROMS.
- Community intelligence, community questionnaires and reported acquisitive crime are used to measure the impact of proactive activity against OCGs and major crime. There is clear evidence of the upward flow of BCU intelligence profiles to the level 2 TCG and requests for level 2 support from BCUs on a daily basis to the daily tasking meeting. Considerations of threat and harm are key elements in decision making.

Work in progress

- Chief officers have recognised a need for a unified and corporate approach to the processes of gathering and analysing community information and intelligence. Work is ongoing with the neighbourhood policing community intelligence workstream and the FIB to establish an emerging definition of community intelligence, based around capturing information on 'community concerns' and 'community cohesion'. This distinction will allow the force to appoint responsibilities across level 1 and level 2, and increase the likelihood of successful implementation. Both would be based on, and subject to, a reassurance, risk and harm approach similar to that being developed for level 2 protective services.

Area(s) for improvement

- The need to monitor harm in communities at an operational level should be emphasised. Although there has been some shift in emphasis, such as in respect to domestic violence, current BCU activity is mainly based around management of crime through crime pattern analysis to identify and target individuals or groups committing crime rather than active crime/harm reduction.
- Although the objectives of operations are clear and the use of the whole family of community policing assets, including the IAG, is evident, along with the completion of CIAs, the force does not use a range of indicators to measure in a systematic way the impact of preventative and enforcement activity on communities. A systematic approach should be developed and introduced to allow the force to better understand the impact of preventative and enforcement activity over time. This approach is to be developed in line with the performance framework for level 2 assets.
- The force does not have any meaningful and systematic approach to results analysis, although recognition of the need for such an approach is evident among senior staff. Currently, results analysis is generally only conducted at the direction of

the chair of the level 2 TCG. The force should strengthen its approach to results analysis.

The inspection found evidence that the force always considers relevant professional standards issues in the operational planning for major crime work. There is a comprehensive security policy in use to ensure that staff are appropriately vetted commensurate with exposure.

Strengths

- There is a robust approach to the security of intelligence (and the systems it is held on), staff vetting, identity protection audit trails and infrastructure testing. The professional standards department (PSD) control strategy includes IT security, corporate assets, buildings and people. Proactive testing is undertaken by the PSD. Effective security policies are in place.
- The police authority oversees the work of the PSD through the staff purposes committee. Training has been provided to members to assist them with dip sampling of enquiry files.
- The vetting manager and the vetting investigator oversee the work of the various vetting functions in the force. The vetting manager is aware of national developments through attendance at national conferences and has undertaken a number of benchmarking visits to other forces.
- The force has effectively prioritised risks surrounding role vulnerability and applied an appropriate focus. A gap analysis has been conducted around staff vetting, which was identified as the highest risk. Accordingly, the vetting processes linked to all new staff have been revisited and made more robust in line with the ACPO vetting policy.
- Planned work involves management vetting of posts identified as enhanced risk. A scanning process has indicated posts likely to be critical and formal consultation in this regard has commenced. Currently staff working in identified high risk posts have been appropriately vetted
- The force actively progresses anti-corruption initiatives.
- The force PSD has good working relationships with crime operations. The skills and knowledge base across the FMIT and the FCOU regarding the role of the PSD is good. Assistance is provided to the PSD in the form of surveillance, interview co-ordination and interview teams. Although there are no formal protocols between the two functions, there is a clear understanding of roles through a published standard operating procedure.
- IAG members have security vetting checks.

Work in progress

- The force aim is to vet all staff in level 2 crime units to security cleared level, while the force addresses the wider process for the future. The force is looking to develop a performance measure of the correct number of staff vetted to the correct level commensurate with their role. A target of 100% will be set relating to covert operations, to include an assessment of the need to provide details to the PSD for vetting purposes.

Enforcement

Governance arrangements for major crime investigations are wholly effective, with appropriate use made of IAGs and community membership of gold command support groups.

