



MERSEYSIDE POLICE

23 – 26 FEBRUARY 2004

POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER

COMPLIANCE REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a Police National Computer (PNC) Compliance Inspection of Merseyside Police between 23rd and 26th February 2004.
- 1.1.2 Merseyside Police was selected for inspection as part of the annual inspection plan. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors adopted a risk-based approach to the plan using the monthly statistics information supplied by PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation) on Force performance in relation to targets set by ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers). The rationale for Merseyside's selection are discussed further in section 2.6 of this report, 'Results'.
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from Strategic, PNC and customer level management, and users at Force Headquarters and at two of six BCUs (referred to as 'Division'). These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Merseyside Police serves a population of approximately 1.4 million. This population is largely concentrated in the city of Liverpool which suffers from some large areas of socioeconomic deprivation. Amongst its other challenges it also plays host to two Premiership football clubs and three universities. The Force is divided into six divisions: North Liverpool, South Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens, Knowsley and Wirral. Each is commanded by a Chief Superintendent who is responsible for the overall policing and management of the area. Some of the area commands within the force are very large. Indeed, Liverpool North has in excess of 800 staff (police officers, support staff and members of the Special Constabulary). The six areas deliver policing services via neighbourhood policing units of which there are forty-six across the Force.
- 1.2.2 The Force is headed by the chief officer group, led by the Chief Constable, supported by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), four Assistant Chief Constables (ACC) and a Director of Finance. The Force strength comprises approximately 4,400 full-time equivalent police officers and 1,500 police staff
- 1.2.3 With regard to the input of data on the PNC, the focus of this inspection, Custody officers create an offender record on the ICJS (Integrated Criminal Justice system) and arresting officers are responsible for completing offender details. This system interfaces with the PNC to create an Arrest Summons record having first been validated by the PNC Bureau.

- 1.2.4 The Force has a central PNC Bureau, which is divided into seven teams.
- The ICJS Validation Team works from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and is responsible for dealing with errors on the ICJS reports before they interface to the PNC.
 - The PNC Phoenix Team is responsible for updating Wanted Missing, Disqualified Driver and vehicle records and works on a 24/7 basis.
 - The PNC Verification Team review Impending Prosecutions held on the PNC, perform Back Record Conversion and undertake other administrative tasks such as handling correspondence and responding to solicitors' letters.
 - The QUEST Keyword Team is responsible for inputting and ensuring the quality of keywording of modus operandi (MO) which are required to enhance QUEST searches, and also has responsibility for updating the sex offender register.
 - The Bail Conditions Team is responsible for the input of all court bail conditions and works until 11pm each weekday.
 - The Court Results Team inputs and updates results from each of the six local Magistrates Courts and the local Crown Court.
- 1.2.5 In addition, The Force Control Rooms are able to update vehicle reports onto the PNC and have enquiry access to the other facilities held on the system. All other updates must be performed by the PNC Bureau. The PNC enquiry facility is available throughout the Force, with training being provided to officers and police staff who can demonstrate a need to have it. The QUEST search facility is provided by intelligence units, Force analysts and the PNC Bureau. VODS searches are undertaken by the PNC Bureau, the Vehicle Crime Group and Area analysts.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A full inspection was carried out covering the HMIC PNC Compliance Protocol sections of; Leadership; Policy & Strategy; People; Partnerships & Resources; Processes and Results.
- 1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of;
- **Green** - Comprehensive evidence of good performance and effective processes. Good-to-strong positive result trends over three years.
 - **Yellow** – Evidence of average/above average performance and effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive. Positive result trends, performance not on target but heading in the right direction.
 - **Orange** - Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others. No better than fair – typically below average - result trends. Performance not on target and not improving.

- **Red** - No or limited evidence of effective activity. Either no results available or key aspects of performance are comparatively poor – bottom quartile, where this can be quantified - and/or deteriorating markedly.

1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with documentation to support their adherence to the protocols. This was followed up by a visit to the force with HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducting interviews with key staff. The visit to the force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection based upon reality checks. These included; reviewing PNC data against source documentation on the ICJS (arrest data and warrants) and checks against user access groups.

1.3.4 Using the evidence gathered during each stage of the inspection, this report has been produced based upon the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) format.

