



HMIC Inspection Report

Essex Police

October 2007



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Contents

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

Programmed frameworks
Risk-based frameworks
The grading process
Developing practice
Future HMIC inspection activity

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area
Demographic profile of force area
Strategic priorities
Force developments since 2006

Findings

National summary of judgements

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing

Performance Management

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

Recommendations

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

Programmed frameworks

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

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

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

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

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

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

Risk-based frameworks

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

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

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

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

The grading process

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

Excellent

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

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

Good

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

Fair

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

Poor

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

Developing practice

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

Future HMIC inspection activity

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

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

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

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

Essex Police covers 1,404 square miles, including a number of large towns with a population of between 100,000 and 150,000 (Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Southend). The area also includes a number of medium-sized towns (Maldon and Braintree) and smaller market towns (Hadleigh and Saffron Walden) with significant agricultural links. Population densities vary significantly; the larger urban communities tend to be found in the south along the Thames corridor and more rural communities to the north.

The county's towns are linked by a number of key roads including the M25, M11, A12 and A13. Essex Police also covers one of the largest expanses of coastline in the UK. This, together with Stansted Airport (the third busiest London airport) and the ports of Tilbury and Harwich, links the UK to other countries and sees many visitors entering the UK through Essex.

Demographic profile of force area

The county has a population of just over 1.6 million people, an increase of 5% since 1991, which is forecast to rise by 24% to over 2 million by 2021. Essex had 72,000 residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups in 2001. There were 38,000 residents from ethnic groups other than white and 34,000 from white minority groups. People from all BME groups made up 3.5% of Essex residents in 2001, the largest group coming from India, with a smaller number of Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani and Chinese heritage. Across England, 13% of people belong to BME groups. People from ethnic groups other than white made up 2.9% of Essex residents. Three times as many people across England were from these groups (9.1%). White minority groups made up 2.6% of the Essex population compared with 3.9% across England.

The average earnings for a full-time employee are £31,755; this is above the UK average of £28,210. The average pay for males within the county is a third higher than that of an average female equivalent. A high percentage of residents work as management or senior officials, closely followed by administrative and clerical occupations.

Over 15% of residents hold qualifications to degree level or equivalent; almost 30% of residents have no formal qualifications.

Local authorities in Essex set some of the lowest council taxes in the country. Like other police forces, Essex is dependent on central government for 75% of its funding; the remaining 25% is met by council tax funding. This means that a gearing effect arises, whereby council tax increases are high in percentage terms if the annual increase in government financial support is significantly less than the increase in the annual budget requirement. This forms the backdrop to what Essex perceives as an uncertain grant-funding future. To address these uncertainties around funding and expenditure, the force has devised a three-year medium-term approach to financial and service planning to ensure delivery of operational goals.

Strategic priorities

Essex Police Authority (PA) and Essex Police strategy outlines the strategic objectives for the policing of Essex over the next three years and provides a framework for the local

October 2007

policing plan. It represents the shared aim of Essex PA and Essex Police to deliver a first-class policing service that is focused on the needs of the citizen.

Essex Police is committed to delivering a style of policing that is visible and accessible, and that improves face-to-face contact with the public.

The strategy reflects local consultation and contains the following priorities for 2007/08:

- to increase police visibility and reassurance;
- to improve both the timeliness and the quality of response to calls for assistance; and
- to tackle anti-social behaviour and disorder.
-

Force developments since 2006

Protective Services

Public Protection Unit

Essex Police engaged external consultants to conduct an inspection into the strategies and operating processes for protecting vulnerable people, while an internal review examined operational areas. Both reviews reached similar conclusions and recommended the amalgamation of disparate functions into a single Public Protection Unit (PPU), which was established in May 2007. The unit is commanded by a DCI and the force has deployed 7 police officers and 8 police staff to the unit.

The PPU is responsible for supporting investigations surrounding domestic violence; missing persons; vulnerable adult abuse; and hate crime. The PPU also conduct monitoring of sex offenders and dangerous persons across the force. The PPU has already started to co-ordinate forcewide training for the investigation of domestic violence; adult abuse; and use of the newly-introduced and dedicated computer system (Compact) which records detail of investigation of missing persons. A post-implementation review of PPU is scheduled for May 2008.

Regional collaboration on counter-terrorism.

In 2006, Essex Police became lead force for the policing of counter-terrorism in the Eastern Region, on behalf of ACPO (TAM). The DCC has set up a regional co-ordination board and leads on the significant work in building the capacity of the regional counter-terrorism unit. Plans are advancing to move the regional counter- terrorism intelligence unit into new premises within the next six months.

Ongoing collaboration between Essex and Kent on Protective Services.

Corporate Development Department has commenced analysis of Essex Police protective services using the same template and methodology used to analyse Kent Police protective services. This will identify common process and practice. The Essex analysis concludes on 15th September 2007, the collaboration team will then scope how collaborative services, between Essex and Kent, can be developed.

Neighbourhood Policing

The Neighbourhood Policing project team has been co-located at Headquarters and comprises 26 members of police and support staff. Hot desk facilities are provided to key stakeholders who also work from the office, including Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock Unitary Authorities, Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, Drugs Intervention Workers as well as other EP Officers and staff.

The HQ team has completed a full engagement programme for the force and is now committed to an inspection and audit programme in each district to ensure compliance with the main neighbourhood policing principles. The citizen focus and Neighbourhood Policing portfolios now continue in partnership and this collaboration is demonstrated within the new performance framework. Post April 2008, when the neighbourhood policing programme concludes, inspection and audit process will be incorporated into the mainstream work of the Territorial Policing department.

Focus on quality of service

In October 2006, the first phase of a centralised Crime Bureau commenced becoming fully functional in April 2007. The Bureau supports quality of service and customer service with focus on getting it right first time. Force compliance with NCRS has improved and continues to improve significantly.

A Head of Customer Service has been appointed and leads a Quality of Service implementation group that meets every 6 weeks to measure compliance against national standards, share good practice, and recommend improvements in customer service across all activities of the force. New guaranteed service standards have been developed and will be displayed in all reception areas from November 2007. The force is introducing mystery shopper exercises to further evaluate force performance.

Performance management

Essex Police has introduced an inspection process of all BCU, HQ divisions and departments. Corporate Development Department reviewers analyse “hard” performance information of the division or department; and investigate the “soft” information about people and leadership through a series of focus groups. Progress is also reviewed against the areas for improvement identified in external reviews and audits; property management, recording and disposal; information security – including security of premises, IT systems and operational practice; and compliance with NCRS and NSIR. At the end of an inspection a report is provided to the DCC who then meets Senior Management and communicates AFIs and a timescale for completing them. The review process is continual and measures progress against AFIs as a matter of course.

The force conducts a pre-inspection self assessment for every external inspection to identify issues and solutions at the earliest opportunity. Pre-inspections are shared with external inspectors to both inform their inspection and to ensure that the conclusions that Essex Police have reached enable the force to develop and implement appropriate strategies to improve performance in accord with final audit reports.

The force monitors the above at the Monthly Performance Improvement Meeting (MPIM), chaired by the DCC and attended by all ACCs, senior management across the force and members of Essex Police Authority Performance Committee. This inclusive approach has been very successful in focusing all efforts towards improved performance and the MPIM now drives the development of medium and long-term strategies within the force, to achieve force objectives.

Findings

National summary of judgements

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

Force summary of judgements

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

Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

National contextual factors

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

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

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

Contextual factors

Essex, as is the case with other forces, has not yet fully embedded Neighbourhood Policing. This is to be expected, given that it requires such a significant change in how resources in the form of specialist police officers, PCSOs, volunteers and support staff are selected, trained and deployed into this important area of policing.

At the outset, leadership has been provided, which includes the Chief Constable and chair of the PA attending 25 road shows to engage with the communities that neighbourhood teams are serving.

This recent inspection has shown that Essex Police has made satisfactory progress in providing dedicated Neighbourhood Policing teams. However, much of the activity around the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing has only been introduced very recently by the force. More work needs to be done in fully implementing parts of the project, including ensuring consistency throughout the force, ensuring that officers are not abstracted from their neighbourhoods and that training reaches all staff.

October 2007

A number of examples of engaging with communities and solving problems with partners were provided to the inspection team, some of which are listed below, and the enthusiasm of officers and staff assigned to this work was clear.

Strengths

Essex Police has introduced the following model for Neighbourhood Policing:

- 6 divisions (including Stansted), each with a dedicated neighbourhood superintendent;
- 15 districts, each led by a chief inspector;
- 34 Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPTs), each led by an inspector;
- 145 neighbourhoods based on 309 wards, with each neighbourhood having a dedicated neighbourhood specialist officer (NSO), a police constable, supported by PCSOs, special constables and, in some cases, volunteers; and
- prioritised neighbourhoods: priority 1 neighbourhoods have a named NSO and PCSO for each ward; priority 2 a named NSO and PCSO for each neighbourhood; and priority 3 an NSO and PCSO for several neighbourhoods (these are predominantly in rural areas).