Strengths

- The ACC (operational support) provides an effective chief officer lead for all major crime occurrences. The ACC is the chair of the level 2 TCG process, supported by other ACPO members who have a good understanding and are supportive of this element of policing.
- Police authority governance arrangements are in place, with liaison through nominated senior members and the chief executive. Members are kept informed of the force's progress in tackling major crime and serious and organised crime and emerging strategic issues through structured meetings and informal briefings with chief officers.
- Resource bids to address level 2 resource gaps following the *Closing the Gap* report have been presented to the ACPO team and the police authority, identifying resource issues. Regular updates on expenditure and budgetary provision for major crime are provided to the authority.
- The police authority is fully committed to strengthening protective services resources and supports an increase in precept to provide financial resilience and development potential. The budget bids for the financial year 2008/09 include an increase in the FOD budget to support witness protection, expert support and overtime.
- Regular briefings are provided to the police authority on the work of the FOD, which then conducts focus groups to further develop its understanding of progress and issues. In recent months, the head of the department has also provided updates on the work of the various units in the FOD to the police authority led community forums.
- Gold support groups are initiated and chaired by an appropriate ACPO officer to ensure that appropriate resources are, or have been, allocated to investigations identified as potentially critical, problematic or complex. Police authority members attend these meetings, as do members of the IAG. This arrangement provides effective scrutiny.
- The police authority has invested in the provision of a sexual assault referral centre with partners to provide a bespoke service to victims of sexual assault. Plans are continuing to finalise the location of this service.

Area(s) for improvement

- The police authority is not systematically made aware of the force's efforts to tackle major crime, nor is it provided with updates on the operational performance of the FOD or any level 2 unit save forensic management. The force should facilitate and encourage the police authority to have more oversight of level 2 performance.
- The force, with the police authority, should consider the development of a police authority working group which could oversee level 2 issues.

- The police authority has considered the necessity for members to receive routine or enhanced vetting and has concluded that vetting is not required. Dependent on the future level of engagement of members in level 2 scrutiny, it will be necessary to keep this decision under review.

The ACPO lead and three SIOs are fully trained and competent in the management of linked and series crime. These officers are supported by staff who have undergone adequate training and testing in critical incident command, CIAs and policing in partnership.

Strengths

- Sufficient SIOs are adequately trained in the management of linked and serious crime, together with the ACC (operational support), who has operational experience of such crimes and would undertake the role of officer in overall command. There is an understanding of the complexities surrounding the leadership and investigation of such crimes.
- The force has prepared and trained for response to critical incidents in partnership with other agencies and manages such responses through gold group support structures. A key aspect to such responses is the completion of CIAs and the gold group meetings to include members of the IAG.

Work in progress

- The force is in the process of reviewing MIR facilities for large scale major crime and counter-terrorism incidents.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force has not completed any specific training for, or exercising of, the response to serial offenders and series crimes. It should develop an approach to training and exercising in this regard.

The force's performance in the investigation of major crime is monitored through a regime that reviews each operation in terms of outcomes, cost, inputs and outputs.

Strengths

- The head of the FMIT is accountable for the performance of the unit through the level 2 PIM. A detailed record is maintained of all enquiries undertaken, the number of hours employed on specific operations and incidences where assistance has been provided to BCUs. There is an ethos of outcome driven performance.
- The business manager for the FOD has monthly meetings with relevant heads of department to discuss budgetary issues. These are supported by detailed spreadsheets recording expenditure and summary documents which are made available to the ACC (operational support) on a regular basis. The FMIT is able to provide overall high level costing for each investigation.
- There is effective intrusive supervision of ongoing major crime investigations at senior level formally undertaken within a two week period outside the formal review process, involving peer oversight at detective inspector level. Reviews are recorded in policy books. Regular meetings chaired by the head of the unit examine workloads and the progress made with investigations and tactics.
- Formal reviews have clear terms of reference and have thoroughly researched conclusions and recommendations. Reviews include part 8 reviews, breakdown in processes, undetected homicides after 28 days and cold case reviews. National review policy for major crime is rigorously enforced through the joint major crime review group.
- All senior managers engaged with the function of major crime have effective links with their counterparts in neighbouring forces and with regional groups, such as the regional intelligence unit, the regional asset recovery team and the North West cash-in-transit robbery working group. This facilitates the sharing of good practice and opportunities to develop investigative skills.
- Focused debriefs are conducted as part of major enquiries to identify operational learning, which is cascaded to all levels within the FMIT. The force information centre is identified as a central repository for information.
- Detective superintendents take on a mentor role for the SIOs for all investigations and provide formal support. Peer group meetings with North West forces are conducted where appropriate.
- Nominated reviews are undertaken following failed prosecutions for rape. BCU detective chief inspectors monitor these crime investigations in a systematic manner through a multi-agency rape steering group.