1.4 Current Performance

1.4.1 On 27th April 2000, ACPO Council accepted the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling;

- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Relevancy

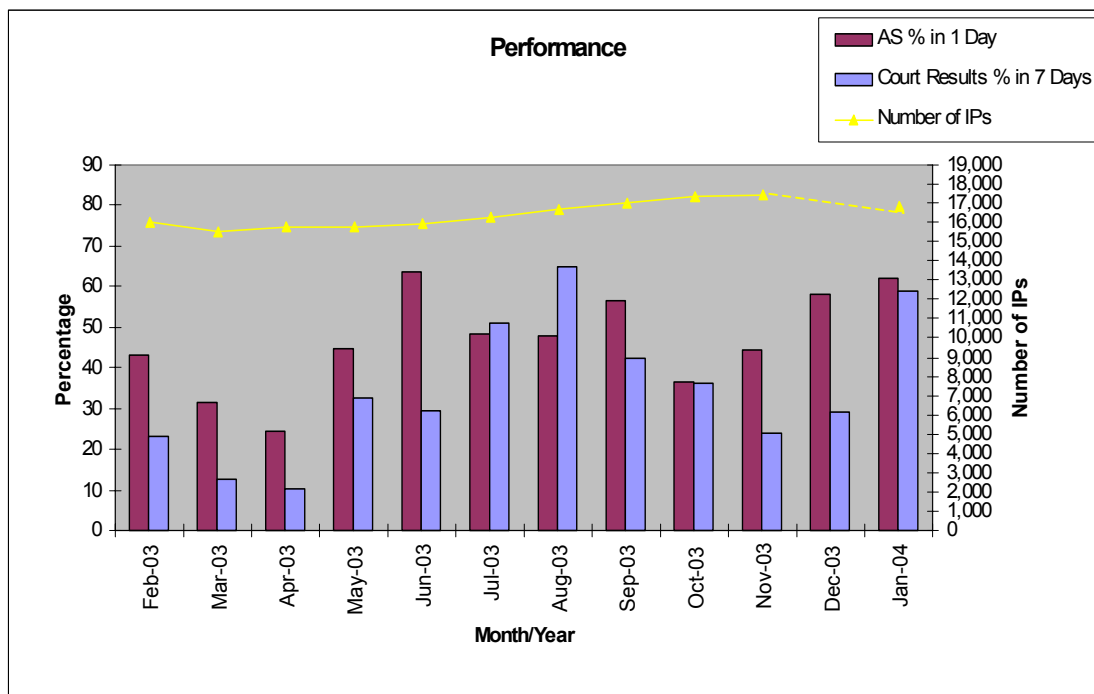
1.4.2 The strategy is owned by ACPO but is also reliant on other partners taking responsibility for key actions within the strategy. The partners include; Centrex; HMIC; Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and individual forces.

1.4.3 With regards to individual forces, a number of performance indicators (PIs) specifically for PNC data standards were set. Each force has a responsibility to achieve the targets set by the PIs in order to improve their position for each of the aspects mentioned above. The key PIs of the strategy are as follows: -

- i. Arrest/Summons – 90% of cases to be entered within 24 hours (where forces are using skeleton¹ records as initial entry, full update must be achieved within 5 days)
- ii. Bail Conditions – Entry of Police Bail within 24 hours
- iii. Court Case Results – 100% to be entered within 72 hours of coming into police possession. (Courts have their own target of three days for the delivery of data to the police, therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 7 days, to take account of weekends and bank holidays)

¹ This is used to describe those Arrest/Summons reports that only contain the minimum amount of information that is required to register the record on the system

- 1.4.4 Merseyside Police made the decision to input full arrest/summons reports on to the PNC in keeping with two thirds of other forces in England & Wales, whilst the remainder create a skeleton record as the initial entry. In the 12 months to January 2004 the Force has updated only 46.4% of arrest/summons reports within 24 hours which is substantially below the national average of 80% and the ACPO target of 90%. This performance puts Merseyside in the bottom quartile of Forces in England and Wales over the 12 month period.
- 1.4.5 Performance with regard to the input of Court Results has fluctuated throughout the same 12 month period with an average of 31% of Court Results being input within 7 days. This is below the England and Wales average over the same 12 month timespan of 35%. Further discussion of Merseyside’s performance in this respect can be seen in paragraph 2.6 of this report.
- 1.4.6 A large part of the earlier HMIC PNC inspections in 2001 and 2002 were focused on the reduction of Impending Prosecutions to ensure that records remaining on the PNC for more than 12 months were there for legitimate reasons – for example, the offender had failed to appear at court and an arrest warrant had been granted. In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs), Merseyside’s overall outstanding number of IPs has increased by 5% (from 16,019 to 16,824).
- 1.4.7 A graph illustrating Merseyside’s performance in the 12 months to January 2004 is shown below.



Notes: The Y-Axis showing the percentage of A/S reports & Court Results input within given time periods shows a maximum of 90% to clearly show the performance of the Force in relation to the target set by the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy. The dotted line between Nov 03 and Jan 04 for the Number of IPs has been included to show the trend during the period, although PITO have been unable to provide IP statistics for Dec 03.

1.5 Conclusions

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

Red - No or limited evidence of effective activity. Either no results available or key aspects of performance are comparatively poor – bottom quartile, where this can be quantified - and/or deteriorating markedly.

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

- Her Majesty's Inspector is disappointed to note that PNC appears to have lost its strategic direction in the Force, with the PNC Steering Group having been disbanded and a lack of involvement at ACPO level in PNC matters. This is despite the Force having been commended in previous HMIC Reports in these areas;
- Merseyside Police have been unable to achieve the ACPO targets for the timeliness of input of Arrest Summons and Court Results data onto the PNC throughout the 12 month period to January 2004. Furthermore, the Force has consistently performed below the England and Wales national average on the input of Arrest Summons information and has been unable to perform consistently in relation to Court Results. Her Majesty's Inspector remains to be assured that performance can be improved with existing business processes;
- The lack of accountability of officers and a failure to enforce Force Policy in relation to the supply of Arrest Summons data has resulted in poor quality data being submitted to the PNC with a high rate of errors and omissions;
- There has been no independent auditing conducted of PNC activity within the Force for some time (at least 9 months). Operational departments and the Divisions have undertaken auditing but this has been uncoordinated and, as such, there is duplication of effort occurring throughout the Force with little or no communication of best practice.