A four-phase approach is being taken by the force:

- Phase 1: Implementation of priority 1 neighbourhoods for each division (completed March 2006).
- Phase 2: Implementation of remaining 139 NPTs (completed July 2006).
- Phase 3: Bedding-in of the ten principles of Neighbourhood Policing (ongoing).
- Phase 4: Fully embedded Neighbourhood Policing (target date March 2008).

Neighbourhood Policing has been introduced into the force with strong leadership from the Chief Constable and considerable support from the PA. The assistant chief constable (territorial policing) (ACC (TP)) is the lead chief officer; the impact on the force of her taking over this portfolio is tangible, with progress being made through the project board which she chairs. Many officers and staff quoted her as providing clear leadership and direction.

A detailed project plan, including actions and milestones, exists for Neighbourhood Policing and forms the basis of the project board chaired by ACC (TP).

Strategic priorities are being influenced through engagement and consultation. One example is that of anti-social behaviour (ASB), now featuring in the current force strategic assessment and control strategy.

NSOs and PCSOs from a number of divisions, including those not in the original pilot, were interviewed. Without exception, all were enthusiastic about their roles and were able to provide many different examples of engagement with communities, identification of problems and providing communities with the results of joint partnership action.

Officers and staff interviewed had job descriptions and role profiles and were clear as to expectations. Performance development review (PDR) objectives reflected the force drive on crime reduction and sanction detections as well as a number of Neighbourhood Policing-

October 2007

related objectives, ie introducing neighbourhood action panels (NAPs) and contacting members of key individual networks (KINs).

Officers stated that they had adequate support from divisional-based analysts with nearly all products (apart from those, such as ASBO-related, that tend to take more time) prepared within a reasonable time and to an adequate standard. Central analytical resource dedicated to crime reduction and neighbourhood management has also been introduced to support the development of community intelligence.

The force has repeat victim, hate crime and witness handling policies that meet the Victims' Code and the quality of service commitment (QoS), although a number of officers interviewed said they would want more information provided to them around domestic violence (DV) repeat victims (see the Protecting Vulnerable People section of this report).

The force has a structured problem-solving process in place based on the well-established SARA (scanning, analysis, response, assessment) model. Multiple data sources are used, including force crime and intelligence, partnership data such as crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) and other services including fire. The problem analysis triangle assessing victims, offenders and locations is used and the force has a problem-solving database to which partners also contribute evidence.

Evidence of engagement with communities was found in Eastern and Western Divisions where neighbourhood teams had carried out surveys during door knocking and street briefings, as well as attending community meetings.

Earlier in the year at Harlow, a shop in the centrally located shopping precinct was rented for a week using Home Office funding. The 'Respect' shop was staffed by NPT staff and partners and used to engage with members of the public to identify problems and also as a means to gather intelligence. All 155 visitors to the shop were invited to complete a questionnaire and this has been used to prioritise community problems and issues. A joint action group (JAG) meeting was also held at this location.

Another example at Southend involved the use of the Southend multi-agency anti-social behaviour reaction team (SMAART). PCSOs engaging with communities living at three tower blocks at Westcliffe-on-Sea identified problems with youths, including drug taking, criminal damage and other anti-social behaviour. A multi-agency meeting took place, including representatives of residents. Police led enforcement activity with SMAART assisting with other aspects of the operation. Results were fed back to residents and a meeting has been held to ensure that the solution is sustainable and that the situation does not present itself again during school holidays.

Increased visibility has been achieved, most noticeably in the more urban areas of the force such as Chelmsford and Colchester. Feedback to the inspection team from members of communities said they had seen an increase in police presence, especially since the start of the year. Few adults were able to state who their NSO was but were confident in knowing how to contact the police, either by phone, personal call to a police station or via the force website. PCSOs were well known by name by a number of young people. Police station opening hours have increased across the force areas to create improved accessibility to policing services.

The force has spent a number of years delivering a nationally recognised strategy to engage young people, Proactive Essex Police Youth Strategy (PEPYS). This fits well with the Neighbourhood Policing arena by engaging with young people affected by crime whether as victims, witnesses or offenders. Additional expertise is provided through ten dedicated safer school partnership (SSP) officers. A further 18 officers have a cluster of

October 2007

schools to work with (two or three schools each), and 40 PCSOs have received training to support SSP officers.

Joint training has taken place in a number of areas, predominantly at the tactical level, between NPTs and partners such as local authority officers, social services and housing. Partners have also been invited to team-building days held by Western Division; this will undoubtedly assist in promoting more effective communication and working not only within NPTs, but also with partners.

The force has identified all its neighbourhoods and has 100% coverage with a named NSO in place. Names of NSOs and contact details are publicised on the force intranet, leaflets and posters. A Neighbourhood Policing leaflet, tailored to each district, was circulated to every household in Essex between January and March 2007. Neighbourhood Policing literature is available at all police stations and distributed during events. A number of giveaways such as fridge magnets, pens, children's sticker books and booklets carry Neighbourhood Policing contact details and information. Literature is also available in various languages, Braille and large font on request.

The force integrated communications programme for Neighbourhood Policing won a gold award at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide awards for the delivery of its communications programme in support of Neighbourhood Policing in November 2006. The programme has also been shortlisted by the CIPR for an Excellence award at the national awards ceremony, which takes place in September 2007.

As part of the engagement strategy, NPTs have been provided with advice and guidance on how to engage with communities. To assist with engagement, Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs), comprised of residents' representatives were introduced in April 2007 for every neighbourhood. Joint Action Groups (JAGs), mainly formed with partners, are in place for every NAP (JAGs are the problem-solving body, marshalling and tasking resources). Apart from the pilot site where NAPs and JAGs are well established, other newer panels have met on at least two occasions since inception. Engagement is in place in over 50% of neighbourhoods across the force area.

At Harwich a NAP has been in existence for over six months with young people gaining a voice through a new youth forum with around 25 members. The forum does not keep minutes but develops actions coded red, amber or green, which is more in keeping with the needs of the membership.

Recognition is given to Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPTs) by a variety of means. They include: special priority payments for NSOs (Neighbourhood Specialist Officers), a new category of Neighbourhood Policing in the force annual ACTION leadership awards and a feature on how each BCU is delivering Neighbourhood Policing, ie good practice, along with pictures of Neighbourhood Policing officers and staff in the force newspaper.

There is evidence of the force's commitment to self-improvement. In July 2006 an external review was commissioned to identify the progress of Neighbourhood Policing in Essex. Recommendations were subsequently fed into the force project board and have been acted upon. Progress on areas for improvement from HMIC 2005/06 Neighbourhood Policing baseline assessment have been completed and internal audits and inspections have been carried out on each BCU by the HQ-based Neighbourhood Policing project team. The force has also contributed data to the ACPO Neighbourhood Policing tracking system.

A centralised crime bureau was introduced in April 2007. This is assisting in a better co-ordinated and more consistent approach to the identification and allocation of neighbourhood priority crimes. Call management staff at HQ have access to a database, by

October 2007

postcode that can identify the resident NSO to callers. This aspect was tested out successfully during the inspection and forms part of the force internal inspection programme.

Essex has exceeded the Home Office target of 362 PCSOs, with 436 in post at the end of April 2007. An additional 26 are expected to be recruited and trained by July 2007. A combination of partners, including county, district, town and parish councils, housing associations and businesses, have match-funded by 50% a total of 87 PCSOs out of the total establishment.

An example of using NPTs for their expertise occurred during a major investigation of an abduction in South Eastern Division. The force major investigation team immediately contacted the NPT for local knowledge and intelligence and successfully tracked down a nine-year-old girl. NPTs were able to provide a number of examples where they had been used to assist in compiling community impact assessments.

Work in progress

Neighbourhoods were originally mapped out and profiled in early 2006 and mainly focused on consultation with partners; questionnaires were also sent out to communities and a number of public meetings held. Demographic and crime data were also used. The force recognises that profiles need to be more refined and are undertaking a programme reviewing all profiles.

Although there is some evidence of joint tasking with partners, this is not an integral part of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) process and needs to be introduced in every BCU. The HQ Neighbourhood Policing team have considered how joint partnership can be best served by an updated Essex intelligence model and will be assessing partnership tasking meetings as part of their audit and inspection work.

The principal overarching information-sharing protocol has been reviewed and updated between Essex Police and the county council, and work is now being carried out to review and update protocols at CDRP level.

Joint strategic assessments with partners are not fully in place although one is being trialled at Southend. Partners within county CDRPs have not planned to introduce assessments until early 2008, mainly due to the need to recruit analysts. Essex Police is preparing presentations to senior executives within CDRPs with a view to encouraging them to bring forward this work.

Performance management within Essex is generally robust and this is now being extended towards Neighbourhood Policing. Performance indicators have very recently been published which include the more easily measured indicators of arrests and sanction detections as well as visits to neighbourhoods, engagement with communities and problems identified and solved. Anti-social behaviour is now monitored as part of the force-level 'daily dashboard' meeting chaired by a chief officer, with divisions required to provide weekly returns to ACC (TP).

The force has 60 volunteers in place, 30 have been used to good effect in Burnham on Crouch, assisting by staffing the front desk/town drop-in centre. Targets have been set for district commanders to increase the recruiting and retention of special constables and other volunteers. A target has been set of 1,000 operational special constables in post by 2010.