Work in progress

- The constabulary is in the process of developing performance measures for all protective service areas under the direction of the ACC (operational support).
- The process of costing major crime enquiries is being enhanced. This will include the further breakdown of costs to facilitate an enhanced understanding of differentials and outcomes between enquiries and to provide performance improvement opportunities.

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- The initial case risk assessment process, including BCU senior management team involvement, has recently been introduced and a peer review process will commence in the near future. This will support professionalising the investigative process (PIP) accreditation.

Area(s) for improvement

- The force does not have in place a systematic approach to debriefing the investigation of major crime which, although frequently undertaken, is at the discretion of the SIO. The force should implement a systematic approach.
- It is unclear as to where ownership and accountability lie for progressing recommendations for change resulting from the various reviews and audits. This is particularly evident in the case of cross cutting recommendations. The force should ensure that all organisational learning is effectively captured and progressed.

Performance management and resilience

The inspection teams found sufficient investigative capability in force to meet the predictable major crime investigation demands; however, collaborative agreements with North Wales Police exist and are deployed as appropriate. These are considered adequate to counter normal levels of need. Force procedures to manage human resources provide partial protection for the investigative capability.

Strengths

- There is sufficient investigative capability in the force to meet the predictable major crime investigation demands.
- Call handling staff are tasked with the early identification of potential critical incidents to the FIM, which has access to the wide variety of resources of the force. An appropriate level of specialist resources available at all times ensures that the force can promptly and appropriately respond to any major crime, while on call rotas are activated to provide appropriate support.
- The FMIT is responsible for the investigation of murder, suspicious deaths and other major investigations at the direction of the level 2 TCG. The FMIT is adequately resourced and sufficient staff are trained in managing and running an MIR.
- The constabulary has a formal protocol for assistance with North Wales Police; this allows the head of the FMIT to make direct contact with their counterpart. If a request for services to support either force is agreed, the two senior officers sign a document setting out services and funding arrangements, which normally amounts to only additional cost rather than full cost recovery. The protocol was tested in 2007 when the FMIT was working at maximum capacity, with support being provided on two occasions.
- The FMIT has commenced outsourcing appropriate work to private companies in order to complete actions, due to the unpredictable frequency of homicide reports. For example, in 2007 there were four reported homicides in four weeks and the services of appropriately trained and accredited staff were bought in.
- On a day-to-day basis, the operational commitments of individual officers within the FMIT are mapped and tracked. A traffic light system ensures appropriate focus is maintained on ongoing work in the face of new pressures. The system allows staff with critical roles to be declared unavailable for new work. To date, resources have matched the level of demand.
- An FMIT training/learning and development plan is in place, with all FMIT DCIs being PIP level 3 accredited. The force is in the process of training additional officers to ensure resilience is maintained.
- HOLMES 2 can be accessed by trained staff from anywhere on the IT network, which provides a considerable degree of flexibility. There are MIRs in each BCU and the facility to run an MIR from HQ. The IT infrastructure allows an extended MIR to be put in place to meet exceptional demand.
- The force has available trained tier 5 interview co-ordinators and a number of tier 3 interview trained staff.

