



**CLEVELAND POLICE**

**5 – 9 JULY 2004**

**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER**

**COMPLIANCE REPORT**

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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a Police National Computer (PNC) Compliance Inspection of Cleveland Police between 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2004.
- 1.1.2 Cleveland Police was subject to a PNC Compliance Audit using the April 2003 Protocols on PNC Compliance. Her Majesty's Inspector would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Force for its services and also to place on record his thanks to all members of staff who contributed to this report and provided assistance during the inspection. Her Majesty's Inspector would also like to make particular reference to the production of a large inspection pack containing documentary evidence that was made available to HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors at the beginning of the inspection.
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from Strategic, PNC and customer level management and users at Force Headquarters and at two of the four Basic Command Units, BCUs, known locally as 'Districts' but referred to in this report as 'Division'. These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Cleveland Police is centred around the mouth of the River Tees in the North East of England and covers an area of approximately 596 square kilometres. The force covers predominantly an urban, densely populated area with a resident population of approximately 540,000. The force faces challenges that are typical to the demography of the area in terms of volume crime but it is also faced with additional challenges in terms of the risks of major incidents. The area is a major production centre for the chemical industry and there is a nuclear power station situated within the force boundary. The area also includes an airport, a major sea port that handles in excess of 50 million tonnes of cargo a year and two football league grounds.
- 1.2.2 Policing services within Cleveland are provided by four divisions, known locally as Districts. These current divisions are Hartlepool, Langbaugh, Stockton and Middlesbrough, the boundaries of which are coterminous with the four unitary local authorities within the area.
- 1.2.3 The Force is headed by the senior manager team comprising the Chief Constable, a Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), two Assistant Chief Constables (ACC), with individual responsibilities for Crime & Support and Territorial Operations and an Executive Director of Finance. The Force strength comprises approximately 1,700 full-time equivalent police officers, 80 police community support officers, 937 police staff and 85 special constables.

- 1.2.4 The PNC function falls within the portfolio of the ACC Crime & Support who has overall responsibility for the function. The Head of Criminal Justice has responsibility for the PNC matters that directly affect Criminal Justice, for example Court Resulting, however, day to day management of the PNC is devolved to the Data Protection Officer who carries out the role of PNC Liaison Officer (PNCLO). The Head of Criminal Justice is responsible for the staff in the custody suites who update Arrest/Summons information on PNC and also the Criminal Records Office (CRO) who update courts results. The CRO also carries out a quality assurance role in relation to the work carried out by staff in the custody suites. The PNCLO has responsibility for the integrity of data and system security and is also concerned with the development of forcewide policies for PNC.
- 1.2.5 Arrest/Summons records are created by Detention Officers (DO) in each of the divisional custody offices once an offender has been processed in the custody suite. The officer in the case must complete the source input document and hands it to the custody officer before leaving the custody area. Once the initial update is complete, the source input document is then sent to the CRO.
- 1.2.6 The CRO, based at the force headquarters, is staffed five days a week, Monday to Friday between 07:00 hours and 23:00 hours incorporating an early and late shift system (07:00–15:00 and 15:00–23:00). The office is primarily responsible for the update on PNC of court results from the magistrates and crown courts. The CRO is also responsible for managing the number of outstanding impending cases on the PNC.
- 1.2.7 Operational updates, including the circulation of persons wanted on warrant, missing persons, lost/found vehicles and vehicles of interest to the police are the responsibility of staff within the force control room (FCR). The FCR is also based at headquarters and as an operational unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The FCR is also the central point of contact for all PNC enquiries including all operational checks via the radio, telephone enquiries from divisional based officers and conducting Vehicle On Line Descriptive Searches (VODS). The force intelligence bureau and divisional intelligence staff can also conduct VODS transactions as well as Queries Using Enhanced Search Techniques (QUEST).
- 1.2.8 The only remaining updates that are made to PNC are disqualified drivers. These are made by the Data Control Unit (DCU) whose main responsibility is the integrity and security of the information. The DCU receive information of all disqualified drivers in hard copy format direct from each of the courts in the force area.
- 1.2.9 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were encouraged that processes and procedures were generally well known throughout the organisation and that despite the force relying on manual process for the creation of arrest/summons reports, the force has managed to remain in the top quartile of forces over the last twelve months.

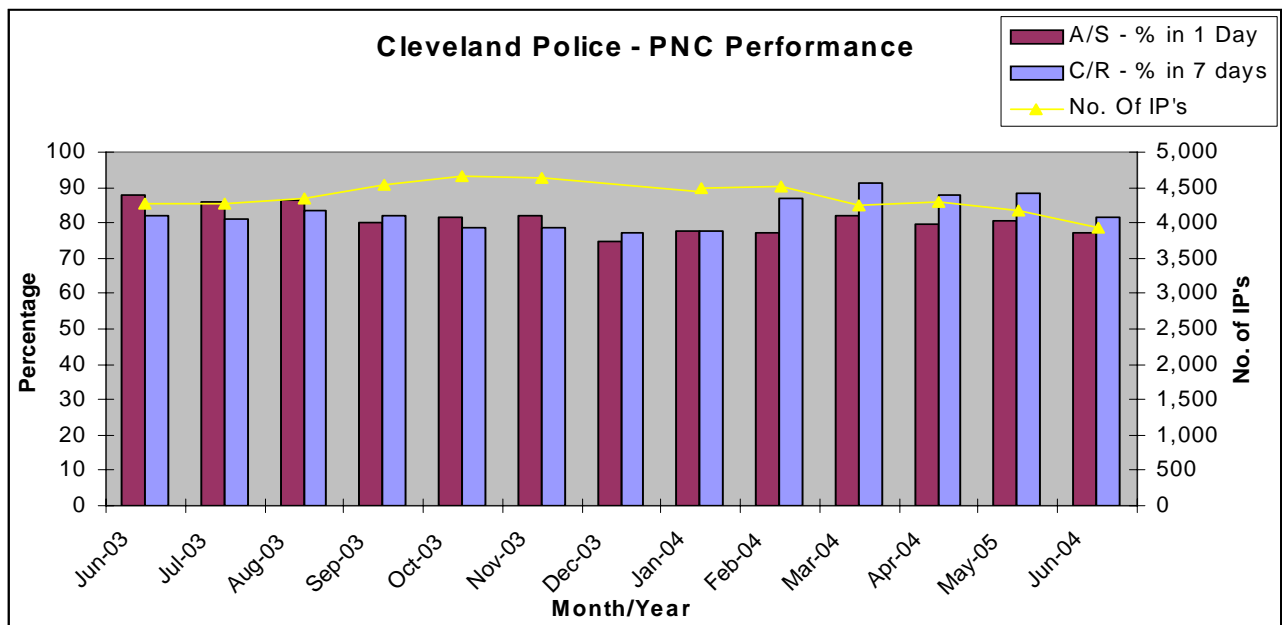
### 1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A full inspection was carried out covering the sections of; Leadership; Policy & Strategy; People; Partnerships & Resources; Processes and Results.
- 1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of;
- **Excellent** - Comprehensive evidence of effective activity against all protocol areas.
  - **Good** – Evidence of effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive.
  - **Fair** - Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others.
  - **Poor** - No or limited evidence of effective activity against the 6 protocol areas; or serious concerns in one or more area of activity.
- 1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with documentation to support their adherence to the protocols. Whilst this was not available prior to the inspection, a comprehensive portfolio greeted HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors on their arrival in the force. This was followed by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducting interviews with key staff. The visit to the force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection that was based upon reality checks. The reality checks focused on reviewing PNC arrest/summons data against source documentation.
- 1.3.4 Using the evidence gathered during each stage of the inspection, this report has been produced based upon the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) format.