October 2007

Accommodation is adequate for NPTs. The force property services team is fully engaged in assisting with the identification of new and more appropriately located accommodation for NPTs. The force has seven projects underway looking at relocating teams and a number of these involve partners, eg with Anglia Housing Trust within a priority 1 neighbourhood at Basildon. Consideration is also being given to long-term requirements during the expansion of the M11 corridor and proposed developments such as Shellhaven port.

In July 2007, Western Division will be piloting a training package on community tensions and counter-terrorism within Neighbourhood Policing. This training will be delivered by the Neighbourhood Policing programme team and will equip officers with the skills to engage communities and gather sensitive and valuable information and intelligence without jeopardising relationships. Other specialists, such as Special Branch/intelligence officers and analysts, will also attend the training.

During interviews with Neighbourhood Policing officers, reference was regularly made to frequent abstractions from their areas. An abstraction is classed as any activity that physically takes an officer away from his/her area. The process of monitoring the recently introduced 5% abstraction target is not refined and is reliant upon a manual check of duty books as it is not possible to identify part abstractions. A sheet is completed to identify planned abstractions, ie major events. Despite these abstractions, investigative workloads are considered to be adequate for teams.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the force refines the recording and monitoring of abstractions of Neighbourhood Policing team officers and staff from their neighbourhoods.

When Neighbourhood Policing was first introduced into the force, the ratio of staffing of Neighbourhood Policing against response policing was 70/30. This ratio proved to be ambitious and is being reviewed for every district within the force. At Harlow, the ratio has recently been altered to 45/55 to prevent continual abstraction of officers from their beats on to response work.

Plans are in place to hold workshops in each division between NPTs and divisional senior management teams. Workshops will be based on case studies and allow for the sharing of best practice.

Key individual network lists exist for every neighbourhood. Some are more comprehensive than others and the HQ NPT is reviewing lists with divisions to ensure that they all meet the same standard and extend beyond elected councillors, Homewatch co-ordinators and housing representatives. NAPs, which are predominantly based on KIN lists, also require developing and will be reviewed to ensure wider representation of communities.

The resource allocation to neighbourhoods is also to be reviewed. This is necessary as there was one example of an NSO who had been given two additional wards to cover as part of his neighbourhood – the total residential population for him to cover was in excess of 20,000.

The force has recognised the need to reassess training and is currently engaged with the force training manager to ensure that when the current bespoke training is delivered it is then mainstreamed into the force training plan. Evaluation of training is undertaken during divisional inspections by the HQ NPT, but it needs to be reliable enough to form part of the training cycle.

October 2007

The level of awareness and submission of community intelligence will increase as more NPT members receive the force-delivered training in this area.

Areas for improvement

Some strong examples of engagement with new and emerging communities were seen during the inspection process, eg a Neighbourhood Policing surgery in a pub used by the gay community, the Southend minority forum and NSO objectives linked to identifying minority groups. However, elsewhere in the force emerging communities are simply monitored by officers 'being out on their beats'. There is no formal requirement for officers or PCSOs to demonstrate how they have identified these communities, and there were varying levels of awareness of what this actually meant.

In some areas NPTs were familiar with NIM processes and how intelligence submitted was utilised. They also had a good knowledge of intelligence requirements and the rationale behind control strategies. This was not consistent throughout the force, with some officers demonstrating completely opposite levels of awareness.

A number of concerns were raised by teams, mainly in the rural areas, of lack of access to vehicles, with some examples cited of officers and PCSOs being on duty without the means to get to their beats. An updated policy, awaiting endorsement by chief officers, will go some way to improving the situation as PCSOs will no longer be restricted to a small pool of designated vehicles.

At the launch of Neighbourhood Policing special constables were aligned to NPTs. Although a sound rationale exists for such a move, ensuring resources were directed to priority 1 neighbourhoods, work needs to be done to ensure all special constables are tasked effectively, fully integrated into teams and valued for their contribution.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the force ensures special constables are fully utilised and tasked when performing roles within Neighbourhood Policing teams.

Organised crime and counter-terrorism are not linked to Neighbourhood Policing activity through strategic assessments or control strategies. An integral part of such assessments is intelligence gained from communities (the 'Work in progress' section above details force plans to improve this intelligence aspect).

There is not a consistent application of shifts worked by NSOs throughout the force. Some work day or late shifts designed to ensure maximum coverage. Others have the freedom to select their own shifts. While in practice this freedom provides flexibility to meet communities' needs, the monitoring of hours worked should feature as a routine part of performance management to ensure it is not abused.

To ensure continuity of staff, the force has introduced a policy whereby NSOs will be required to give a commitment to staying 18 months in the role. To ensure a reasonable return on the investment of training, knowledge and skills, this period could be increased by an additional six months; this would be in line with practice in a number of other forces. There also needs to be a succession plan for officers and staff assigned to NPTs.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the force introduces succession planning for officers and staff performing Neighbourhood Policing team roles.

A view expressed by some NSOs and supervisors was that response officers should receive some form of training or formal input as to what their roles entail as they do not understand what NSOs are doing. It was also claimed that not all CID officers use NSOs as a resource although all priority 1 neighbourhoods have a detective constable assigned to them.

Two dedicated trainers have delivered training to Neighbourhood Policing staff including PCSOs. One is being retained as the project nears completion to ensure regular training needs analysis is carried out and gaps are addressed. Despite this, significant variances were found during the inspection with some officers saying they had received good training for Neighbourhood Policing and problem solving and others saying they had had very little or none at all.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Marketing communications – public engagement

PROBLEM:

In the last HMIC assessment recommendations were presented for improving the dissemination of policing information – eg police station opening hours, the mobile telephone numbers for local officers, police station location information, details of how to access local, Neighbourhood Policing advice and information online, to the residents of Essex.

SOLUTION:

To support local understanding and awareness of the rollout of Neighbourhood Policing within Essex a series of initiatives has been implemented.

Throughout the past 12 months Essex Police has launched its public-facing Neighbourhood Policing website, which consists of 144 sections, each devoted to a local NPT. These pages are updated monthly by a nominated police officer in each of the 144 areas. The website was promoted via a press launch, and details of the site are added to all external communications materials. The quality of the 144 micro-sites is audited on a monthly basis by the communications manager.

In addition, Essex Police produced and issued 14 district-level Neighbourhood Policing leaflets in January 2007, which were distributed to every house and business within the county. The leaflets contained information on how to access local policing services, police station opening hours, the Neighbourhood Policing priorities for each district and the mobile telephone numbers for each of the nominated points of contact on the 144 NPTs.

In February 2007, Essex Police launched an internal, intranet-based marketing communications toolkit, which provides front-line officers and staff with access to a range of amendable, Neighbourhood Policing-branded communications tools, such as newsletters, posters, leaflets and presentations. This toolkit was produced with the objective of standardising and controlling the brand presentation of Neighbourhood Policing county-wide.

From January 2006 to March 2007 Essex Police hosted (with partner agencies) 25 county-wide Neighbourhood Policing roadshows and public-facing events, all of which have been hosted by the Chief Constable, the PA chairman and other members of the policing executive.

The communications lead on Neighbourhood Policing at Essex Police is hosting a tactical seminar for Neighbourhood Policing communications practitioners in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

October 2007

OUTCOME(S):

Measurement of the Neighbourhood Policing campaign at this stage is fairly anecdotal, although there has been a noticeable improvement in the response from the public to Neighbourhood Policing at the recent series of PA roadshows, which commenced in February 2007. The positive response demonstrated that the public had noticed a marked change in the number of officers patrolling the streets of Essex, and also that the communications materials – in all their guises – were reaching the public.

Essex Police's integrated communications programme for Neighbourhood Policing picked up a Gold award at the CIPR PRide awards for the delivery of its communications programme in support of Neighbourhood Policing, at the award ceremony in November 2006. The programme has also been shortlisted by the CIPR for an Excellence award at the national awards ceremony, which takes place in September 2007.

FORCE CONTACT: Daniel Lennox-Foreman, Communications Manager – 01245 452439

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Divisional training of community engagement

PROBLEM:

Essex Police implemented Neighbourhood Policing in 2006. The plan was to phase it in by divisions and complete it by 1 June. Training was to be given on division just prior to each division 'going live'. The training was aimed to give everyone an introduction to the aims, three guiding themes and ten principles. This would also include training on the basic structure to be adopted in Essex. Community engagement was not included in this training as it would be phased in once NPTs had been 'bedded in'.

In practice, the divisional commanders 'went live' before their predicted start dates. This meant that many officers did not receive their training until after they had commenced working in their NPTs. Consequently, a common complaint was that the training did not reflect what was actually being done at 'ground level'. Furthermore, in many cases the highest rank to attend the training was at sergeant level. Therefore, those delivering Neighbourhood Policing on the street had a different understanding from those directing them. However, those who did attend the training gave very positive feedback about both content and delivery. Those inspectors who had missed this training attended a one-day training session later in the year to prepare them for the next phase of training.

The problem was to design a training programme that was useful and bespoke for each district, that would involve partners and that would also ensure that as many staff as possible received it.