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

2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Leadership

2.1.1 PNC Steering Group and Role of ACPO

- 2.1.1.1 In July 2000, Her Majesty's Inspector, Sir Keith Povey, published the findings of a thematic inspection into police crime recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System data quality, entitled 'On the Record'. This was the result of a thematic inspection conducted between January and May 2000 during which 11 Forces, including Merseyside Police, were visited. The report, amongst other points, highlighted the crucial role of Chief Officers in driving PNC performance through Steering Groups. This was, in fact, one of the few areas of consistency in forces who were seen as performing well. Several points of good practice were noted by Her Majesty's Inspector in relation to the performance of Merseyside, and these included the following:

"In Merseyside Police the PNC Steering Group chaired by an assistant chief constable had developed specific strategic terms of reference. It had designed an organisational chart governing the structure of the main and associated groups. The structure consisted of the Steering Group, senior suppliers, a work group co-ordinator and work group managers covering training, crime, intelligence, criminal justice and IT. Progress on matters related to PNC and Phoenix were well structured through a series of sub-groups with individual work allocations and reporting procedures."

"In Merseyside Police an assistant chief constable's involvement in data quality was stated by a number of staff to be a major contribution in organising and realising change. This included the establishment of a PNC Steering Group and a series of sub-groups researching various aspects of PNC and Phoenix."

- 2.1.1.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were disappointed to note that the PNC Steering Group, chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), has not met since February 2002. As a result many of the staff interviewed during the inspection felt that there is no strategic drive behind PNC in the Force and consequently knowledge and understanding of the system is being lost.

- 2.1.1.3 Furthermore, during the inspection HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware of growing staff concerns discussions that without a PNC Steering Group, there is no forum for PNC issues to be addressed and that communication of PNC related information, including the performance of the Force in this area, has deteriorated. The establishment of such a group would enable the Force to devise long term strategic objectives for its use of the PNC and provide a forum to discuss and action any performance issues to ensure that the Force is obtaining maximum benefit from the system.

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- **The Force re-establishes a PNC Steering Group, with representation from relevant stakeholders within the Force to provide a forum to discuss and action any performance issues to ensure that the Force is obtaining maximum benefit from the system.**
- **The Force PNC Steering Group devise long term strategic objectives for its use of the PNC**
- **In order to improve and subsequently maintain the profile of PNC, the Steering Group should be chaired by a Chief Officer rank to ensure issues are addressed and carried through to completion.**

2.1.2 Performance monitoring

- 2.1.2.1 Currently monitoring of the Force's performance in relation to the timeliness of data input to the PNC is performed centrally, in the PNC Bureau. The Force is looking to increase accountability at BCU level in many areas of police activity and it is anticipated that PNC will also be viewed in this light. With this in mind, the Force has created the role of Criminal Justice 'Tsars'. These are superintendents at each Division whose responsibility it is to improve performance in criminal justice matters. PNC performance and marketing is to come under the remit of these Superintendents and PNC will become a standing agenda item for their monthly meetings.

- 2.1.2.2 However, due to the limitations of the ICJS, which is used by officers to record offender details for submission to the PNC, it is not possible to attribute data to an individual officer or Division. It is anticipated that the ICJS system will be replaced during the next financial year and the Force is currently assessing three possible options for replacement. Therefore, whilst it is encouraging that information relating to the Force's performance on PNC is to be disseminated more widely, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors question whether the Criminal Justice Superintendents can be effective in improving their Division's performance with the limited management information which can currently be provided to them.

- 2.1.2.3 In addition, whilst increasing accountability through the Criminal Justice Superintendents is a positive step in aiming to improve PNC performance, this may place limitations on the improvements which can realistically be achieved as actions are likely to be co-ordinated at BCU, rather than Force level. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are also of the opinion that by using the Criminal Justice Superintendents without a PNC Steering Group increases the risk that strategic decisions will be based solely against statistical performance without taking account of the all of the protocol areas. Therefore, in order for maximum progress to be made, strong lines of communication need to be developed between the Criminal Justice Superintendents and a PNC Steering Group of all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- **The availability of management information at an individual officer and Divisional level is considered when deciding upon a replacement for the ICJS;**
- **A formal line of communication is established between the Criminal Justice Superintendents and the PNC Steering Group (see Recommendation 1).**

2.2 Policy and Strategy

- 2.2.1 With regard to policy and strategy, the inspection highlighted a number of areas which warrant a review. These can be described under four broad headings: PNC Strategy; Communication and Adherence to Policy; Data Protection Audits, and PNC Security. Each of these themes is discussed in further detail below.