## 1.4 Current Performance

- 1.4.1 On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2000, ACPO Council accepted the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling;
- Accuracy
  - Timeliness
  - Completeness
  - Relevancy
- 1.4.2 The strategy is owned by ACPO but is also reliant on other partners taking responsibility for key actions within the strategy. The partners include; Centrex; HMIC; Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and individual forces.
- 1.4.3 With regards to individual forces, a number of performance indicators (PIs) specifically for PNC data standards were set. Each force has a responsibility to achieve the targets set by the PIs in order to improve their position for each of the aspects mentioned above. The key PIs of the strategy are as follows: -
- i. Arrest/Summons – 90% of cases to be entered within 24 hours (where forces are using skeleton records as initial entry, full update must be achieved within 5 days)
  - ii. Bail Conditions – Entry of Police Bail within 24 hours
  - iii. Court Case Results – 100% to be entered within 72 hours of coming into police possession. (Courts have their own target of three days for the delivery of data to the police, therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 7 days, to take account of weekends and bank holidays)
- 1.4.4 Cleveland Police are currently one of the few remaining forces to rely on a completely manual system for updating the PNC with arrest/summons information. In view of this, the force can be proud of its achievement in which it has generally experienced a strong performance over the last twelve months. In June 2003, the force was achieving a performance of 87.7% of arrest/summons records being created within 24 hours. Since then, performance has fluctuated between 77% and 86.3% with the latest data, June 2004, showing that 77% of cases were created within 24 hours. This is just below the English national average of 79.1%. In terms of the number of days to enter the quickest 90% of cases, the force has experienced a steady decline in performance. In June 2003, it was taking the force 7 days to enter 90% of the cases. This has increased to 40 days in June 2004, significantly lower than the national average of 9 days.

- 1.4.5 Performance with regard to the input of Court Results has also been strong over the last twelve months. The force has consistently been one of the best performers in England. In June 2003, the force achieved the input of 82% of cases within 7 days of the court date. Over the twelve month period, performance has ranged from 77% to 91.1% with the latest data, June 2004 showing that 81.7% of cases were updated within the target time. This is considerably higher than the English national average of 44%. The number of days to enter the quickest 90% is also showing strong performance, particularly over the last 4 months. In June 2003, it was taking the force 55 days to enter 90% of results, increasing to 456 days in October 2003. Since October 2003, performance has improved steadily with the latest data showing that in June 2004, it was taking 14 days to enter 90% of cases. This is also considerably better than the English national average of 57 days.
- 1.4.6 The performance in relation to court results is also based upon a manual process in which the courts supply a hard copy of the court register to the police. Upon receipt of the register, Cleveland Police prioritise the updating of court results before returning to the register to update remand information on each record.
- 1.4.7 In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs), Cleveland Police's overall outstanding number of IPs have reduced from 4,281 in June 2003 to 3,922 in June 2004, a reduction of 8.4%. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were content that the force is managing its outstanding cases and that the force can be assured that all cases are legitimately outstanding.
- 1.4.8 A graph illustrating Cleveland Police's performance in the 12 months to June 2004 is shown below.



Note: No data is available for the number of Impending Prosecutions for December 2003. PITO are unable to supply information for this month.

## 1.5 Conclusions

1.5.1 HMIC's assessment of PNC compliance within the Force has been assessed as:

**Good** – Evidence of effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive.

1.5.2 This assessment is based on the detailed findings of the report. However, the key areas can be summarised as follows:

- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary is pleased that the force has developed well thought out procedures to deliver performance on a consistent basis using manual processes. Performance against the ACPO targets has been good over the last twelve months.
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary is also satisfied that under the leadership of a chief officer and a strong PNC Steering Group, the force has clear defined objectives in relation to PNC. This has allowed the force to plan ahead for future developments that are soon to be delivered by the PNC.
- The levels of awareness of the PNC are high throughout the force ensuring that operational officers obtain the maximum benefit from the system.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary found strong evidence of Good Practice in each of the protocol areas that are used as the basis of the inspection.
- Whilst there is strong evidence of good practice throughout the force, there are also a number of challenges that the force must face in order to improve on this current grading and deliver performance that exceeds the targets.

1.5.3 The findings of this report should be read in conjunction with the previous reports and recommendations relating to PNC. The previous reports are;

- Police Research Group Report – 'Phoenix Data Quality', *published 1998*.
- HMIC Thematic Inspection Report – 'On The Record', *published 2000*
- HMIC Report – PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 1<sup>st</sup> Report, *published 2001*
- HMIC Report – 'PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 2<sup>nd</sup> Report', *published 2002*

1.5.4 A summary of good practice points, along with recommendations for improvement can be seen in Appendix A of this report.