SOLUTION:

It was recognised that while Essex Police already had partnership working, such work would differ from district to district. Partners should be involved, with guidance and assistance being offered as well as training.

The solution was to adopt an approach similar to the process of being trained. Each division is allocated a trainer from the Neighbourhood Policing project team. They act as the dedicated point of contact for that division and are available to offer advice and assistance

October 2007

on request. These officers visit the divisions on a regular basis to talk with individual officers, policing teams and their senior officers to identify the issues that matter most to them. Together with the district commander, they decide on what training is to be given and to whom. In this way the training can be specific to the needs of each district and assistance or guidance can be given to setting up a workable engagement strategy. The trainers can also meet regularly to help resolve any major issues in much the same way as an NAP would do. Any issues requiring further assistance could be brought back to HQ territorial policing.

OUTCOME(S):

In each case divisional command teams and district commanders have been consulted. This has ensured that a common understanding has been achieved at the highest levels. This has been achieved through either attendance at training sessions or through inputs at command team meetings.

District commanders and their inspectors have been able to identify gaps in their knowledge or understanding and have either had specific training or have attended training sessions for their teams.

Officers have received training that has specific reference to their areas and the trainers have been able to attend meetings, existing and new, to give guidance as to whether or not they meet the purpose of an NAP.

Trainers have also been able to give training and guidance to partners and make recommendations to improve joint working.

Feedback from district commanders, NPT inspectors and Neighbourhood Policing officers has been very positive. One district commander has stated that this training has been excellent and has helped to raise the morale of the NPT officers.

FORCE CONTACT: PS 1802 Faccini – 01245 491491 ext 51916

TITLE: Neighbourhood Policing electronic contact list

PROBLEM:

Call-handling staff all over the county were struggling to find the right neighbourhood specialist, their contact numbers and details of the right neighbourhood, and were providing either no information or incorrect information, failing to deliver at first point of contact.

SOLUTION:

Using the force intranet, the Neighbourhood Policing project created a database for its own purposes to keep an accurate and up-to-date list of NPTs and their contact numbers, including details of their respective neighbourhoods and wards with priority rating, and contact details for neighbourhood inspectors, and their entire neighbourhood family trees. The database also doubled as a document library of best practice. When the team explored the use of the database it discussed the problem set out above. The intranet Neighbourhood Policing project website author suggested moving the existing database into the front end of the project's own website, providing a one-stop-shop for contact details, principally for neighbourhood specialists. The database was renamed Neighbourhood Policing Electronic Contact List. It was set up to provide initial contact details for all

October 2007

neighbourhoods, and the facility to email to anyone in that neighbourhood. To make it fit for purpose, the team organised data files of all existing Essex postcodes to be imported into the database, enabling the first contact staff to search for the right neighbourhood officers by entering the postcode of the member of the public; if mobile numbers cannot get directly through, then the contact staff are able to email the officers. An added benefit is the availability of all neighbourhood information to all staff including chief officers.

OUTCOME(S):

This provided a change in customer service aims, presenting a very positive look and feel, resulting in significant success factors in the 'ACCESS' outcomes in Neighbourhood Policing and, critically, supplying accurate information to the public ensuring compliance with Citizen Focus 10 point plan.

FORCE CONTACT: Sgt 2299 Kevin Whipps – 07890 969087

Performance Management

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

National contextual factors

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

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

Contextual factors

Performance management within the force is clearly evident, with significant focus on crime reduction, sanction detections and arrests. More attention is now being paid to other priorities such as anti-social behaviour and quality of service issues.

The Chief Constable, who is also chair of the ACPO performance committee, has been instrumental in introducing robust management in respect of performance and this is followed through by the rest of the chief officer team.

For a three-month period during late 2006, the chief officer team experienced a number of significant changes, many of which could not have been predicted. Portfolios were adjusted a number of times and at one stage an acting deputy chief constable (DCC) and three acting ACCs were in post. To the credit of the team, performance was maintained throughout this period. Some ground was lost in advancing a number of areas such as Neighbourhood Policing and protecting vulnerable people but given the scale of disruption this is not surprising. Stability returned in early 2007 and the team is making up for lost time.

The vision and priorities for the force are clearly articulated to all officers and staff; investment in fully equipping managers and supervisors so that they can effectively monitor and manage performance will assist in maintaining and improving the current high level of performance.

Strengths

The three-year strategic plan sets out the force priorities and vision. Strong leadership is provided by the chief officer team in sending out consistent messages on force priorities.

October 2007

Staff are familiar with these messages and they stated that the focus was primarily on crime reduction and sanction detections.

The three-year strategy and annual local policing plan are supported by a number of key strategies such as finance, HR and information and communications technology (ICT). The finance strategy is contained within the three-year medium-term financial plan which is updated and presented to chief officer management group (COMG) and the PA during workshops ahead of yearly budget decisions. The HR strategy is also reported on at COMG and is provided with strategic direction by the strategic human resource planning group chaired by either ACC operations support (OS) or the director of finance and administration (DFA). The ICT strategy is linked to the corporate strategy and other plans and the programme of work is subject to close scrutiny by the DCC through the force programme board to ensure ICT supports the force business.

Chief officers hold a force-level strategic tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) meeting to agree force priorities based on the strategic assessment. In line with NIM guidance, a control strategy is prepared and integrated into the force NIM process. National and local priorities are reflected in the control strategy.

Quality of service and customer focus continue but are now receiving even more attention. The appointment of a head of customer service post in November 2006 demonstrates the commitment of the force to improving customer service.

Customer service data is provided to chief officer monthly meetings and at a more tactical level to the fortnightly district commander meetings chaired by ACC (TP). Examples of where survey data has influenced performance are the sharing of best practice from Central Division (not closing incidents until a statement has been taken from a victim of a crime) and from Eastern Division, which had not been performing well in respect of customer follow-up. As a result, the divisions are piloting a system whereby supervisors select one in three crimes and undertake a telephone survey of complainants within seven days of the crime being reported, to ensure appropriate action has been taken by the officer attending.

Feedback from police and community consultation groups (PCCGs) and divisional meetings is considered for the annual plan. Staff associations, including the Police Federation, UNISON and the Superintendents' Association, are fully consulted.

A number of performance management and review processes are integrated with partners, notably local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) and the CPS. LCJB targets are jointly monitored by Essex Police and partners. Offences brought to justice (OBTJ) objectives have been incorporated into all CJU PDRs. Essex Police and CPS performance is monitored during a monthly county-level meeting drawing on data supplied from the prosecution team performance management tool, the Effective Trial Management programme and No Witness No Justice figures.

The DCC chairs the recently introduced monthly performance improvement meeting (MPIM). All the ACCs attend along with divisional commanders, the force analyst and head of inspection and review. Performance is monitored and recent audits and inspections considered. Where necessary, support is provided to assist areas struggling against targets. An example is South Western Division: its performance was below that of other divisions and at the MPIM a decision was taken to provide resources to it from other areas (Operation Sprint).

BCU commanders are held to account by ACC (TP) during the fortnightly BCU commanders' meeting. The agenda features performance, initiatives, best practice, DV and

October 2007

missing persons. One-to-one meetings in addition to PDR meetings are scheduled as required.

A force-level daily dashboard meeting, chaired by a chief officer, is held between 8.30 and 9am. This is a mix of divisional performance review against targets as well as an opportunity for information to be shared on current operational issues, ie major events, high-risk missing persons and DV. These meetings have developed over time and are regarded by senior managers as more supportive than when first introduced. This meeting is regarded as good practice.

Immediately following the daily dashboard meeting, each division holds a daily meeting also lasting for 30 minutes. It is chaired by a member of the senior management team and links into team-level performance, concentrating mainly on the tactical aspects supporting the performance examined in the daily dashboard.

Daily dashboard and divisional meetings were examined by the inspection team during the assessment and found to be well chaired, informative and relevant to force daily business.

Data, including daily crimes against target, is easily accessible via the force intranet and is presented at force, divisional and district level.

Strategy and performance conferences are held every bi-monthly for superintendents and equivalent police staff and above.

The force uses comparative data during force-level performance meetings, at BCU level and between departments. iQuanta data is used by the PA as well as by the force. Essex Police has sent officers to other forces to identify transferable best practice, including Lancashire, Surrey and Dyfed Powys.

There is constructive engagement with the PA and support is provided to enable it to carry out its statutory responsibilities for planning and scrutiny through the policing plan panel, comprising PA members and chief officers. The panel also provides the means to identify, consider and resolve any tensions between national and force priorities.

PA members sit on a number of project boards and are now being aligned to divisions and HQ departments. A number have also attended force performance meetings, ie district commanders. The improved level of knowledge this will bring to members will assist them to hold the force better to account.

Poor performance is identified through the monitoring of personal performance indicators. Although not particularly refined for uniformed officers, they do provide an indicator for supervisors and managers to probe further. The force uses formal unsatisfactory performance procedures where appropriate.

Good performance is recognised through the well publicised ACTION awards scheme, Chief Constable's commendation and letter of appreciation, honorarium and bonus payments and financial ACTION rewards. A budget of £128,000 is held centrally for reward and recognition. A number of divisions have an 'employee of the month' award. This is recognised by staff and could easily be adopted in other BCUs and support divisions.