2.2.2 PNC Strategy

- 2.2.2.1 At the time of the inspection, there was no documented PNC Strategy in place. As described earlier in paragraph 2.1.2, the combination of a lack of strategy and the absence of a PNC Steering Group has resulted in a body of feeling developing across the Force that PNC has no strategic direction. On the strength of the evidence presented HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors share this view. There is a need for the Force to document how it plans to ensure that the PNC is assisting in achieving wider organisational goals.
- 2.2.2.2 A formalised strategy document, outlining roles and responsibilities and covering topics such as Marketing and Awareness and PNC Security, would provide a framework to assist the Force in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of PNC usage throughout the Force. It would ensure that the Force gives 'ownership' of issues to individuals or departments, and generates a proactive approach to PNC. Importantly, it would help to ensure that the Force is getting a maximum return on its investment in the system and that officers gain most benefit from the information which is stored on it.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Merseyside Police formally documents a strategy for PNC. The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous HMIC reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.

2.2.3 Communication and Adherence to Policy

2.2.3.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware of a booklet entitled, 'Getting It Right First Time'. This has been issued to all officers at Merseyside and outlines their responsibilities for the compilation of prosecution files and highlights their responsibilities for providing complete and accurate information for input to the PNC. The issue of such a booklet is viewed as good practice.

2.2.3.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed the booklet and whilst it details the information to be captured by officers, it does not include reference to the national performance indicators for the timeliness of data submission. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors noted a general ignorance as to the performance targets within these areas and are of the opinion that this needs to be reflected in future editions of the policy booklet.

2.2.3.3 Whilst officers have been issued with this guidance document, there is no enforcement policy sitting behind it. This lack of enforcement can be attributed, in part, to the accountability issues described in paragraph 2.1.2.3 and has resulted in poor quality data going onto PNC, including the omission of a number of data items when compared with the source document. Recommendation 2 of this report discusses officer accountability and its implementation would enable Merseyside Police to enforce its policy as outlined in 'Getting It Right First Time'.

2.2.4 Data Protection Audits

2.2.4.1 Data Protection audits are the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at Merseyside Police. The DPO adopts good practice, as outlined in the ACPO Data Protection Manual, by producing an annual risk based strategic audit plan which has the PNC as its main focus. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors question the value of such a process as the DPO stated that no audit activity has taken place for at least 9 months due to a lack of resources. In the current situation it is unlikely that that the Data Protection team will be able to implement the 2004 strategic audit plan.

- 2.2.4.2 It became apparent that some auditing is being performed locally. However, due to the devolved nature of management throughout the Force, best practice in relation to auditing is not being disseminated and this is resulting in a duplication of effort. Furthermore, although this type of audit activity can add some value to the Force's data quality and processing, the lack of independence of an operational department conducting such audits means that these cannot provide the same level of assurance as an audit performed by the DPO.
- 2.2.4.3 Finally on the subject of Data Protection auditing, it was brought to the attention of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that historically, the findings of any such audits were reported to and actioned through the PNC Steering Group. The fact that this group no longer exists at Merseyside Police, as described in paragraph 2.1 of this report, means that there is no mechanism to ensure that recommendations arising from such audits are implemented.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- **The Force ensure that Data Protection Audits are resumed at the earliest opportunity and mechanisms are put into place to ensure that recommendations are implemented.**
- **Additional audit activities conducted throughout the Force are co-ordinated to ensure that resources are being used in the most efficient way and duplication of effort is kept to a minimum.**

2.2.5 PNC Security

- 2.2.5.1 Overall, PNC Security was viewed by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors as an area which is well managed at Merseyside Police. PNC User access groups have been constructed to ensure that people are only granted a level of access which is appropriate to their role and to the training they have received. There is an Access and Authorisation Officer within the PNC Training Team who is responsible for granting and removing or amending user access to the PNC. The PNC Manager is also able to perform this function in order to provide some resilience if the Access and Authorisation Officer is unavailable. The PNC Trainers send an e-mail to the Authorisation Officer advising who has attended and proved competent in PNC and their access to the system is then provided. In addition, the Trainers are responsible for managing the structure and number of user access groups.

- 2.2.5.2 Nevertheless, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware that there is a weakness in the current system of PNC Security. Details of movers and leavers are published on 'Personnel Matters' on the Force Intranet and this is relied on as the source document upon which decisions on the removal of user access to the PNC is taken. However, information can take up to a month to be updated on the Intranet and, as such, people who have changed roles or left the Force may not have their access amended or deleted from the system. This clearly leaves the system open to potential unauthorised access and abuse.

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force introduce a more robust process to ensure that all changes to personnel are accurately reflected in PNC user access.