## 2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

### 2.1 Leadership

- 2.1.1 The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Crime & Support currently has PNC within his portfolio at Cleveland Police. The level of activity of the ACC encouraged HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors and they were also pleased that ownership of the issue has been embraced. This was evident from comments received during the inspection from key stakeholders within the force that a difference had been visible since the current ACC had assumed responsibility.
- 2.1.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also noted that the force has an established PNC Steering Group (PSG). The PSG meets on a regular basis and is chaired by the ACC with responsibility for PNC. The membership of the group is also well structured with all relevant departments and territorial divisions represented on the group. Whilst this is good practice, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors became aware that in one part of the force, staff were not aware that they were represented on the group by their senior manager, therefore, they were unaware that issues could be raised.
- 2.1.3 In addition to the strong representation on the PSG, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also found clear lines of responsibility concerning the PNC function. This was complimented by open lines of communication between the Head of Criminal Justice, the PNC Liaison Officer and the ACC, ensuring that urgent issues can be addressed informally without the need for a meeting of the PSG.
- 2.1.4 However, one area of concern for HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors is the combined role of the Data Control Unit (DCU). The DCU carry out an auditing role for all PNC update activity in the force. They have a responsibility for some of the quality assurance work and are also responsible for carrying out Data Protection audits. In addition, the DCU also have some operational responsibility, for example updating covert markers on vehicle records and assisting investigators with transaction enquiries. Without questioning the integrity of the DCU, it is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the operational activity of the DCU should be independently audited in line with other PNC auditing activity. This will provide the force with suitable assurance concerning all PNC update activity. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors acknowledge that in order to preserve independence, the DCU could not carry out this role.

### Recommendation 1

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force introduce a process to ensure that operational activity on the PNC carried out by the Data Control Unit is independently audited. In doing so, suitable reporting lines for the findings of the audits should be considered.**

- 2.1.5 With regard to overall force performance against the targets of the ACPO Compliance Strategy for PNC, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that performance is monitored and recorded on a divisional basis. The performance of the divisional staff forms part of the Management Performance Reviews (MPR) carried out by chief officers on a monthly basis. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors view this as good practice. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also discovered that the way in which the management information is used and distributed differs between the divisions. For example, in one division, a document entitled 'Impact' is produced outlining divisional performance across a number of policing areas, including PNC. In another division, PNC performance is recorded in a book that is reviewed quarterly by the Detective Superintendent.
- 2.1.6 This lack of corporacy results in varying levels of activity across the divisions when tackling qualitative and timeliness issues. Officers in one division are being held accountable for their work whilst others in different divisions may only be tackled when issues are recurring. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that a uniform approach for the production of management information should be adopted across all divisions to ensure that remedial action, if required, becomes consistent in all divisions. Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness may be lost if good practice is not disseminated across the force. A further example of this is that in one division, the divisional commander is developing an audit plan for his own district. No other division is involved in this process and there is a risk that this local auditing will be isolated to one division.

## **Recommendation 2**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reviews the current production of management information and consider the need for an improved corporate approach to certain issues. The overall performance against PNC performance indicators should be reported in a consistent manner to ensure that appropriate action is taken for under performing officers. Divisions are currently working in isolation of each other resulting in a lack of consistent processes.**

## **2.2 Policy and Strategy**

- 2.2.1 With regard to policy and strategy, the inspection focused on a number of areas that warrant comment. These can be described under three broad headings: PNC Strategy, PNC Policy; Security; and Data Protection. Each of these themes is discussed in further detail below.

## 2.2.2 PNC Strategy

2.2.2.1 In HMIC's Second Report on the Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness (the recommendations of which are provided in Appendix E of this report), it was recommended that a PNC Strategy should be an integral part of the Force's Information Management Strategy. Cleveland Police do not currently have a documented strategy, however, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were confident that the strength of the PSG was providing the force with a clear and defined direction in terms of the PNC.

2.2.2.2 The PSG operates on the basis of a dynamic action plan that is updated as progress is being made against specific actions. In addition, new issues that may affect the plan, for example, the Schengen Information System, are added to the plan in order that the force can develop new actions to enable it to prepare and respond effectively. Therefore, it is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the development of a documented PNC strategy will be more of a bureaucratic exercise rather than serve a useful purpose. The existing action plan, under the direction of the PSG, is meeting the current needs of the force in terms of strategic direction.

## 2.2.3 PNC Policy

2.2.3.1 The force has recently developed a comprehensive PNC Policy outlining the responsibilities of all personnel in the different areas of PNC functionality. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that all areas of PNC are covered by the policy and that the policy has been made available to all staff via the PNC Intranet site.

2.2.3.2 Due to the recent introduction of the policy, a number of staff were unaware of the existence of the policy and how it might affect the way they work. This is an issue the force may wish to address in the short term to ensure that the level of awareness is raised amongst all staff. In addition, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also learned that there is a lot of confusion surrounding the current policy for the circulation and cancellation of warrants on the PNC. Divisional warrants staff, detention officers in the custody suites and staff in the Force Communications Centre (FCC) all have a role to play in the updating and cancellation of warrants. Despite staff throughout the force being aware of this, there is confusion concerning the exact nature of each role. Anecdotal evidence from the force itself confirmed that this has resulted in either information not being circulated correctly or that information is not being removed at the appropriate time. The latter poses the risk of wrongful arrest if information that a person is wanted remains on the system longer than necessary, therefore, clarity for the staff is required urgently.

2.2.3.3 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that the existing warrant policy is under review with a planned date for publication being 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that in order to remove some of the confusion and reduce risks in the short term, an interim instruction is required to all staff involved in the process in anticipation of the published policy.

**Recommendation 3**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the publication of a revised policy on warrants is either brought forward, or that the force issues an interim instruction to all staff to provide clarity concerning the current process for the circulation and cancellation of warrants on the PNC.**

**2.2.4 Security**

2.2.4.1 Security is viewed as an area of strength within Cleveland Police. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found robust processes for the management of user access verifying PNC checks through transaction monitoring. However, there is a need to update the current Information Security Policy.

2.2.4.2 User access levels to PNC are managed within the Data Control Unit. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed the structure of the groups and are confident that the levels of access being granted are appropriate to the roles of the staff. Access is granted following successful completion and subsequent assessment at the end of a training course. A list of successful candidates is sent to the DCU via fax or e-mail from an accredited PNC trainer and the DCU makes the necessary updates to the user groups.

2.2.4.3 Following the update to the user groups on PNC, a local database is updated to record when a person has been trained, who the trainer was and the level of training received. This database then provides the DCU with the necessary information to conduct an annual audit of all PNC users within the force. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors viewed this as good practice. With regards to staff who leave the force or change roles, therefore, requiring their level of access to be removed or amended, staff in the DCU review the 'Weekly Brief'. This document includes details of staff who have recently left the force or changed roles, providing staff in the DCU with suitable information to make the necessary updates. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are confident that this process provides sufficient management of PNC User IDs.

2.2.4.4 The DCU are also responsible for carrying out transaction monitoring of PNC checks conducted by the force. The unit monitors approximately four transactions a day on a selective basis, e.g. transactions in which insufficient information has been provided on the PNC Originator line.<sup>1</sup> Staff in the DCU send out a hard copy form to the relevant member of staff asking for confirmation of the reasons why a check of the PNC has been made. The member of staff receiving the document, appends their reasons and returns the form direct to the DCU. Failure to return a form promptly will result in a second request being made to the line manager of the person receiving the form. Whilst HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors felt this was a good process, they are of the opinion that the process can be made more robust and fair.