Essex, as the largest force in the Eastern region, regularly supplies support to other forces. During Operation Sumac, the investigation into the murder of five women in Ipswich, the force was not only quick to offer assistance in the form of resources but also provided support for a considerable time beyond the initial investigation.

October 2007

Other additional demands it has met are Stansted Airport and the six-week period of heightened security during summer 2006, and, for the World Cup, monitoring in excess of one million passengers (82 football-related arrests were made). The force is also active in making preparations for the policing of the 2012 Olympics.

The force is the lead for counter-terrorism in the region and manages the regional Special Branch intelligence cell. The Chief Constable and DCC are regional representatives on ACPO terrorist and allied matters (TAM).

Work in progress

Essex Police has embarked on a strategic initiative with Kent Police to explore ways in which to collaborate in a number of areas such as ports policing, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and air support. This work crosses traditional regional boundaries and will strengthen policing in common areas covering serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism. A recent bid by both forces to be awarded with demonstrator site status by the Home Office was successful.

The force is planning to make activity analysis software (APRAIS) available to divisional commanders, business managers and analysts to allow for comparison of activity analysis (AA) data with other BCUs.

Up to ten workshops are being planned under the ACTION leadership programme with the focus on customer first.

Following a restructure of the corporate development department on 1 April 2007, a new inspection and audit programme is being devised. Work already under way includes the assessment of divisions, based on a risk-assessed approach, using an adapted HMIC Going Local 3 (GL3) methodology.

Areas for improvement

No training is in place to equip inspectors and sergeants (and equivalent police staff) to manage performance effectively. The closest fit is through induction meetings when arriving at a new division and through the PDR process. Similarly, nothing is provided to middle managers or equivalent to prepare them to operate in a performance management culture. Senior leadership development programme (SLDP) modules on managing performance are attended only on a voluntary basis.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the force introduces an appropriate level of training on performance management for all managers and supervisors.

The feeling expressed by many officers and staff interviewed was that only arrests and sanction detections mattered. This is hardly surprising, given the drive and focus in these areas of business. More work needs to be done to share with staff the many different ways in which the force is improving quality of service but also to ensure effective monitoring takes place of high volume work, ie quality of crime reports and statement taking.

Although in practice there is robust performance management within the force, models vary between BCUs and there is not a consistent approach to managing performance or a published framework. A number of supervisors interviewed carry out regular formal

October 2007

assessments of staff in addition to annual and six-monthly PDR meetings. This includes a close examination of arrests, stop searches, sanction detections, timeliness of file submission and quality of files and forms and an informal welfare check. Other supervisors simply carry out cursory checks on officers' trays.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the force identifies and publishes a performance management framework to ensure a consistent approach to the monitoring and managing of performance.

Some officers and staff felt the PDR system was useful; this was not a view shared by the majority of staff during focus visits to a number of divisions and HQ departments. Many stated that the system did not add value and was simply a means to list objectives as opposed to an opportunity to identify development needs to achieve objectives. Quality of the objectives in PDRs varied between divisions.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the force ensures the performance development review process is a meaningful activity with equal emphasis placed on both personal development and objectives.

Members of the Special Constabulary have personal development portfolios but there is no annual process to review them.

It is a Home Office requirement for every force to submit annual activity-based costing (ABC) returns. Owing to staffing issues the 2005/6 return was sent late. The 2006/7 return is on track to be submitted in time.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA : Performance management

TITLE: Monthly performance improvement meeting

PROBLEM:

The force was generating a large amount of performance information without it leading to an end-product that supported operational policing, but this was not presented in full to chief officers. This led to a degree of information overload which failed to underpin strategic management.

SOLUTION:

The Chief Constable redefined chief officer portfolios to clarify ownership of performance areas and also inspections. The Chief Constable required that, along with targeted performance information, the imminence of inspections, their final reports and recommendations became a fixed part of the performance information agenda for chief officer meetings.

The MPIM was introduced, chaired by the DCC and attended by all chief officers and some members of the PA. The performance information unit makes in-depth presentations about performance against all force objectives and operational leads attend as speakers on specific issues of interest; , forensics, arrests and complaints have each been presented as a specific issue. Quantitative and qualitative targeted performance information is presented as exceptional data, both positive and negative, enabling chief officers to capture best practice as well as identify areas for improvement. Chief officers task the development of action plans based upon performance information, assuring its value to the force.

The MPIM receives a report on inspections and the progress of action plans to deliver against areas for improvement at every meeting. Minutes and actions from MPIMs are published on the force intranet which can be accessed by all staff.

OUTCOME(S):

Performance information is better targeted to support progress on force performance.

The monthly meeting focuses the strategic direction of the force clearly upon policing objectives and areas for improvement identified by external audit.

Lines of accountability are clearer and managed more effectively.

FORCE CONTACT: Dick Madden, Head of Compliance and Review – 01245 452218 (direct)

October 2007

INSPECTION AREA: Performance management

TITLE: Management of the external audit process

PROBLEM:

Until recently, and with the exception of baseline assessments, Essex Police had no formal process for the management and co-ordination of external audits conducted by bodies such as HMIC, the Audit Commission or the Health & Safety Executive. Auditors made contact directly with operational leads, which generated successful reviews, but there was no central co-ordination of key issues. There was no formal process to develop action plans to address areas for improvement (AFIs) and hold managers accountable for delivering against AFIs. The force failed to identify or address AFI ahead of inspections and, more importantly, returning inspectors raised concerns that AFIs were not being addressed in a formal and co-ordinated manner after the inspections.

The incoming Chief Constable required the corporate development department (CDD) to develop and implement an effective solution.

SOLUTION:

CDD deployed the head of compliance and review to develop a cohesive approach that would improve the force's management of external audits. A team of two (part-time resources) was appointed to develop a process for the administrative management of inspections and to establish a sound working relationship with all external bodies, thereby creating a clear entry point to the force for all auditors as well as a clear reference point for Essex Police personnel in areas that were to be inspected.

The team, located within the programme and planning unit to place it at the heart of CDD operations, was tasked with:

- representing Essex Police to auditors in a positive, professional and organised manner, demonstrating the value that the force places on inspection;
- developing a process for managing external audits and then managing performance against them;
- generating a diary of all external audits to inform the force;
- communicating with chief officers and key personnel in relation to inspections and their outcomes;
- supporting and conducting pre-inspection to Specific Graded Criteria (SGC), including the research and writing of self-assessments, where required;
- briefing chief officers, enabling them to drive performance and compliance;
- providing a single point of contact able to respond to auditors' demands before, during and after the inspection;
- co-ordinating the programme of visits and interviews;
- ensuring that all papers requested are delivered to the inspection by the deadline, before, during and after the inspection; and
- generating an AFI tracker to drive the force response to AFIs identified in inspections as part of a monthly performance meeting, chaired by chief officers.

OUTCOME(S):

The force manages inspections professionally and has a more effective working relationship with external auditors as a result. This cohesive approach delivers clearer co-ordinated communication between key personnel and has enabled performance to be managed more effectively and efficiently at all levels.

A single document incorporates all AFIs; lead responsibility for responding to AFIs; and timescales for implementation. The AFI tracker is presented monthly to chief officers, enabling operational leads to be held accountable directly to chief officers. The AFI tracker is reviewed fortnightly within CDD.

The AFI tracker is shared with Essex Police Authority, creating a better relationship with members while also creating a conduit for more effective involvement in overseeing the response to inspections and participating in operational progress.

The force has benefited from the new process and welcomes inspection as a positive contribution to continuous improvement.

FORCE CONTACT: Dick Madden, Head of Compliance and Review, – 01245 452218 (direct)

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

National contextual factors

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

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

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

Contextual factors overview

Following the 2005/06 grading of Poor for protecting vulnerable people (PVP), the force put in place a comprehensive recovery plan. This included an external review of the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) as well as an examination of the structure supporting the four functions within PVP. As a result, chief officer portfolios have been adjusted and a number of programmes of work have followed. ACC protective services (PS) has policy responsibility for child abuse, DV, public protection and missing persons. He is the chief officer with line management responsibility for child abuse as well as very high and high risk registered sex offenders (RSOs). ACC (TP) has chief officer line management responsibilities (and service delivery) for DV, low and medium risk RSOs and missing persons investigations. Progress in all four areas has been made but there is still more to be done, especially around service delivery of DV.

Strengths

All staff interviewed were clearly dedicated to their work and many impressed the inspection team with their level of knowledge, professionalism and commitment within these areas.

There are clear signs that the force is making progress throughout all four areas of PVP with each having an identified chief officer lead.

An additional detective chief inspector post has been introduced to provide a professional lead for public protection, DV and missing persons. A separate detective chief inspector takes the lead for CAIUs.

Work in progress

A number of accountability frameworks and policies for protecting vulnerable people, eg DV and missing persons, are currently being reviewed to ensure that new structures and systems are incorporated into guidance.

Areas for improvement

DV does not feature as a matter of course within NIM-based processes.