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- Policies exist for appropriate trained supervisors to assess unexplained deaths. All unexplained deaths in communities and institutions are referred to the FMIT as a matter of course; this facilitates effective quality assurance. The head of the FMIT is a member of the North West region work related death forum.
- The force monitors the number of deaths in the county compared to those reported to the coroner. Any emergent trends and specific issues are discussed with the coroner.
- CSIs and pathologists are appropriately tasked to attend scenes and assist with initial crime scene management.
- Road death is investigated by the specialist investigation unit (SIU) sergeants under the direction of the SIU detective inspector. There is a clear demarcation between that role and that of the FMIT, with a roads policing SIO on call at all times. Inputs are given to road death SIO courses, discussing where the differing disciplines meet around the nature of the death. FMIT support would be provided in relevant cases.
- Links exist with the Health and Safety Executive, with input onto the regional work related death forum and considerable experience in dealing with corporate manslaughter.
- The force has formal collaborative agreements with North Wales Police for support, including a joint major crime review team, surveillance team, forensic support and to provide detective staff for major investigations. There are good informal and professional relationships between ACPO officers in the North West region.
- Crime training is delivered to detectives in force to the level of detective sergeant, using one dedicated crime trainer holding the rank of detective inspector. Associated trainers are also engaged in the training process. Experts are used to deliver training such as exhibits handling and crime scene management. A large number of staff have received critical incident training, this being assisted by the force hosting the Northern Synergy exercise, which exposed many members of the organisation to higher level issues.
- The force has in place a professional and well structured approach to investigative training. Training to candidates is provided by a mixture of accredited trainers and associated training experts, who provide support to lead trainers. Collaboration arrangements are in place with North Wales Police, involving a reciprocal training arrangement for detective constable training.
- The trainee investigator programme for staff on the FMIT has recently been changed to ensure that all trainees receive exposure to a variety of activities, with particular focus on reactive investigations. This assures their competence when working on the night cover rota, which is undertaken by all detectives.
- The force retains details of FLOs on a bespoke database which provides skills area, deployment and other key information for all 60 FLOs and 13 family liaison co-ordinators, who are all trained to national standards. The system automatically generates referrals to the occupational health unit and prompts the SIO to review the FLO deployment after a determined length of time. FLO deployments are recognised by the allocation of bonus payments to those officers deployed, where a family liaison strategy has been set by the SIO. This approach provides appropriate resilience in respect of disaster victim identification issues while servicing the needs of major crime investigations.

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- A nominated chief inspector has been tasked to identify proactive opportunities to either develop capability or address strategic gaps in level 2 service delivery. A number of business cases have been prepared, including Home Office funding for one demonstrator site bid, while another initiative is being funded by forces. A notable success is the agreement to fund a strategic roads policing joint initiative with three other forces and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency to develop ANPR capacity.
- MIRWeb and CasWeb are used by the police service to run major crime enquiries and casualty bureaus after major incidents, with nationally linked IT systems enabling forces anywhere in the country to support another force in taking high levels of calls from the public. The force is able to support both of these and the MIRWeb system has been successfully activated in support of other forces.

Work in progress

- The force has identified a requirement to provide capacity to develop protocols and procedures around major crime. There is recognition by the force that policy development, updating of policies and evaluation are inadequate.
- Recently, there have been constraints placed on recruiting and other abstractions, which resulted in the FMIT operating at 75% of establishment. A high profile murder had for the first time required the FMIT to seek the support of six BCU detectives to assist in early enquiries to ensure that demanding deadlines set within the judicial process were met. The force should continue to monitor demand and ensure that sufficient specialist resources are available.
- Currently, the force only delivers crime training up to detective sergeant level. The intention is to ensure specialist training is provided by having competent investigators influencing decision making. An FMIT detective inspector has been seconded to review the delivery of crime training and to create a golden hour development programme.
- While the force has trained a number of staff in tier 3 interview skills, often this training was not role appropriate. More focus has been applied and training is now only provided to relevant staff. As a result, through 2008 the number of tier 3 trained staff on the FMIT will increase to better match requirements.