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<sup>1</sup> A Free text field on the PNC in which an operator should provide sufficient information why a transaction is taking place, where relevant, a force reference, e.g. crime number, should be included.

- 2.2.4.5 The selection of transactions to be verified should be on a random basis to ensure that the process is fair. If there is a need to be selective of certain transactions, for example, if it is obvious that insufficient information has been provided on the originator line, DCU staff should conduct these checks in addition to the checks that are selected randomly. In addition, Line managers of staff receiving transaction monitoring forms should review the reasons being submitted and endorse the form to state they are happy with the reasons being provided. This will ensure that supervisors are aware of the forms being received by their staff.
- 2.2.4.6 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also encouraged to note that operational staff were aware of this process and felt that it was a deterrent against misuse of the system. In addition, the force has a process to escalate any concerns regarding responses to the Professional Standards Unit for appropriate action.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the transaction monitoring process is reviewed to provide a more robust reporting structure. The selection of transactions should be random and line managers should have a responsibility to endorse the reasons being provided by their staff.**

- 2.2.4.7 With regard to the Information Security Policy (ISP), HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors learned that the current policy has not been reviewed for a number of years. However, a review of the policy, under the direction of the Information Security Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, is currently underway with a planned publication date of the revised report being autumn 2004. It is the opinion of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that due to constant changes in Information & Communications technology, the ISP should be reviewed and updated on a more frequent basis.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force ensures the publication of the revised Information Security Policy within the planned timescales. The policy should also include the facilitation of regular reviews in the future to ensure that it reflects any changes in technology. The policy must also be drawn up in accordance with the ACPO Community Security Policy and the relevant parts of ISO17799.**

#### 2.2.5 Data Protection

- 2.2.5.1 Data Protection is also considered an area of strength within Cleveland Police. Data Protection Audits are subject to a five year plan that is reviewed at least once a year and includes regular auditing of PNC applications. The plan is produced using the risk assessment process as per the ACPO Data Protection and Audit Manual (DPAM). In addition, audit reports are produced in accordance with the DPAM including the classification errors. A review of previous audit reports by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors confirmed that good practice has been adopted.

- 2.2.5.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also pleased to note that the reporting of findings is via a formal report to the DCC with copies of the report being made available to relevant stakeholders, including the PSG. This reporting structure ensures that the force is able to differentiate between local and forcewide problems and direct resources concerned with corrective action in an appropriate manner.
- 2.2.5.3 The DCU who carry out the audits have also developed good relationships with divisional staff by way of the auditing process. In carrying out an audit, the DCU audit business processes as well as data integrity and conduct divisional focus groups as part of the process. This approach has developed a clear understanding of the need for auditing amongst divisional staff resulting in improved assistance during an audit assignment. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors viewed this as good practice.

## **2.3 People**

### **2.3.1 PNC Awareness**

- 2.3.1.1 The level of awareness of functionality that PNC offers is good across all ranks throughout the force. During interviews and focus groups, all staff demonstrated knowledge of the capabilities of the system. In most cases this was relevant to all functionality that PNC offers. However, in some areas of the force, staff reported that it was 'hit and miss' whether they were kept informed of changes as there was not formal process to notify them of changes to the system.
- 2.3.1.2 The force has developed a marketing strategy under the auspices of the PSG and it is clear that in the main, the objectives of the strategy are being met. There is a comprehensive intranet site dedicated to PNC, with a link from the home page of the intranet, which provides information on everything related to PNC. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were disappointed that the site had only received 1,543 hits in a twelve month period, between 20<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004, an average of 30 hits per week.
- 2.3.1.3 The marketing strategy has also resulted in the development of posters that are distributed around the force and they have exploited the opportunities to use PITO staff to deliver PNC presentations. In addition, the recent publication 'A Guide to Using the PNC' which has been published by PITO and is a pocket sized book, has been distributed to every officer within the force. The force also utilises PNC trainers to provide an input during probationer training to ensure that new recruits are aware of the facilities available to them.
- 2.3.1.4 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also pleased to note that during all interviews and focus groups, all staff were aware of who to contact for the various PNC activities. In addition, the PNC Liaison or Deputy PNC Liaison were known by name by most staff.

**Recommendation 6**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in order to reduce the 'hit and miss' aspect of communication, the force review the mechanism to notify relevant staff of changes to functionality or procedural changes concerning the PNC. A review will enable the force to identify any gaps in the process whilst maintaining momentum in promoting the services of the PNC.**

**2.3.2 Training**

- 2.3.2.1 PNC training is also an area of strength within Cleveland Police. The IT Training department plan PNC training courses on a three month cycle, ensuring that they can adapt to meet changing demand if necessary. The three month cycle allows the force to target training in specific areas if necessary and with two trainers available, numerous courses, or a combination of courses can be routinely offered to relevant staff.
- 2.3.2.2 PNC Trainees are also subject to a pass/fail assessment at the conclusion of a course. Only staff who reach the appropriate standard gain access to the system. Any staff who fail the assessment are provided with additional guidance in an attempt to enable them to successfully complete the assessment. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors view this as good practice.
- 2.3.2.3 The force has also recently introduced a process for identifying staff who require refresher training on the system. The database in DCU that is used to record details of PNC users (see paragraph 2.2.4.3) is systematically used to identify staff who are due to be evaluated for refresher training. If a member of staff has not had an assessment in the last eighteen months or has recently reached the second anniversary of their training, they are highlighted as relevant for refresher training.
- 2.3.2.4 However, in order to reduce abstraction rates of staff, refresher training is not routinely delivered. Staff who are identified as requiring refresher training are asked to complete an assessment in their workplace. If they pass the assessment, no additional training is required and their record is updated accordingly. If the assessment is failed, the member of staff is recalled for refresher training and PNC usage cannot continue until the refresher training has been completed. This is also viewed as good practice by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors and ensures that the force PNC operators are using the system to appropriate standards.