2.3 People

2.3.1 PNC Awareness

- 2.3.1.1 The Force has an extensive Intranet site, "Merlin", sections of which are dedicated to PNC. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware of a growing opinion that the Force perhaps relies too heavily on Merlin to disseminate information. The opinion of those interviewed was that the site is cumbersome to navigate, even though improvements have been made with a new search facility. Comment was frequently made that "you have to be actively looking for something to find it" and that therefore "if you are not aware of something in the first place, you would not think to go looking for it". Consequently, it is possible that useful information is being put onto Merlin but that staff are not aware of its existence.
- 2.3.1.2 Furthermore, during the course of the inspection it became apparent that the levels of knowledge and understanding of the functionality of the PNC vary throughout the Force at all levels. In particular, whilst there was a good general awareness of VODS (Vehicle On Line Descriptive Searches), knowledge of the QUEST (Queries Using Extended Search Techniques) facility and the #TE transaction, which enables an officer to view who has previously viewed a specific file, was more varied.
- 2.3.1.3 A poor level of knowledge was displayed by police officers and staff in all areas with regard to who in the Force has the ability to perform certain PNC transactions. For example, very few people were able to say who they should contact, either at their own Area or at Headquarters, to request a QUEST search. As a result, many stated that QUEST would be their final line of enquiry, once all other routes had been exhausted.

- 2.3.1.4 The Force does not currently have a PNC Marketing Strategy in place which could be used to identify and address the issues identified above. Effective implementation of such a strategy would enable the Force to become more proactive in relation to PNC. It would also help to ensure that the Force is getting maximum return on its investment in the system and that officers gain most benefit from the information which is stored on it.

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that a structured approach to marketing, by way of a formal marketing or communication policy, is developed to ensure that awareness amongst operational staff is raised to a suitable level to ensure the effective use of PNC.

2.3.2 Training Availability

- 2.3.2.1 PNC enquiry and update training for the names, property and vehicle applications is provided by Merseyside Police's accredited PNC trainers who are situated within the PNC Bureau, rather than in Force Training. The only exception is with regard to the Force Control Rooms who have their own team of PNC accredited trainers. The students are assessed at the end of each course to ensure their competence before being given access to PNC.
- 2.3.2.2 Training is offered to any police officer or staff who can demonstrate a need to be provided with it. The PNC Trainers draft a quarterly PNC Training Plan and allocate a specific number of places to each Division. The PNC Trainers communicate the availability of courses to the Divisions via the Area Training Officers, who collate officer and staff responses and forward the names to the PNC Trainers.
- 2.3.2.3 During the inspection HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducted Focus Groups with operational officers at the two of the six Divisions in Merseyside when questions were asked of the officers regarding the availability of PNC training. There was a consensus of opinion in the responses that officers are often not aware that there are courses running with places available and even if they are it is often too short notice to be able to organise a place.
- 2.3.2.4 It should be noted that HMIC PNC Compliance Officers were unable to interview an Area Training Officer during the inspection and, as such, were unable to establish the reasons behind the apparent breakdown in communication. Nevertheless, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors formed the opinion that the provision of a quarterly Training Plan may not provide the notice required to enable officers and staff to book places on the courses offered.

2.3.3 PNC Training Structure and Evaluation

2.3.3.1 Currently, PNC Enquiry Training is provided in two parts: Module 1 and Module 2. Module 1 is a two-day course covering log on to the PNC, vehicles and property enquiries. Module 2 is also a two-day course and covers enquiries on the names application only. In order to be able to attend the Module 2 course, police officers and staff must first have attended and passed the assessment on Module 1. At the end of each course, a questionnaire is provided to students to enable them to give feedback on the quality of training received. However, there is no longer term evaluation with students being asked to provide feedback once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice. It is therefore possible that opportunities are being missed by the PNC Trainers to improve their training delivery and design.

2.3.3.2 During meetings and Focus Groups held throughout the Force, it became apparent that there are roles within the Force which require access to the names application on PNC only. Due to the current structure of PNC Training, these people are required to attend both modules, although they are unlikely to require access to the vehicles or property applications in order to fulfil their duties. The effect of this is that they are abstracted for four days of training when two and a half, or potentially three, days would suffice.

2.3.4 Officer Probation Training

2.3.4.1 As described earlier in 2.3.2, PNC Training sits within the PNC Bureau, rather than in the Force Training department. This is viewed by the Force to be beneficial as it allows staff within the Bureau, who are the primary users of the PNC, easy access to the trainers for support and advice.

2.3.4.2 The Force Training Department has responsibility for organising training to all new probationers who enter the Force. Historically, PNC Trainers were invited to conduct a session as part of probationer training. However, Force Training now conduct a PNC awareness session to all new probationers and the officers are provided with a booklet, 'A Guide to Using the PNC'.

2.3.4.3 It is the opinion of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that accredited PNC Trainers should conduct these sessions as Force Trainers may not be aware of the most recent developments in the system. Therefore, it is possible that valuable marketing opportunities are being lost and probationary officers are not being made fully aware of the system's functionality.