There was little evidence of any proactive work being undertaken in CAIU and DV areas. The basis for any such work will be dependent on good quality products from departmental analysts and the capacity within teams, especially DV, to deliver.

Formal links need to be introduced between DV and CAIUs. This will ensure the prompt allocation of investigations where disputes arise over which team takes the lead role.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

National contextual factors

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

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

Contextual factors

The force CAIUs are managed by a dedicated detective chief inspector. CAIUs are located at six areas within the force. Staff are predominantly trained detectives and cover core hours 9am to 10pm Monday to Sunday with a detective inspector providing out-of-hours cover. CAIUs investigate allegations of child abuse, including suspicious deaths and offences taking place within the family. Investigations are also carried out where the alleged offender is entrusted with the care of the child at the time of the offence (eg babysitter, schoolteacher, youth worker) and in any previous cases where the victims are now adults but the abuse occurred while he/she was a child.

Following an external review of CAIUs in 2006, funding was identified to increase the numbers of staff and supervisors in this high risk area of business.

Strengths

ACC (PS) is chief officer lead for child abuse, leads on a programme of work associated with this function and has been visible in visiting CAIUs within the force. He also co-chairs Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

October 2007

Policy and procedures on child abuse investigation are consistent with ACPO guidance on investigating child abuse and safeguarding children. Policies are accessible via the force intranet. Joint working protocols with other agencies are followed.

The detective chief inspector in command of the CAIU sits on all three local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) for Essex, Thurrock and Southend. He is also chair of the child death review workstream.

Staff described their current workloads as manageable. Flexibility in the use of resources was evident, with staff from the Chelmsford CAIU assisting Colchester during times of peak demand. Staff are not routinely abstracted to duties outside their core function.

Supervision is intrusive but supportive. Every two weeks a work review for every investigator is carried out by the dedicated supervisor. Cases are examined and actions set. Supervisors monitor the timeliness of files and assess the quality of investigations; this includes sitting in during criminal interviews under caution and listening to tape recorded interviews of offenders and victims. Each file submitted for closure or disposal is assessed by a supervisor. Staff described the level of supervision as very good.

Officers from the CAIU fully contribute to meetings/discussions with social services. Investigators attend all initial case conferences which are chaired by Social Care from the local social services. Copies of minutes from case conferences are kept with case files in CAIU offices.

CAIU investigators will attend review conferences only if there has been police contact with families since the original referral or if specifically asked by a partner agency.

Job descriptions of child abuse investigators and supervisors are up to date and reflect the role. Job descriptions are accessible via the force intranet.

All child abuse investigators undertake the initial crime investigators development programme (ICIPD) if not already qualified when appointed to the team. All staff are trained in achieving best evidence.

The force has developed a specialist course tailored to child abuse investigation work. This course has also been attended by specialists from other forces.

Mandatory referrals are made for staff to visit occupational health twice a year; a spreadsheet is used to identify when visits are due.

Work in progress

As a result of the external review of CAIUs in 2006, a growth bid was made for additional resources. This was successful and on 1 April 2007 the establishment was increased by one police staff post, two detective constables and five detective sergeants. Recruitment is currently under way for the sergeant posts.

The written accountability framework for child abuse investigation is currently being reviewed to reflect changes in the protective services command.

Areas for improvement

From April 2007 the specialist child abuse development programme will be delivered to all new staff. This should be extended to those staff who have worked in the teams for some time and would ensure a common level of understanding among all investigators.

October 2007

Although child abuse is included within the Crime Division annual plan and the protective services programme of work, it does not feature with NIM-based business processes.

Formal links need to be introduced between DV and CAIUs. This will ensure the prompt allocation of investigations where disputes arise over which team takes the lead role.

There is little proactive work being undertaken and no analysis of repeat offenders or victims.

A backlog of cases within the high-tech crime unit regarding computer investigation exists, up to six months in some cases. To mitigate any risk in during these delays, cases involving professionals and children (eg teachers, healthcare workers) are fast-tracked.

The force uses the PROtect computer system to record initial reports of child abuse. Investigation logs, however, are handwritten and the only way to access intelligence for a live operation out of hours would be to call in an off-duty member of staff from the CAIU to access a file.

Although referrals from non-CAIU officers to the team can be made via telephone, email or from the force command and control system some are paper-based; consequently, delays can be experienced in referrals being received by CAIU staff.

Although first- and second-line supervision of investigations is good, the force has not introduced a range of personal performance indicators for CAI staff. It is waiting for national developments in this area before progressing.

At Chelmsford CAIU, staff do not have access to an adequate number of computer workstations. Staff regularly have to wait for a workstation to come free before they can carry out their work.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	POOR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

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

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

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

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

Contextual factors

The investigation and associated support activity around DV for Essex was identified in HMICs baseline assessment 2005/06 as requiring significant improvement. While it is clear that some progress has been made, this is still an area requiring more work. When the areas listed under work in progress and areas for improvement have been delivered, the force will have achieved well above minimum standards.

In early 2006 the force introduced domestic violence and hate crime units (DVHCUs) for every division. Policy set out resource allocations with staff allocated to either investigative or support roles for DV as well as hate crime.

Although there was a force policy on dealing with DV, DVHCUs evolved over time without any coherent plan. Consequently, service delivery was inconsistent across the force.

October 2007

There is clear evidence of chief officer drive to improve the service provided, but this will require resources to ensure various workstreams are introduced in a timely manner.

Strengths

ACC (PS) has responsibility for policy surrounding DV and ACC (TP) for delivery of services. ACC (TP) chairs the force domestic abuse working group which is progressing a wide range of actions around DV. Officers interviewed held the view that ACC (TP) was demonstrating clear leadership in this area, stating she was driving changes and improvements through.

DV features within the Essex Police local policing plan and details the force commitment to working with partners as well as new targets for sanction detections of DV (61%) and an increase in percentage of arrests made following police attendance at DV incidents (target 40%). It is a force requirement that each annual plan at BCU level contains performance objectives in relation to domestic abuse.

Essex Against Domestic Violence is a quarterly strategic group initiated by Essex Police. The group brings together all relevant agencies and partners (police, local authorities, voluntary agencies, women's aid, probation and CPS) and has not only improved communications but has also produced work resulting in the introduction of dedicated DV courts at Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood in April 2007.

Since the introduction of the new DV court, the force vulnerable victims co-ordinator has introduced and chairs multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) in Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood. Other partners that attend include: probation, A & E safeguarding nurses, health, children and social care professionals, independent DV advisers, and people working in women's aid, housing, youth offending teams, the court service and criminal justice mental health. The top ten very high risk DV cases are discussed at this panel which is fully minuted. Cases can be referred into the panel by any agency.

Force policy on DV, which incorporates ACPO guidance, is accessible via the force intranet. Uniform officers interviewed during the inspection were fully aware of the positive action policy surrounding DV, including actions to be taken at the scene. Referrals of any children found at the scene of DV are made to the CAIU by DVHCU staff.

Reports of DV to the force are either allocated a 'high' or 'priority' deployment by the force information room (FIR). Call-handling staff in FIR have access to drop-down menus containing standard operating procedures for DV calls and leading operators through a checklist, including what to record on the call log, units despatched, previous calls to the address, intelligence and PROtect checks. DV incidents are flagged appropriately on the command and control system with only FIR authorised to close an incident. Accountability processes have recently been improved within FIR regarding DV incidents.

DV features as part of the force-level daily dashboard and daily divisional meetings. Domestic abuse is the subject of daily performance monitoring as new working practices are introduced. At daily meetings each division provides an update regarding key performance indicators as follows:

- number of incidents attended;
- number of forms recording DV incidents (DV1s) received by the DVHCU;
- number of DV1s waiting to be input on a daily and weekly basis;
- crimes recorded;
- arrests;
- arrest disposals; and
- risk assessment levels.

October 2007

Monthly figures are also examined by ACC (TP) to ensure that any trends identified through performance meetings are addressed.

DVLOs at Central Area arranged a multi-agency briefing day for DVHCU staff and partners from other agencies including social services. Areas covered were new legislation and the sharing of best practice.

As part of the inspection, feedback was sought from women's aid groups. On the whole responses were encouraging with positive comments made about the new DV1 forms and a perception that DV is now taken more seriously by officers.

After some delay, an updated domestic violence form DV1 was introduced in June 2007. This form is completed at the scene of an incident by an officer and contains categories for completion to identify risk. Risk assessment is carried out by DV staff.

At Harlow the operations superintendent has set a standard for the quality of initial DV investigations. Where investigations fail to meet this standard, the file is returned to the original officer. This has made a significant improvement in the quality of work submitted. Each BCU has an investigative support unit with responsibility for quality assurance of investigations including DV.

Staff from occupational health have attended a number of DVHCUs to offer and provide welfare support to investigating officers and liaison officers.

Work in progress

An accountability framework has recently been written. The document is going through the consultation phase and should be adopted by July 2007.

Job descriptions for DVCHU staff are being updated and will be published in July 2007.

A five-day training programme is scheduled for all DVHCU staff commencing September 2007.