## 2.4 Partnerships and Resources

- 2.4.1 The Criminal Records Office (CRO) has developed good working relationships with the three courts in the Cleveland force area. This has resulted in the overall time to receive court results reducing to approximately three days of the court disposal date. Court registers for all three courts are printed at one court for onward transmission to the police. This improved process is a direct result of dialogue between the force and courts in order to improve the timeliness of court results. This improved performance by the courts is also reflected in the force's overall performance with regards to the update of disposals on the PNC.
- 2.4.2 Whilst the relationship between the force and courts has developed, there has been no formal dialogue between the force and Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs). The responsibility to develop these relationships rests with the CRO but at the time of the inspection there were no formal agreements in place concerning the timely supply of information relevant for updating the PNC. The force is aware that it may benefit from a formal agreement with NPPAs but it is perceived that the current volume is not having a significant impact at the moment. Nevertheless, it is the view of the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that an arrangement in the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the force and each NPPA will reduce the impact on the statistical performance. An SLA will also be useful in developing relationships concerning the supply of information between both parties.

### Recommendation 7

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force develop Service Level Agreements between itself and all relevant Non Police Prosecuting Agencies concerning the sharing of PNC information.**

- 2.4.3 Another area that HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed under this protocol heading was the effectiveness of the force when attending regional and national PNC meetings. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that the force plays an active role in the regional PNC Liaison Officers Conference. The PNC Liaison Officer for Cleveland Police is the current Chair of the North East group and is therefore suitably placed to become aware of any regional and national issues that may impact upon the force. The importance of the role of the PNC liaison officer as the chair of the north east group is acknowledged by the force in the support that is received from senior managers and chief officers.

## 2.5 Processes

- 2.5.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed the following processes within Cleveland Police; Source Input Document, Data Quality, Updates of Warning Signals, Ad Hoc Intelligence Updates, Availability of PNC Checks and Police Bail.

## 2.5.2 Source Input Document (CID11)

- 2.5.2.1 Cleveland Police are one of the few remaining forces who rely totally on a manual process for the creation of Arrest/Summons records on the PNC. This is despite having NSPIS Custody in one of the four divisions. The force creates a full record from the manual process as opposed to a skeleton record from the NSPIS interface. Therefore, a decision was made to continue with the manual process in favour of the interface available via the NSPIS custody system.
- 2.5.2.2 Upon arrest of an offender, the officer in the case must complete a CID11 before the custody sergeant closes the custody record. A local force policy states that where no CID11 is produced, the custody sergeant must not complete the charge. Once a CID11 has been submitted, detention officers within the custody suites make the update to PNC to create the Arrest/Summons record. Once this has been completed, the form is sent to the CRO for quality assurance.
- 2.5.2.3 This local policy has ensured that the force has experienced favourable performance regarding the timeliness of cases on PNC against the targets of the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. However, whilst HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are happy that the process is almost delivering the required performance, there is a factor that can have a significant impact on the overall performance.
- 2.5.2.4 Each custody suite has a detention officer (DO) to cover each shift, providing cover 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. This ensures that there is always availability to update the PNC with details of new cases. However, if a DO is absent, for any reason, there is no additional cover and CID11s are sent to another divisions to be input to the system. This process involves a manual transfer, using the force internal mail system, of the forms to a custody suite on an adjoining division in order that the information can be updated. This can invariably add a delay in the updating of PNC and subsequently impact on the force's performance.
- 2.5.2.5 In addition, the DOs are responsible for carrying out the initial PNC check when an offender is brought into the custody area. If the DO is not available, it is possible that this PNC check may not be carried out, producing the possibility that a custody officer is not aware of any warning signals about the individual. This is important information for the custody officer when making the decision concerning detention of the offender. Anecdotal evidence was provided to HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that this has occurred in the past.

### **Recommendation 8**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force review the current way that resources are managed in the custody suites in order to reduce the impact in the absence of a detention officer. Suitable arrangements should exist to facilitate the timely input of records to PNC and the provision of support for the custody officers.**

### 2.5.3 Data Quality

- 2.5.3.1 There is good awareness amongst officers of their responsibilities when submitting information for update to PNC. In addition, the DCU receive copies of all updates to PNC via Daily Activity Files (DAFs) received from the Hendon Data Centre. The DAFs provide a hard copy of updates that have been made to the system and except for updates to arrest/summons records, the DCU review every update that has been made by Cleveland Police. The quality control of arrest/summons records is the responsibility of the CRO.
- 2.5.3.2 In reviewing the quality assurance process within DCU, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors identified an area of good practice. All updates by FCC staff are checked for accuracy and relevance. If one operator makes three update errors within a twelve month period, the force removes their ability to update the PNC and provides the operator with additional training to overcome the quality issues. At the time of the inspection, this had occurred on one occasion and the result is that the overall quality within FCC has improved.
- 2.5.3.3 Whilst HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were encouraged to find a strong regime of quality control, a weakness was found during reality checks of the data.
- 2.5.3.4 Part of the inspection included the verification of data on PNC against the initial source document. A total of sixteen source documents that had already been through the quality assurance process in the CRO were checked against PNC. Out of the sixteen records that were checked, over 80% (13 records) contained errors or omissions in the data. The most common errors that were made were Post Codes not being supplied or updated, Marks/Scars/Tattoos (MST) not being supplied or updated and warning signals not being updated. The lack of post coding and MST can have a detrimental effect when using the QUEST facility on PNC, as searches would not produce the desired number of hits.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the CRO employ a more robust process when carrying out quality control checks of source input documents. Errors and omissions in the data must be returned to divisional staff to be corrected with instances of sub-standard submissions recorded against the officer. Management information should then be produced on behalf on divisional commanders in order that persistent problems can be rectified.**

## 2.5.4 Warning Signals

2.5.4.1 Warning Signals are created on the PNC at the request of an officer in the case or a custody officer. The source input document should be updated with the request for a warning signal in order that the DO in the custody suite can create the record on the system. All warning signals that are created are then validated by the DCU by way of a proforma being sent to the officer asking for confirmation of the need for the warning signal. The DCU then retain all records to ensure that warning signals remain valid and can be reviewed.

2.5.4.2 This approach to high quality information being recorded is commendable. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are concerned that the process is making officers reluctant to submit warning signals. A warning signal is added to a record to indicate that a person 'may' have the characteristics that the warning signal depicts, e.g. may be violent. In view of this, certain offences would automatically justify the creation of a warning signal, for example, a person arrested for assault on a police officer would normally have a 'Violent' warning signal appended to their record.

2.5.4.3 However, during reality checks of documentation against the information held on PNC, it was clear that in a lot of cases, warning signals were not being requested, despite the offence justifying the need. In addition, it is a concern that despite the officer in case not requesting warning signals, neither the DO when making the initial update to PNC and staff in CRO when carrying out quality control, had identified the need for a warning signal. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that warning signals are an important aid towards officer safety when members of the public are either stopped or apprehended as a suspect, therefore, the correct use of the facility should be promoted within the force.