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- **Review its current arrangements for the communication of PNC Training availability to the Divisions and address any issues identified;**
- **Produce longer term plans for the provision of PNC Training to ensure that officers and staff are given reasonable notice of availability.**
- **Review its current PNC Training structure to ensure that officers and staff attend only those parts of the course which are relevant to their roles so as to keep abstraction rates to a minimum;**
- **Introduce a post-training questionnaire for students once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice.**
- **Utilise its accredited PNC Trainers to conduct PNC awareness sessions on the probationer course and other courses where PNC input is required.**

2.3.5 PNC Bureau

- 2.3.5.1 At the time of the inspection there were five team supervisors in the PNC Bureau and HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that there are plans to increase this number by one. The team supervisors have several responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the Bureau one of which is to dip sample the work of those in the Bureau. This is viewed as good practice as it ensures the quality of the work being performed and also enables any training needs to be identified. However, the results of the dip samples are not recorded and are therefore not included in the Personal Development Plans of PNC Bureau staff. In order to be truly effective in ensuring the quality of data input and that training needs are addressed, it is important that such work is recorded for each team member.

- 2.3.5.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also invited to a presentation given by the Court Results Team from the PNC Bureau. The presentation concerned the outcomes of recent Process Planning Workshops which have been conducted by every team in the Bureau and which aimed to identify team goals and how these are to be achieved over the coming year. Whilst the Court Results Team were clearly enthusiastic about this process, Focus Groups held with other teams in the Bureau showed that this enthusiasm is not shared throughout the Bureau. The reason for this appears to be that many staff members do not believe that the actions they had identified will be carried through as they do not believe there is the time or management commitment to do so. In order for staff motivation to be positively affected by the workshop exercise, it is important that the team supervisors and management act upon the outcomes and staff are able to see evidence of their contributions leading to positive action being taken in the Bureau. Furthermore, staff members should be encouraged to become actively involved in the planning and implementation of the changes, thus engendering a sense of ownership.
- 2.3.5.3 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were concerned that morale in the Bureau appears to be very low. From the discussions held, a key reason for this seems to be the process for awarding honoraria to staff. When a position becomes available it is advertised first within the Bureau and applications are invited from existing staff. Applicants are then invited for interview and this is conducted by management from the Bureau. Due to the internal nature of the post, and the internal advertising, no independent adjudication is provided at the interview. The lack of the independent representation on the panel has led staff to conclude that favouritism is taking place and that the choice has been made before the interviews. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors do not question the integrity or judgement of Bureau management, but felt that the current system leaves them open to criticism from Bureau staff. In order to prevent criticism being made, it is important that a degree of independence is seen to operate in the selection of staff for temporary promotion by way of honorarium posts.

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that management in the PNC Bureau:

- **Ensure that actions are taken in line with the outcomes of the recent Process Planning Workshops.**
- **Revise its selection process for honorarium posts to ensure that the interview panel is seen to maintain independence and objectivity.**

2.4 Partnerships and Resources

- 2.4.1 Relationships with other agencies and organisations are viewed as an area of strength at Merseyside. The Chief Crown Prosecutor attends a monthly meeting which now includes the Force's Criminal Justice Superintendents. This enables the Force to raise issues with the courts, particularly those which may be affecting performance. In addition, the PNC Manager attends monthly meetings with the Magistrates and Crown Courts during which any issues relating to timeliness for the submission of data to the Force can be addressed.
- 2.4.2 Furthermore, the PNC Manager has developed a good relationship with the City Council. This can, in part, be attributed to the Force policy of only supplying the Council with details of previous convictions if they have previously been supplied with an NPA1 form². This is viewed as good practice as it encourages complete and timely sharing of information.
- 2.4.3 Finally, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed of a recent agreement between the Force and the Crown Court enabling the police to conduct its own audit of the Court's processes. This is viewed as good practice in improving understanding between the court and the police. However, it was disappointing to note that the PNC Manager, who primarily deals with the Crown Court, had not been involved in the consultations to reach this agreement, nor was he aware that they were taking place.

2.5 Processes

- 2.5.1 In terms of processes, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found two key areas of concern. These relate to the submission of ad hoc information and the quality of data being entered on the PNC.
- 2.5.2 Submission of ad hoc intelligence onto the PNC
- 2.5.2.1 In relation to ad hoc updates, for example a change of address or description of a known offender, there is no process in place at Merseyside to ensure that this data is input to the PNC. It should be noted, that there is a process to ensure that this data is captured on local intelligence systems. However, if this data is not entered on the PNC it could have an adverse impact on the quality of QUEST searches performed on the PNC and, as such, could hinder an investigation, particularly with cross border crime. It is therefore important that this data is entered on the PNC as well as onto the local system.

² This is the Source Input Document supplied by Non-Policing Agencies who have prosecuting powers.

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force amend its current process, which ensures that ad hoc intelligence is input to local intelligence systems, to ensure that this information is also entered on the PNC.

2.5.3 Data Quality

2.5.3.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducted reality checks during their inspection in order to verify the quality of the data which is being entered onto the PNC by Merseyside Police. This was achieved by comparing the data submitted by officers on the ICJS and the PNC. The objective was twofold: to ensure that officers are submitting sufficient data via the ICJS to meet the needs of PNC and to ensure that the data is accurately transferred to the PNC. In total 36 Arrest/ Summons records were reviewed, 22 of which included a caution.

2.5.3.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were very disappointed to note that 100% of the records examined on the ICJS had data omissions.