Area(s) for improvement

- Currently, collaboration is focused on North Wales Police. Arrangements for mutual aid with other North West forces and forces bordering in the south and west of the county are generally informal and not documented. The force should seek to document collaborative agreements into formal protocols, with clearly defined expectations and governance arrangements to resource times of extraordinary demand.
- The force does not have formal categorisation for homicide enquiries. The rationale to resource emerging relevant investigations is based on the experience of SIOs and the head of FMIT and resource availability at the time. The force should ensure that it continues to resource murders or other homicides in accordance with the principles contained in the major incident room standard administrative procedures (MIRSAP).
- Recruiting to the FMIT is recognised by the force as challenging. BCU based SIUs are more attractive to many potential and suitably skilled detectives, as they attract

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special priority payments, have regular working hours and there is consistency with location of duty. The force should continue to be proactive in encouraging applications for vacancies in the FMIT and in doing so overtly recognise and reward good work.

- Although the force maintains a record of the deployment of FLOs, there is no clear deployment policy in place; this results in a tendency to over utilise the FMIT FLOs, in part caused by the reluctance in some divisions to release staff for this work. The development and introduction of a deployment policy should alleviate this issue and better utilise trained staff.

Specialist and covert investigations are resourced through a robust infrastructure that is proven to be effective. Elements of specialist services are delivered through written and verbal collaborative agreements, which are sound. The inspection found evidence of proactive and reactive use of these assets across a widening range of offences.

Strengths

- The force has a robust and effective infrastructure in the form of an FMIT and FCOU to deliver across all specialist investigations, assisted by documented collaborative agreements. There is evidence of the proactive use of specialist assets, which are integral to the business of the force. There has been an increase in capacity over the last year; this is still developing.
- The force has effectively assessed its protective services capabilities following the *Closing the Gap* report and responded by preparing a detailed business case for resources to address gaps identified. Significant funding was allocated against the estimated cost to close the gap. A further gap analysis has been undertaken for level 2 crime, which has formed the basis of additional funding bids during the 2007/08 financial year. The force has developed and has maintained a gap analysis action plan, which is shared with the police authority.
- The FCOU and FMIT are allocated investigations through the TCG process, which includes, for example, support to the PSD, robbery investigations and rape cases, in addition to supporting BCUs at times of exceptional demand. This is outside the FMIT's core focus on homicide.
- All specialist assets are effectively tasked either fast-time, authorised by an ACC, or through the TCG process, and are appropriately trained, allowing the force to deal professionally with the covert gathering of both evidence and intelligence with appropriate approval of surveillance techniques and technical support, using up to date equipment and tactics. There is evidence of the use of resources across a wide range of offences.
- The force retains a central CHIS handling unit together with a unit in each BCU. Test purchase and undercover operatives are available through informal collaborative approaches between forces. A confidential unit has been established to firewall intelligence from the various sources.
- The force is able to provide witness protection through a number of trained officers and is seeking formal collaborative agreements with other forces to create a joint witness protection unit.
- There are collaborative arrangements in place with North Wales Police for support at times of exceptional demand for some specialist services, including the FMIT, although it is accepted that support is mainly to North Wales Police rather than from North Wales Police. This ongoing collaboration has been based on the willingness of both forces. The force is aware of the need to develop better collaboration with surrounding forces.

Work in progress

- The force, in conjunction with the police authority, is actively pursuing an 'investment in policing campaign' to highlight the need for increased investment in key areas of policing. Future development is dependent on the success of this campaign.

- The force will apply the emerging ACPO protective services toolkit to continue to monitor progress and development.

The force has a full time and dedicated case review team that is always deployed when current and historical major crime cases are reviewed, in accordance with ACPO guidance. Case review work is efficient.

Strengths

- There are full time dedicated resources in place to conduct robust, independent and structured reviews in line with national policy of both current and historical unsolved cases of major crime and fail to stop road traffic collisions. The function is undertaken within a formal documented collaboration with North Wales Police, which has supplied staff.
- Reviews include part 8 reviews, breakdown in processes including command structure, undetected homicides following 28 days and cold case reviews. Work is prioritised using a matrix. To assist with capacity issues, the review team uses appropriately skilled staff sourced through an agency.
- The force is a member of the regional review team forum, which includes North West region forces and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, providing an opportunity to share good practice.
- There is effective liaison between the review team and the PSD.
- The HOLMES team undertakes reviews of ongoing enquiries to ensure compliance with MIRSAP and HOLMES protocols.
- The force has a rota of road death SIOs on call to deal with all fatal and serious road traffic collisions. There is an established system of mentoring new staff and peer review of ongoing enquiries.
- Road death SIOs are line managed by SIU detective inspectors in each BCU. This arrangement facilitates appropriate investigative support and supervisory scrutiny of enquiries by a trained detective in the position to refer to the FMIT enquiries such as fail to stop road traffic collisions. The terms of reference for the FMIT include such enquiries.