### **Recommendation 10**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force review the current process for submitting requests for the creation of warning signals. Officers should be encouraged to request warning signals where there is a legitimate reason and update staff should be encouraged to record details of warning signals where the offence provides justification.**

## 2.5.5 Ad Hoc Intelligence Updates<sup>2</sup>

2.5.5.1 Cleveland Police do not currently have any process for the capture or update of ad-hoc intelligence on the PNC. Local intelligence is captured following the submission of intelligence from officers, with evaluation being carried out by Intelligence Officers on the divisions. The lack of process for PNC is resulting in useful information being lost. An example provided to HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors outlined the problem. An officer stopped a vehicle in which the driver was known, when the driver was asked for nominal details, an alias name was given to the officer. The officer in this case attempted to have the new alias name added to PNC but found there to be no process available.

2.5.5.2 Furthermore, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discovered that whilst local intelligence does not make its way to PNC, a process does exist whereby PNC information can be entered on to the local system. Daily Activity Files (DAF) are received from Hendon when an update is made to records containing certain reports, for example, a sex offender registration order. When the DAF is received with the new information, the DCU forward the DAF to the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) who review the information and update the local system if necessary. It is the opinion of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that relevant information should be available nationally and therefore, the force should have a process for sharing intelligence between systems.

### Recommendation 11

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force expand the existing process for capturing intelligence to ensure that information applicable to PNC is identified and that a process is developed to ensure that the information is updated accordingly.**

## 2.5.6 Availability of PNC Checks

2.5.6.1 During the course of the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discussed with operational staff the ease with which PNC checks can be carried out. The feedback received was that there are no problems when requesting PNC information via the radio. The dispatcher in the FCC carries out these checks. However, if officers are using a telephone to contact the FCC, problems were often encountered. Officers reported that it is a regular occurrence that the PNC position within the FCC is not staffed and that lengthy delays are encountered when attempting to obtain PNC information. The result is often that officers are reluctant to make the enquiry unless it is absolutely essential.

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<sup>2</sup> Information applicable for update to PNC that originates from a source other than the creation of an arrest/summons report

- 2.5.6.2 Upon visiting the FCC, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors learned that PNC is provided by either a radio operator or a position known locally as the Telex position. There is also a 'PNC2' position that is staffed when resources allow. However, it was discovered that it is common that neither the Telex nor PNC2 are staffed for lengthy periods of time during a shift. Staff are assigned to the position but are then moved to other roles to cover meal and refreshment breaks.
- 2.5.6.3 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were concerned by this abstraction due to the Telex and PNC2 positions being responsible for making operational updates, e.g. Wanted Persons, Stolen Vehicles, to the PNC. Whilst in the FCC, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware of a stolen vehicle report that was already outstanding for over three hours but had yet to be circulated on the PNC. Staff also reported at the time that the position was unlikely to be staffed in the immediate future and it could be up to a further three hours before any updates were made. The abstraction of this responsibility is contrary to an instruction that was issued to FCC supervision in July 2003.

#### **Recommendation 12**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force urgently review the resources assigned to PNC within the FCC to ensure that operational officers receive the appropriate level of service. The FCC also needs to consider the priority that is given to PNC updating to ensure that operational updates are carried out expeditiously.**

- 2.5.7 Police Bail
- 2.5.7.1 The force is not currently updating PNC with details of offenders released on police bail. The force is currently midway through a project to implement NSPIS custody throughout the force and once the interface is up and running, the force will be faced with additional administrative burdens if police bail is updated on PNC. This burden will be as a result of the current problem with PNC in that subsequent updates cannot be made to a record over the interface, all subsequent updates must be carried out manually.
- 2.5.7.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors acknowledge the reasons for the decision not to currently record the information on PNC, however, it must be noted that opportunities are being missed by the force in failing to do so. The creation of police bail on PNC will allow the force to record and retain details of fingerprints and DNA of an offender released on police bail. Without a PNC record, this forensic evidence cannot be recorded.

## 2.6 Results

- 2.6.1 In the 12 months to May 2004, Cleveland Police have experienced varied performance in relation to the timeliness of arrest/summons reports being input onto the PNC. In June 2003, the force was achieving 87.7% of cases being updated within 24 hours. Performance has then ranged from this figure to a low of 75% in December 2003, falling just short of the English national average in each month. In terms of the number of days to enter the quickest 90% of cases, the force has experienced significant fluctuation in performance ranging from 7 days in June 2003 to 52 days in September 2003. The latest performance data (June 2004) shows that it is taking the force 40 days to enter 90% of cases, considerably higher than the English national average of 9 days.
- 2.6.2 With regard to the performance concerning the input of Court Results, the force has sustained a strong position over the last twelve months. Over the last twelve months, performance has ranged from 77% in December 2003 to a high of 91.1% in March 2004. The latest information (June 2004) shows that 81.7% of cases are updated on PNC within 7 days of the court date. The force is in the top quartile regarding court results and has consistently achieved performance in excess of the English national average. The number of days to enter the quickest 90% of court results has also shown notable improvements. In June 2003 it was taking the force 55 days to enter 90% of results and despite a high of 456 days in October 2003, the force improved to 7 days in March 2004. In June 2004, the figure was 14 days, however, this is still above the English national average of 57 days.
- 2.6.3 The number of Impending Prosecutions has decreased by 8.39% over the last 12 months from 4,281 to 3,922. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that a process exists in which the Back Record Conversion (BRC) team within the CRO reviews old impending cases on a regular basis. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are happy that this process is enabling the force to manage its old outstanding cases.
- 2.6.4 A graph illustrating these performance figures can be seen in Section 1 of this Report at paragraph 1.4.8.
- 2.6.5 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary has no further recommendation to make in relation to PNC within Cleveland Police.

## Appendix A

### A Summary of Good Practice within Cleveland Police

- Data Protection Audits are subject of a five year plan which is reviewed annually and based upon a risk assessment conducted in accordance with the ACPO Data Protection and Audit Manual.
- All PNC Users Ids are audited on an annual basis to ensure that all are current and have the appropriate level of authority to match the role of the individual.
- All PNC training courses are subject of a pass or fail assessment ensuring that only staff who attain the appropriate standard gain access to the system.
- All updates to the PNC are subject to quality assurance by the Data Control Unit. In addition, staff who make three update errors within a twelve month period have the facility removed until additional training has been provided.
- The force has introduced a process of refresher training preceded by an assessment to ensure that only staff who require further training are abstracted from their duties.
- The force has a policy whereby the custody officer will not complete a charge unless a Phoenix Source Document has been submitted by the officer, ensuring that all forms are submitted in a timely manner.