- Examples of the data items that were omitted include descriptive information of the offender and post codes from offence locations (see paragraph 2.6.5), both of which are vital elements required to increase the success of QUEST searches.
- Furthermore, 25% of the 36 records contained obvious errors, including MO's that did not apply to the offence and an alias name being created on a record because the name entered on ICJS was not formatted correctly.

2.5.3.3 All of the omissions and errors can be attributed to the officers submitting substandard data to the PNC Bureau, although the individual officers concerned cannot be identified. These results further highlight the need for the Force to hold individual officers accountable for the data they submit (paragraph 2.1.2.3) and to ensure adherence to policies (paragraph 2.2.3.3).

2.5.3.4 Furthermore, the inspection highlighted the fact there is no mechanism to ensure that all cases that should be input to the PNC actually make it. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were provided with anecdotal evidence of recent occasions when a Divisional Criminal Justice Unit (CJU) has contacted the PNC Bureau to inform them that they have found a 'pile' of cautions that need to be input. In addition, the CJUs are able to update PNC with summons cases but there is no check available to the PNC Bureau to ensure that all cases are being recorded

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently reviews its business processes for the submission of data to ensure that all data which should be entered onto the PNC is input in a timely and accurate manner.

2.6 Results

- 2.6.1 The ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy key performance indicator for the input of Arrest/ Summons is that 90% of cases should be entered within 24 hours. In the 12 months to January 2004, Merseyside Police achieved an average of just 46.4% with the best month's performance being January 2004 with 61.9%. However, this is well below the national average of 80%. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found no evidence that this level of performance could be significantly improved or sustained due to the fact that no transfer of data to PNC occurs over the weekend, in light of the weekend working arrangements of the ICJS Validation Team. This leaves the Force with a large workload on a Monday morning giving no capacity to improve on the timeliness figures.
- 2.6.2 In addition, the Force does not currently enter details of offenders who have been released under Sections 37(2) and 37(7) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Therefore, the force is losing opportunities to record invaluable DNA and Fingerprint information. Analysis of custody data from the last 12 months shows that under the current process of only updating charges, summons and cautions on PNC, only 75% of those people who could be recorded, are being recorded. In October to December 2003, this equates to 4363 offenders who could have had DNA and Fingerprint information obtained from them but who were not recorded in this way.
- 2.6.3 The input of Court Results to the PNC also saw an improvement in January 2004 with 58.8% of cases being entered within 7 days which is above the national average of 34.6%. However, this followed five months of falling or poor performance with an average of only 30% of such cases being input within 7 days in the last quarter of 2003. The improved January performance was achieved at the cost of 140 hours of overtime being worked by the team. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors believe that this cannot be sustained and are therefore doubtful that performance in this area can be maintained or improved without changes to the existing processes.
- 2.6.4 A large part of the earlier HMIC PNC inspections in 2001 and 2002 were focused on the reduction of Impending Prosecutions to ensure that records remaining on the PNC for more than 12 months were there for legitimate reasons – for example, the offender had failed to appear at court and an arrest warrant had been granted. In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs), Merseyside's overall outstanding number of IPs has increased by 5% (from 16,019 to 16,824). The Force acknowledges that it has a backlog of old cases which, if tackled more promptly, should considerably reduce this number.

- 2.6.5 In terms of Warning Signals being entered onto the system, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found that officers are failing to add accompanying text to warning signals detailing the nature of such signals and, as such, this information is not being stored on the system. This causes an administration burden for the PNC Bureau who have to manually amend the records, where they are able. However, this raises the greater concern that important information, which could be vital in ensuring officer safety, is not being transferred to PNC and will not therefore be communicated to officers.
- 2.6.6 Finally, the current ICJS being used by Merseyside Police has no facility to record the postcode for an offence location nor is there a process to update them manually afterwards. This information can greatly improve the quality of a QUEST search which could assist in a police investigation. Therefore, the Force is not obtaining maximum benefit from the PNC system during investigations.

Recommendation 11

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- **Clears the backlog of Impending Prosecutions requiring review.**
- **Ensure that all data which could later be important in officer safety be captured and input to the PNC.**
- **Establish a process to ensure that the postcode for offence locations is captured and input to the PNC.**

- 2.6.7 The recommendations outlined so far in this report aim to assist Merseyside Police in improving its PNC performance in terms of both data quality and timeliness. It should be read in conjunction with previous HMIC Reports and the Force needs to urgently develop action plans to address the issues it faces if it is to improve its HMIC assessment grading in the future.

Appendix A

A Summary of Good Practice within Merseyside Police

- The Force has issued a booklet, 'Getting It Right First Time' to all officers in order to raise awareness of Force policies.
- The competence of all staff attending PNC training courses is assessed before they are given access to the system.
- PNC Bureau supervisors dip sample the work of staff in the Bureau to ensure the quality of work produced and to identify any possible training needs.
- Each team within the PNC Bureau has been involved in a Process Planning Workshop to identify goals for the coming year and to plan how these will be achieved.
- The Chief Crown Prosecutor attends a monthly meeting with the Force's Criminal Justice Tsars to address and action any issues.
- The PNC Manager holds monthly meeting with representatives from the Magistrates and Crown Courts in order to address any performance issues which may arise.
- Merseyside Police have obtained an agreement with the local Crown Court to conduct an audit of the court's processes.
- The Force has policy of only supplying the Council with details of previous convictions if they have previously been supplied with an NPA1 form. This encourages the Council to provide the Force with details of offenders.