Work in progress

- The constabulary is in the process of developing performance measures for all protective service areas under the direction of the ACC (operational support), who chairs a monthly level 2 PIM. This process is still developing and, at the time of the inspection, focus was being applied to identifying appropriate performance measures for each area of work.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is a lack of a central point to collate, develop and disseminate good practice and lessons learnt through the force from reviews and audits. Although recommendations are often progressed, arrangements are not systematic. The force should ensure that all organisational learning is effectively captured and progressed within an accountability structure.

The inspection found that the force was predominantly compliant with relevant ACPO standards of the Murder Investigation Manual and MIRSAP.

Strengths

- The force is predominantly compliant with relevant ACPO standards of the Murder Investigation Manual and MIRSAP.
- The constabulary has invested in an FMIT responsible for the investigation of murder, suspicious deaths and other major crime enquiries as directed by level 2 tasking, which provides a consistent and professional approach.
- Increasing use is made of HOLMES to manage major investigations in line with MIRSAP guidance, with BCU based incidents rooms available across the force. FMIT staff are trained in roles within MIRSAP and each operation is risk assessed through regular resource meetings.
- Although there is good understanding and application of the Murder Investigation Manual and MIRSAP throughout the force, these documents are acknowledged as being for guidance and are flexibly interpreted. Where a decision is made to vary compliance with the guidance, the rationale is recorded in the appropriate policy log. Where full compliance is essential, then the SIOs makes clear to the ACPO lead their role and responsibility to support this critical area of work.
- The use of policy logs to record key decisions is embedded. Use is made of separate policy records for sensitive decision making by SIOs in appropriate cases.
- A programme of level 3 PIP accreditation is ongoing, with a secondment process to ensure future development of SIOs.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	automatic number plate recognition
ASB	anti-social behaviour

B

BCU	basic command unit
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C

CAM	community action meeting
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CHIS	covert human information source
CROP	covert rural observation post
CSI	crime scene investigator

D

DAAT	drug and alcohol action team
DCC	deputy chief constable
DSU	dedicated surveillance unit
DV	developed vetting

E

ECU	economic crime unit
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F

FCOU	force crime operations unit
FIB	force intelligence bureau

FIM	force incident manager
FLO	family liaison officer
FMIT	force major investigation team
FOD	force operations department
FSA	force strategic assessment

G

GMP	Gretaer Manchester Police
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H

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HQ	headquarters

I

IAG	independent advisory group
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K

KIN	key individual network
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M

MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MIR	major incident room
MIRSAP	major incident room standard administrative procedures
MoPI	management of police information
MSF	most similar force(s)

N

NIM	National Intelligence Model
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NPIA National Policing Improvement Agency
NPSAT National Protective Services Analysis Tool
NPU neighbourhood policing unit

O

OCG organised crime group
OSC Office of Surveillance Commissioners

P

PIM performance improvement meeting
PIP professionalising the investigative process
PNC police national computer
POCA Proceeds of Crime Act
PPU public protection unit
PROMS problem management system
PSD professional standards department

R

RART regional asset recovery team
RIU regional intelligence unit

S

SAR suspicious activity report
SB special branch
SC security cleared
SCAS Serious crime analysis section
SGC specific grading criteria
SIO senior investigating officer
SIU specialist investigation unit
SOCA Serious Organised Crime Agency

SPI statutory performance indicator

SPOC single point of contact

SPPU strategic public protection unit

T

TCG tasking and co-ordination group

TSU technical support unit