## Summary of Recommendations for Cleveland Police

### Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force introduce a process to ensure that operational activity on the PNC carried out by the Data Control Unit is independently audited. In doing so, suitable reporting lines for the findings of the audits should be considered.

(Paragraph 2.1.4)

### Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reviews the current production of management information and consider the need for an improved corporate approach to certain issues. The overall performance against PNC performance indicators should be reported in a consistent manner to ensure that appropriate action is taken for under performing officers. Divisions are currently working in isolation of each other resulting in a lack of consistent processes.

(Paragraph 2.1.6)

### Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the publication of a revised policy on warrants is either brought forward, or that the force issues an interim instruction to all staff to provide clarity concerning the current process for the circulation and cancellation of warrants on the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.2.3.3)

### Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the transaction monitoring process is reviewed to provide a more robust reporting structure. The selection of transactions should be random and line managers should have a responsibility to endorse the reasons being provided by their staff.

(Paragraph 2.2.4.6)

### Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force ensures the publication of the revised Information Security Policy within the planned timescales. The policy should also include the facilitation of regular reviews in the future to ensure that it reflects any changes in technology. The policy must also be drawn up in accordance with the ACPO Community Security Policy and the relevant parts of ISO17799.

(Paragraph 2.2.4.7)

**Recommendation 6**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in order to reduce the 'hit and miss' aspect of communication, the force review the mechanism to notify relevant staff of changes to functionality or procedural changes concerning the PNC. A review will enable the force to identify any gaps in the process whilst maintaining momentum in promoting the services of the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.3.1.4)

**Recommendation 7**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force develop Service Level Agreements between itself and all relevant Non Police Prosecuting Agencies concerning the sharing of PNC information.

(Paragraph 2.4.2)

**Recommendation 8**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force review the current way that resources are managed in the custody suites in order to reduce the impact in the absence of a detention officer. Suitable arrangements should exist to facilitate the timely input of records to PNC and the provision of support for the custody officers.

(Paragraph 2.5.2.5)

**Recommendation 9**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the CRO employ a more robust process when carrying out quality control checks of source input documents. Errors and omissions in the data must be returned to divisional staff to be corrected with instances of sub-standard submissions recorded against the officer. Management information should then be produced on behalf on divisional commanders in order that persistent problems can be rectified.

(Paragraph 2.5.3.4)

**Recommendation 10**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force review the current process for submitting requests for the creation of warning signals. Officers should be encouraged to request warning signals where there is a legitimate reason and update staff should be encouraged to record details of warning signals where the offence provides justification.

(Paragraph 2.5.4.3)

**Recommendation 11**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force expand the existing process for capturing intelligence to ensure that information applicable to PNC is identified and that a process is developed to ensure that the information is updated accordingly.

(Paragraph .2.5.5.2)

**Recommendation 12**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force urgently review the resources assigned to PNC within the FCC to ensure that operational officers receive the appropriate level of service.. The FCC also needs to consider the priority that is given to PNC updating to ensure that operational updates are carried out expeditiously.

(Paragraph 2.5.6.3)

## Appendix B

### **Thematic Inspection Report on Police Crime Recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System Data Quality - 'On The Record'**

#### **Recommendation 9** (Chapter 5 page 86)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all Forces produce position statements in relation to the 1998 PRG report recommendations on Phoenix Data Quality and the ACPO Compliance Strategy for the Police National Computer. He further recommends that Forces produce a detailed action plan, with timescales, to implement their recommendations. The position statements and action plans together with progress updates should be available for audit and inspection during future HMIC PNC Compliance Audits and inspection of Forces. Forces should send copies of action plans to HMIC's PNC Compliance Audit Section by 1 February 2001.

#### **Recommendation 10** (Chapter 6 page 104)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces urgently review their existing SCAS referral mechanisms in the light of the above findings. These reviews should include verification with SCAS that all Force offences fitting the SCAS criteria have been fully notified to them, and updated. This process should be managed by Forces through their in-Force SCAS Liaison Officers.

#### **Recommendation 11** (Chapter 7 page 111)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the marketing, use and development of national police information systems is integrated into appropriate Force, local and departmental, strategic planning documents.

#### **Recommendation 12** (Chapter 7 page 112)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that where not already in place, Forces should establish a strategic PNC Steering Group. This group should develop and be responsible for a strategic plan covering the development, use and marketing of PNC and Phoenix.

#### **Recommendation 13** (Chapter 7 page 118)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that all Forces conduct an audit of their present in-Force PNC trainers to ensure they have received nationally accredited training. Any individuals who have not been accredited as PNC trainers by National Police Training should not conduct in-Force PNC training.

#### **Recommendation 14** (Chapter 8 page 145)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces ensure that each Phoenix inputting department develops an audit trail to register the return of substandard PSDs, via line supervisors, to originating officers. The system developed should include a mechanism to

ensure the prompt return of PSDs. Forces should also incorporate locally based audit trails, monitoring the passage of returned PSDs between line supervisors and originating officers.

**Recommendation 15** (Chapter 8 page 146)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces develop clear guidelines to cover their expectations of officers on the return of incomplete or substandard PSDs. This guidance should be communicated to all staff and regular checks conducted to ensure compliance.

**Recommendation 16** (Chapter 8 page 148)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces should develop a system to ensure that all ad-hoc descriptive and intelligence updates registered on local Force systems are automatically entered onto the Phoenix system. The policy should clearly outline whose responsibility it is to notify Phoenix inputters of any descriptive changes. Forces should also ensure that the policy is marketed to staff and that regular checks are conducted to ensure compliance.

**Recommendation 17** (Chapter 8 page 150)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces develop a formal system to ensure that a proportion of each member of Phoenix inputting staff's work is regularly checked for accuracy. Forces should also consider the benefits of measuring other aspects of their work including speed of entry and compliance with policies. Performance outcomes should be evidenced in staff PDRs.

**Recommendation 18** (Chapter 9 page 164)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends, where not already present, that Forces develop risk assessed Force Data Protection Officer audit programmes.

**Recommendation 19** (Chapter 9 page 164)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces integrate PNC and Phoenix data quality compliance into their performance review and inspectorate programmes for BCUs and specialist departments.

**Recommendation 20** (Chapter 9 page 165)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that PSD performance statistics should be incorporated in routine Force performance information. The statistics should identify omissions and errors in individual fields, in particular, descriptive information. Appropriate accountability measures should be established to ensure that any performance shortfalls identified are addressed.