A review is being carried out to determine the precise number of investigators and support officers required. This is necessary owing to an under resourcing of the function at the moment. The mandate for officers from within DVHCUs to investigate lower-level hate crime detracts from their capacity to deal with higher-level DV. The new policy will clarify the direct specialist responses for high risk cases and the support for lower risk cases (see also, Areas for improvement).

There is little proactive work being taken around DV and more effort needs to be put into preventing DV. ACC (TP) is sponsoring analytical work on DV victims with a view to providing bespoke action plans.

Training to familiarise officers with the new DV1 risk assessment booklet has not been consistent. A number of divisions have included DV in first aid training days to ensure all staff receive a minimum input. The effectiveness of cascade training via divisional supervisors has been variable.

Areas for improvement

At the time of inspection there were significant backlogs in most DVHCUs of DV1 forms. Although supervisors at DVHCUs were retrieving high risk cases for fast tracking, a delay of sometimes up to several weeks in entering offender and victim details on to PROtect has meant that valuable intelligence was not available and therefore increased the risk posed to victims. The force has responded by temporarily seconding staff to clear the backlog but a

October 2007

more sustainable solution is required. This should follow on from the review of staffing levels as highlighted above.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the force ensures a sustainable solution is introduced to ensure DV1 forms are submitted and processed in a timely manner.

Workloads are inconsistent between DVHCUs; in the main this is due to shortages of staff with some DVHCUs well below establishment. A number of staff interviewed gave examples of high levels of work and although supervisors sympathised they simply allocated more work. Some supervisors carry an excessive workload and do not have the capacity to carry out regular and intrusive supervision within DVHCUs. The force is aware of this issue and it is featured within the DV working group.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the force reviews/increases capacity within domestic violence and hate crime units to ensure adequate numbers of staff are in place to investigate high risk cases of domestic violence and to carry out proactive work.

Some divisional officers interviewed felt they did not know enough about the DV profile of their beat areas and wanted to have quick access to DV intelligence, including addresses and information about potential vulnerable and repeat victims.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That the force introduces mechanisms to ensure safer neighbourhood team officers are made aware of the domestic violence profile on their neighbourhoods (to include repeat victims and offenders).

A number of officers had limited awareness of DV specialist units, who they were and the role they performed.

The quality of statements taken by uniformed officers needs to be improved.

The PROtect system is not routinely used to record details of investigations; therefore only brief information is available to inform live enquiries (via FIR) unless call-out procedures of DV staff are implemented.

There was no evidence of DV being mainstreamed into NIM processes and it did not feature as part of a divisional level 2 tactical TCG meeting that was observed by the inspection team. DV does not feature in its own right in control strategies but is incorporated within violent crime and the Essex local policing plan.

October 2007

Domestic incident to crime conversion rates vary significantly across the force area from 17% in Tendring to over 40% at Western Thurrock and Southend. There has not been any work undertaken to identify why there is such a variation.

Formal links need to be introduced between DV and CAIUs. This will ensure the prompt allocation of investigations where disputes arise over which team takes the lead role.

The investigation of domestic rape is not standardised across the force. Insufficient officers with appropriate skill sets are employed within the force, leading to some cases being dealt with by DVHCUs and others by mainstream CID officers.

Victim personal statements are not used as a matter of course during DV investigations and were described as 'sporadic'.

Special constables receive around two hours input in DV during initial training but this is not refreshed as they continue their service.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Protecting vulnerable people

TITLE: Domestic abuse – recording and investigation

PROBLEM:

For the past ten years the force has had a policy in relation to recording details collected at the scene of any domestic incident and the minimum standard of investigation, whether or not an offence has been committed.

Since the inception in July 2005 of the DVHCUs and a specific database in which all domestic incidents are recorded, it had become apparent that the standard of completion of the form and combined risk assessment was poor and that in many cases the forms were not being completed either at the scene or subsequently.

Specific areas of concern:

- officers not completing the risk assessment with the victim/complainant at the time of the incident;
- officers not completing a new form every time they attended the same address;
- officers not checking on the welfare of children and identifying whether they had witnessed the incident; and
- officers not carrying out an appropriate level of investigation for all incidents.

An internal review of the current position within the force revealed that it was in a potentially vulnerable position should a domestic homicide occur at an address an officer had previously attended. With the advent of domestic homicide reviews and the extension of Part 8 child death reviews to include parents, there was considerable scope for risk within the organisation.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission investigations and stated cases concerning risk assessment also indicated an unacceptable level of risk to the organisation if it was shown that officers were not completing the risk assessment with the complainant on every occasion.

SOLUTION:

A proposal was put forward to create a new domestic abuse 'toolkit' which would contain all the paperwork required to be completed at an incident whether a crime was identified or not. The only form not contained within the toolkit was an MG11 as officers were expected to these with them.

Extensive consultation resulted in the revised document containing several stages, but with only five extra boxes to be checked if the case was not a crime. In theory the toolkit should not have taken any longer to complete than previously. The toolkit contained:

- a checklist for completion at ALL incidents;
- a checklist for completion when investigating a crime – to be detached and attached to the crime report;
- an information sheet for complainants/victims – detachable;
- family composition and occurrence sections;
- a risk indicator and guide to potential actions for officers to take to protect the victim;

October 2007

- an MG2 (application for special measures) – detachable;
- a victim personal statement – detachable;
- a medical consent form – detachable; and
- a security check (copy to be given to the victim).

The toolkits were to be corporately badged to provide a professional appearance and to indicate to staff the importance of the incidents they were attending.

By completing all the relevant sections of the toolkit, officers would ensure they carried out the minimum standard of investigation/enquiry expected of them, thus providing a consistent level of service across the county.

By completing the risk indicator with the victim and obtaining the victim's signature, they would be able provisionally to estimate the level of risk to a victim and so carry out basic safety measures and alert the DVHCU staff or senior officer to the potential danger for very high risk victims.

These measures would improve service to victims, provide a consistency of approach and reduce the level of vulnerability to the force in the event of any subsequent domestic homicide.

OUTCOME(S):

There have been some 'snagging' problems arising from minor issues with the layout of the forms which will be rectified for the next print run.

The most common comment has been that it now takes longer to fill in the form for non-crime incidents; however, on talking to staff, it is clear that this is because they are now completing the forms more accurately and carrying out the required checks and enquiries at scene.

The standard of information coming into the DVHCUs has improved and the provisional assessment of risk is allowing Domestic Abuse Liaison Officers (DALOs) to target those high and very high risk victims at a glance rather than having to check all the reports received to carry out that first assessment themselves. This gives time for the specialist part of the risk assessment process to be carried out and for safety measures to be planned with victims in a timely manner.

Information from children about whether they have witnessed an incident has improved and this information is passed on to social care agencies for their assessment.

The publicity surrounding the domestic toolkits has highlighted the issue of DV across the force and the numbers of forms being received by the DVHCUs has significantly increased, as has their quality. Partner agencies are enthusiastic about the packs, which they see as being beneficial in providing immediate support to victims, facilitating improved safety planning and effective information sharing.

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

National contextual factors

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

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

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

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

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

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

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

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

October 2007

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

Contextual factors

Within Essex Police there are different lines of command for the monitoring of sex offenders. ACC (PS) holds the portfolio for public protection and is the ultimate line manager for HQ-based officers who monitor very high and high risk registered sex offenders (RSOs). ACC (TP) is responsible for divisional-based specialist officers who monitor medium and low risk offenders. This system appeared to be working but, in the view of HMIC, the accountability monitoring of sex offenders could be moved to just one ACC in order to streamline lines of accountability and minimise risk.

Staff interviewed were professional and gave a good explanation of where risks lay within their area of business and of how these risks were managed.

Strengths

Any application for disclosure of an RSO has to be made through ACC (PS). Evidence was produced of the high level of detail and scrutiny among officers from the HQ team and is in regular contact with PPU officers, not least because of disclosure issues.

Essex contribute fully with partners in the area of public protection, ACC (PS) co-chairs the multi agency Strategic Management Board.

A comprehensive force policy details levels of accountability for the monitoring and supervision of RSOs. The policy includes the roles of HQ and divisional public protection units (PPUs) as well as guidance on disclosure, monitoring visits, ownership of offenders and an outline of various prevention orders. Policy is readily available via the force intranet.

Resources dedicated to the management of sex offenders have increased. The force provided an two additional monitoring officer posts as part of the PVP recovery plan.

The HQ team is comprised of a dedicated supervisor and five monitoring officers (including one police staff). The monitoring officers carry a workload averaging 25 very high and high risk RSOs each. Each of the five divisions has a supervisor (who also carries divisional intelligence unit responsibilities) and two dedicated monitoring officers, each carrying on average 60 medium and low offenders.

A multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) manager, jointly funded by the police and probation services, is employed and chairs MAPPA meeting. He has been provided with the delegated authority from both services to hold attendees to account.

Appropriate attendance is given to MAPPA levels 1, 2 and 3 meetings. All meetings are minuted and attendance is monitored. Where offenders fall outside MAPPA criteria, nominal records are created on the intelligence system and details shared with social services where appropriate.

October 2007

Monitoring officers are trained for their role and evidence was provided of new staff being allocated relevant courses. All officers spoken to were up to date with unarmed defence tactic training and stated risk assessments were carried out prior to every home visit.