Summary of Recommendations for Merseyside Police

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- The Force re-establishes a PNC Steering Group, with representation from relevant stakeholders within the Force to provide a forum to discuss and action any performance issues to ensure that the Force is obtaining maximum benefit from the system.
- The Force PNC Steering Group devise long term strategic objectives for its use of the PNC
- In order to improve and subsequently maintain the profile of PNC, the Steering Group should be chaired by a Chief Officer rank to ensure issues are addressed and carried through to completion.

(Paragraph 2.1.1)

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- The availability of management information at an individual officer and Divisional level is considered when deciding upon a replacement for the ICJS.
- A formal line of communication is established between the Criminal Justice Tsars and the PNC Steering Group (see Recommendation 1).

(Paragraph 2.1.2)

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Merseyside Police formally documents a strategy for PNC. The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous HMIC reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.

(Paragraph 2.2.2)

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- The Force ensure that Data Protection Audits are resumed at the earliest opportunity and mechanisms are put into place to ensure that recommendations are implemented.
- Additional audit activities conducted throughout the Force are co-ordinated to ensure that resources are being used in the most efficient way and duplication of effort is kept to a minimum.

(Paragraph 2.2.4)

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force introduce a more robust process to ensure that all changes to personnel are accurately reflected in PNC user access.

(Paragraph 2.2.5)

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force make provisions for a PNC Marketing Strategy to be implemented throughout the Force to ensure that officers are aware of the PNC facilities available and how to obtain them.

(Paragraph 2.3.1)

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- Review its current arrangements for the communication of PNC Training availability to the Divisions and address any issues identified;
- Produce longer term plans for the provision of PNC Training to ensure that officers and staff are given reasonable notice of availability;
- Review its current PNC Training structure to ensure that officers and staff attend only those parts of the course which are relevant to their roles so as to keep abstraction rates to a minimum;
- Introduce a post-training questionnaire for students once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice.
- The Force utilises its accredited PNC Trainers to conduct PNC awareness sessions on the probationer course and other courses where PNC input is required.

(Paragraph 2.3.4)

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that management in the PNC Bureau:

- Ensure that actions are taken in line with the outcomes of the recent Process Planning Workshops.
- Revise its selection process for honorarium posts to ensure that the interview panel is seen to maintain independence and objectivity.

(Paragraph 2.3.5)

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force amend its current process, which ensures that ad hoc intelligence is input to local intelligence systems, to ensure that this information is also entered on the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.5.2)

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently reviews its business processes for the submission of data to ensure that all data which should be entered onto the PNC is input in a timely and accurate manner.

(Paragraph 2.5.3)

Recommendation 11

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- Clears the backlog of Impending Prosecutions requiring review.
- Ensures that all data which could later be important in officer safety be captured and input to the PNC.
- Establishes a process to ensure that the postcode for offence locations is captured and input to the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.6)

Appendix B

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

Recommendation 9 (Chapter 5 page 86)

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

Recommendation 10 (Chapter 6 page 104)

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

Recommendation 11 (Chapter 7 page 111)

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

Recommendation 12 (Chapter 7 page 112)

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

Recommendation 13 (Chapter 7 page 118)

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

Recommendation 14 (Chapter 8 page 145)

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces ensure that each Phoenix inputting department develops an audit trail to register the return of substandard PSDs, via line supervisors, to originating officers. The system developed should include a mechanism to ensure the prompt return of PSDs. Forces should also incorporate locally based audit trails, monitoring the passage of returned PSDs between line supervisors and originating officers.

Recommendation 15 (Chapter 8 page 146)

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

Recommendation 16 (Chapter 8 page 148)

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

Recommendation 17 (Chapter 8 page 150)

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

Recommendation 18 (Chapter 9 page 164)

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

Recommendation 19 (Chapter 9 page 164)

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

Recommendation 20 (Chapter 9 page 165)

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

Appendix C

PRG Report “Phoenix Data Quality” Recommendations

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

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

Appendix D

Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 1st Report

Recommendation One (Paragraph 5.2)

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

Recommendation Two (Paragraph 5.11)

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

Recommendation Three (Paragraph 5.19)

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

Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.29)

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

Recommendation Five (Paragraph 5.31)

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

Recommendation Six (Paragraph 5.34)

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

Recommendation Seven (Paragraph 6.10)

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

Recommendation Eight (Paragraph 6.12)

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

Recommendation Nine (Paragraph 6.14)

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

Recommendation Ten (Paragraph 6.16)

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

Appendix E

Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 2nd Report

Recommendation 1

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

Recommendation 2

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

Recommendation 3

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

Recommendation 4

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

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

Recommendation 5

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