## Appendix C

### PRG Report “Phoenix Data Quality” Recommendations

- National performance indicators and standards for timeliness of input, data fields to be completed, quality assurance requirements and the provision of training should be agreed by ACPO and promulgated to all Forces.
- Achievement against and compliance with these indicators should be audited after a period of 12 months, perhaps through the inclusion in the scope of HMIC audits.
- Senior officers take an active and visible role in policing compliance with agreed standards within their own Force.
  - ACPO performance indicators should be reflected in Force policy or standing orders (or the Force equivalent). Guidance should include the responsibilities of officers at each stage of the process e.g. for the provision of source documentation, for approval, time taken to pass to input bureaux, and the bureaux' responsibilities for data entry and quality control.
  - Line and divisional managers, as well as chief officers, should be held accountable for compliance with these standards. This could be achieved through inclusion in divisional efficiency assessments, and through the publication and dissemination of performance statistics throughout individual Forces and nationally.
- Source documentation should be common across all Forces, if not in design, in the information requested. A national format, stipulating a hierarchy of fields to be populated, should be developed.
- Programme(s) geared to raising awareness amongst operational officers and line managers of the potential benefits of Phoenix in a practical sense and their responsibilities of the provision of data should be developed. To ensure all officers have an opportunity to benefit from these programmes, consideration should be given to inclusion of a 'Phoenix awareness' module in probationer training, promotion courses and divisional training days.
- Best practice in administrative arrangements and organisational structures should be widely distributed. Internal working practices and organisational structures should be streamlined to remove any redundancies.

- Greater computerisation of the transfer of results from courts direct to Phoenix should continue to be developed. In the shorter term, the Police Service is likely to retain responsibility of the input of court information. To minimise the resource burden on the Police Service in this interim period, the police and courts should work to ensure recognition of each other's requirements and to minimise any inconsistencies in their respective working practices.
  - In the first instance, this might be achieved by ACPO highlighting to Magistrates' Courts and to the Crown Court, perhaps through the Trials Issue Group, the importance of Phoenix records to the integrity of the criminal justice system as a whole. Liaison meetings could usefully be established to introduce greater consistency in working and recording practices between the courts and police Forces e.g. for recording data. In the first instance, this could be pursued locally, perhaps through the court user group. Issues considered by such meetings might include supplying additional information (such as Arrest / Summons numbers) to the Magistrates' Court system and to automated transfer of court registers.
  - Consistent practice and performance is also required from the courts. Recommendations referring to performance indicators and standards, audits and monitoring, senior level commitment, common recording practices, awareness of system customers and administrative 'best practice' could equally apply to the courts. Mirroring the responsibilities of Chief Constables for their Force, the Court Service and the Magistrates' Court Committee should be accountable for the performance of courts.
  - Consistent practice in advising custody details, including transfers and releases, is required. This includes consistency in advising CRO numbers to maximise the number of complete records. The police and prison services should liaise to encourage greater understanding and acknowledgement of each other's requirements.

## Appendix D

### Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 1<sup>st</sup> Report

#### Recommendation One (Paragraph 5.2)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that ACPO nationally review the position and priority of PNC within the structure of portfolio holders to reflect both the technical and operational importance of PNC.

#### Recommendation Two (Paragraph 5.11)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector draws renewed attention to Recommendations 11 to 20 of *'On the Record' (2000)*, and recommends that all forces develop appropriate systems, overseen at a senior level, to ensure that they are implemented.

#### Recommendation Three (Paragraph 5.19)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that PITO review, as a matter of urgency, the supplier/customer relationship between PNC and forces, particularly in relation to the marketing of PNC functionality, and the type, frequency and validity of management information reports produced.

#### Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.29)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that Her Majesty's Inspector (Training), in consultation with PITO and National Police Training, conducts a review of the quality and availability of accreditation training for PNC trainers and the extent to which they are subsequently employed in forces.

#### Recommendation Five (Paragraph 5.31)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that discussions take place between ACPO, PITO and other relevant stakeholders to examine what opportunities exist for a short term 'technology solution' for the inputting of Court Results, either involving NSPIS applications currently in development, or an interim solution.

#### Recommendation Six (Paragraph 5.34)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that renewed and re-invigorated discussions should take place between relevant stakeholders to, (a) Ensure that local systems are in place to maximise co-operation with the courts to achieve their respective 72 hours targets and, (b) Work towards Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts assuming full responsibility for inputting all case results directly onto PNC.

**Recommendation Seven (Paragraph 6.10)**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends that following appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, a national inspection protocol for PNC data quality and timeliness be introduced.

**Recommendation Eight (Paragraph 6.12)**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that following appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Secretary of State should consider using his powers under Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1999, to require all police authorities to institute a Best Value Review of processes to ensure PNC data quality and timeliness. Such review should be conducted against a common template and terms of reference.

**Recommendation Nine (Paragraph 6.14)**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that in consultation with the Standards Unit and other stakeholders, HM Inspectorate should urgently review their current PNC audit responsibilities in the light of the findings of this report, with a view to adopting a more proactive stance in relation to force performance, data quality and timeliness.

**Recommendation Ten (Paragraph 6.16)**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector recommends, that in consultation with other stakeholders, ACPO IM Committee initiate research with a view to encouraging mutual support between forces for out of hours PNC data entry purposes.

## Appendix E

### Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 2<sup>nd</sup> Report

#### Recommendation 1

The Home Office should lead and co-ordinate an urgent re-examination of the current PNC strategy and standards with a view to producing national binding performance and compliance criteria to which all relevant stakeholders and partners are agreed and committed.

#### Recommendation 2

ACPO nationally and Chief Constables locally must ensure that the national standards for PNC operation, resourcing and training are fully integrated into local Information Management Strategies and recognised as an important part of operational service delivery. This area must receive sustained high-level support through a 'champion' at chief officer level.

#### Recommendation 3

PITO should be tasked to consolidate the force 'profiling' approach as used in the inspection into the routine statistical returns provided to forces. PNC statistics should then be integrated into the mainstream suite of management information/indicators that inform decisions at force and BCU levels.

#### Recommendation 4

HMIC should be tasked to establish a risk-assessed programme of monitoring and inspection that is able to respond quickly and effectively to deviations from accepted standards. This programme should include;

- remote monitoring of performance (PITO profile statistics)
- regular collaboration and contact with force PNC Managers
- proportionate programme of visits and inspections
- targeted interventions to respond to identified problems

#### Recommendation 5

The Home Office should establish a structured process for addressing and remedying any significant and persisting deviation from the agreed national standards (see Recommendation 1). This process should identify the respective roles of HMIC, Police Standards Unit and police authorities. It should set out the escalation of responses, which might include an agreed action plan, re-inspection, Intervention, and ultimately withdrawal of facility.