At the time of inspection, all visits were up to date. Owing to the limitations of ViSOR (the Violent and Sex Offenders Register), the force has adopted a visit spreadsheet introduced by Basildon monitoring officers. This good practice has not only assisted with the identification of due visits but has also aided ACC (PS) to monitor performance.

ViSOR is used by monitoring officers to record RSOs. Visits and any new information on RSOs is entered on to ViSOR and risk regularly assessed using the risk assessment tool RM2k.

Entries on ViSOR are cross-referenced to the force command and control system, Steria Storm. This allows for any further intelligence checks to be made during live incidents as well as for intelligence to be added to ViSOR.

Audit and quality control are built into the force inspection system. The public protection function is inspected yearly with a detailed examination of ViSOR, PPU (public protection unit) files and level of integration with partners.

Work in progress

Policy has been changed in that PPU staff will now have mandatory six-month referrals to occupational health.

A growth bid has been approved for a deputy MAPPA manager in order to provide resilience and to deal with an increase in demand. This post will also be jointly funded with probation.

Work has recently been started to review job descriptions and role profiles of monitoring officers working at HQ and based within divisions.

Officers performing the role of monitoring officers are not currently vetted to full Criminal Records Bureau status. The issue of vetting for officers in the unit is currently being reviewed by the force

Areas for improvement

There is split responsibility between HQ and divisions for the management of sex offenders, depending on the level of indicated risk. Monitoring officers report through line management to either ACC (PS) or ACC (TP). Risk could be reduced and accountability increased if ownership rested with just one ACC.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That the force reviews the shared ownership between chief officers on the service delivery of monitoring registered sex offenders.

In one division, owing to staff shortages, single-crewed visits had been made on monitoring visits to RSOs. From records inspected, this was the exception as opposed to the norm and was not in accordance with force policy.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

National contextual factors

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

Contextual factors

From a national perspective, a significant number of murder enquiries commence as a person reported missing. It is imperative therefore, that all missing persons enquiries are dealt with in accordance with national policy and guidance.

Within Essex, policies and practice are documented and are currently being refreshed as part of the reviewing of protective services. A new computerised missing persons system, Community Policing and Case Tracking (COMPACT), is being rolled out throughout the force. This system will ensure more effective recording, investigating, managing and auditing of missing persons enquiries.

The inspection team found a good level of knowledge among staff during the inspection of missing persons; this was reassuring given the high risk nature of this work.

Strengths

ACC (PS) holds the strategic responsibility for policy concerning missing persons with ACC (TP) responsible for service delivery for the investigation of missing persons. The level of scrutiny by chief officers and senior managers is significant and is reflected in an awareness among officers of policy and procedure.

Until COMPACT is fully rolled out and to minimise risk, the force-level daily dashboard and divisional daily meetings examine high risk missing persons. The management of missing persons features during fortnightly meetings chaired by ACC (TP) for divisional commanders.

Policies and procedures (although being updated to reflect changes in local procedures) are consistent with ACPO guidance.

October 2007

Missing persons enquiries are, in the first instance, brought by the FIR inspector to the attention of divisional duty inspectors who, in turn, allocate them to a neighbourhood support officer. After completion of the necessary documentation and following initial steps, ie house search, the reporting officer completes a risk assessment which is then ratified by the inspector. Enquiries then continue. Missing persons feature within NIM business processes.

Uniformed officers interviewed during the inspection gave an encouraging response as to how they recorded and investigated reports of missing persons. They were up to speed in relation to force policy and initial actions to be taken at the scene.

At a force level, missing persons audit quality and control now feature within the recently introduced divisional inspections. Each division has an audit manager with missing persons processes forming part of the internal inspection process.

An element of multi-agency work is carried out mainly during the investigative stages of missing persons but it could be more widespread. Links have been forged with NHS mental health/elderly person care teams and social care teams and their expertise is being used to provide background knowledge on persons missing from residential/care homes.

All instances where missing persons are found dead are the subject of a case review by a senior investigating officer (SIO).

Work in progress

Missing persons investigations are based on a paper-based system. The force recognises the limitations and risks associated with such a method and have procured the COMPACT electronic recording and management system. This system is compatible with systems used in adjoining forces and is being introduced at Chelmsford and Maldon with plans to extend it to the rest of the force, subject to user testing.

No formalised problem solving is in place regarding regular missing persons from children's homes. This would be of use, especially in the case of a known trend in South Eastern Division which relates to asylum seekers entering children's homes as a means of moving from custodial arrangements and then disappearing into the community. A draft protocol has been prepared for Essex Safeguarding Children Board to address this issue.

A working group has been introduced by ACC (TP) to develop and review practice and procedure around missing persons. This includes the protocol for the management of multi-agency responses to reports of missing persons and a written accountability framework, and will take into consideration new systems such as COMPACT.

The force strategic policy has been reviewed and awaits ACC (PS) policy group sign off. New policy will state that high risk missing persons will be reviewed at 24 hours and 72 hours by a member of the divisional command team. At seven days a review will be carried out by an SIO and this will be followed by further reviews. If a missing persons enquiry is allocated to a major incident team, reviews will follow the standard review periods.

Areas for improvement

A number of missing persons forms were audited during the inspection. Although, in the main, enquiries were completed satisfactorily, there were a number of entries on forms that were ambiguous in that they implied actions had been carried out as opposed to explicitly stating whether or not an action had been completed and signed off. No evidence was found of risk being regularly reviewed and documented.

No formal analysis has been commissioned to look at past or current trends relating to missing persons to identify opportunities for proactive and/or preventative work.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the force carries out analysis to inform proactive and preventative work around missing persons.

Officers transferring into Essex as constables or as supervisors do not receive any training on missing persons procedures within the force.

Recommendations

Neighbourhood Policing

Recommendation 1

That the force refines the recording and monitoring of abstractions of Neighbourhood Policing team officers and staff from their neighbourhoods.

Recommendation 2

That the force ensures special constables are fully utilised and tasked when performing roles within Neighbourhood Policing teams.

Recommendation 3

That the force introduces succession planning for officers and staff performing Neighbourhood Policing team roles.

Performance management

Recommendation 4

That the force introduces an appropriate level of training on performance management for all managers and supervisors.

Recommendation 5

That the force identifies and publishes a performance management framework to ensure a consistent approach to the monitoring and managing of performance.

Recommendation 6

That the force ensures the performance development review process is a meaningful activity with equal emphasis placed on both personal development and objectives.

Protecting vulnerable people

Recommendation 7

That the force ensures a sustainable solution is introduced to ensure DV1 forms are submitted and processed in a timely manner.

Recommendation 8

That the force reviews/increases capacity within domestic violence and hate crime units to ensure adequate numbers of staff are in place to investigate high risk cases of domestic violence and to carry out proactive work.

Recommendation 9

That the force introduces mechanisms to ensure safer neighbourhood team officers are made aware of the domestic violence profile on their neighbourhoods (to include repeat victims and offenders).

Recommendation 10

That the force reviews the shared ownership between chief officers on the service delivery of monitoring registered sex offenders.

Recommendation 11

That the force carries out analysis to inform proactive and preventative work around missing persons.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

AA	activity analysis
ABC	activity-based costing
ACC (OS)	assistant chief constable (operations support)
ACC (PS)	assistant chief constable (protective series)
ACC (TP)	assistant chief constable (territorial policing)
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ACPO (TAM)	Association of Chief Police Officers (terrorist and allied matters)
AFI	area for improvement
ANPR	automatic number plate recognition
APA	Association of Police authorities
ASB	anti-social behaviour
ASBO	anti-social behaviour order

B

BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic

C

CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CDD	corporate development department
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CIPR	Chartered Institute of Public Relations
CMU	Crime Management Unit
COMG	chief officer management group
COMPACT	Community Policing and Case Tracking
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service

D

DALO	domestic abuse liaison officer
DCC	deputy chief constable
DFA	director of finance and administration
DV	domestic violence
DVHCU	domestic violence and hate crime unit

F

FIR	force immigration room
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H

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HR	human resources

I

ICIPD	Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme
ICT	information and communications technology

J

JAG	joint action group
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K

KIN	key individual network
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L

LCJB	local criminal justice board
LSCB	local safeguarding children board

M

MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	multi-agency risk assessment conference
MPIM	monthly performance improvement meeting

N

NAP	neighbourhood action panel
NIM	National Intelligence Model
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing team
NSO	neighbourhood specialist office

O

OBTJ	offences brought to justice
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P

PA	Police Authority
PCCG	police and community consultation group
PCSO	police community support officer
PDR	performance development review
PEPYS	Proactive Essex Police Youth Strategy
PPU	public protection unit
PVP	protecting vulnerable people

Q

QoSC	quality of service commitment
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R

RSO	registered sex offender
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S

SARA	scanning, analysis, response, assessment
SGC	specific grading criteria
SIO	senior investigating officer
SLDP	senior leadership development programme
SMAART	Southend multi-agency anti-social behaviour reaction team
SPI	statutory performance indicator
SSP	safer school partnership

T

TCG	tasking and co-ordination group
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V

ViSOR	Violent and Sex Offenders Register
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