



HMIC Inspection Report

North Wales Police

October 2007



ISBN: 978-1-84726-472-5

CROWN COPYRIGHT

FIRST PUBLISHED 2007

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

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://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005 and 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 of law-abiding citizens.

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

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

Risk-based frameworks

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

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

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

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

The grading process

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

Excellent

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

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

Good

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

Fair

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

Poor

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

Developing practice

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

Future HMIC inspection activity

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

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

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

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

North Wales comprises the island of Anglesey, the Llyn peninsula and the Snowdonia mountain range, together with the catchments of the Rivers Conwy, Clwyd and Dee.

The North Wales Police (NWP) area contains the following administrative areas:

- the county borough of Wrexham (*Wrecsam*);
- the county of Flintshire (*Sir y Fflint*);
- the county of Denbighshire (*Sir Ddinbych*);
- the county borough of Conwy;
- the county of Gwynedd; and
- the county of the Isle of Anglesey (*Ynys Môn*).

The area is mostly rural, with many mountains and valleys. The majority of the settlements in North Wales are along the coast, including some popular resorts such as Rhyl, Llandudno and Pwllheli. The North Wales Borderlands are situated to the east and the Snowdonia National Park to the west, making it an area of intriguing contrasts.

There are two cathedral cities, Bangor and St Asaph, and a number of mediaeval castles (Harlech, Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris), which are popular tourist attractions. The A55 expressway links towns with the north of England and the port of Holyhead; few routes connect North Wales with South Wales.

NWP headquarters is in the town of Colwyn Bay, and there are three basic command units (known locally as divisions). Eastern Division encompasses the county borough of Wrexham and the county of Flintshire, with its divisional headquarters in the town of Wrexham; Central Division covers the county of Denbighshire and the county borough of Conwy, with its divisional headquarters in the city of St Asaph; and, finally, Western Division encompasses the county of Gwynedd and the county of the Isle of Anglesey, with divisional headquarters in the town of Caernarfon.

The force is isolated from the other three Welsh forces by the physical geography of the area and in many respects it has more affinity with forces in the North West of England. There is, however, strong evidence of collaboration with the other Welsh forces on a number of strategic issues. There is a need to meet the challenge of travelling criminals from the North West, and there are well-established procedures for mutual support where necessary. The strategic approach of the force has enabled more effective targeting of cross-border issues.

Demographic profile of force area

The shape and nature of North Wales influence its population characteristics. Most of the inhabitants live in and around the lowland coastal plains. Towards the hills and mountains the population becomes thinly scattered across large areas dotted with occasional small towns.

NWP is responsible for policing a resident population of 674,508 people in 280,329 households. In Eastern Division there is a population of 280,278 in 113,503 households; Central Division has a population of 207,402 in 88,736 households; and Western Division has a population of 186,828 in 78,090 households. The population increases substantially – particularly in Central and Western Divisions – with the influx of tourists during the summer months.

Strategic priorities

The Government has put forward a series of national priorities for forces in Wales and England which NWP has considered and consulted upon with members of the public. On the basis of this process, it has adopted the Government's national priorities for 2007/ 08, namely to:

- **reduce overall crime**, focusing on more serious violent crime, drug-related crime and alcohol-related crime and disorder;
- **enable people to feel safer in their communities** by embedding a dedicated, visible, responsive and accountable neighbourhood policing team in every area by April 2008, working in close collaboration with local government and other community safety partners, and reducing the public perception of anti-social behaviour;
- **increase the number of offences brought to justice**, in partnership with other criminal justice agencies, through improved performance on sanction detections, especially in relation to more serious crime;
- **strengthen public protection** by increasing capacity and capability to deal with widespread threats, and in particular by tackling serious and organised crime; and
- **protect the country** from both terrorism and extremism.

Local policing priorities agreed by the police authority are to:

- **improve the safety of children and young people in North Wales** and reduce their fear of crime; and
- **improve the safety of all road users in North Wales.**

Force developments since 2006

The HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006 assessed NWP as Fair in tackling serious and organised criminality, but judged that the force's performance had declined in comparison with the previous year. As a result of the assessment, five areas for improvement (AFIs) were identified and subject to re-inspection in February 2007.

The re-inspection showed that the force has made progress, with some structural and policy changes designed to meet the changing nature of organised criminality which affects the force. Tackling serious and organised criminality relies upon co-operation between police

forces, and NWP is actively engaged in collaboration with the other Welsh forces and with forces from the North West of England, notably Cheshire Constabulary.

A key factor in the progress being made by the force is the commitment made by the police authority to support investment in a major incident team. This team will be brought to full operational capacity over a three- to four-year period, commencing in 2007; a commitment to this team is crucial if the force is to maintain and improve its capacity in delivering protective services.

Of the five AFIs, one has been signed off by HMIC, with the inclusion of tackling drugs in all divisional control strategies. While progress has been made on the remaining four AFIs, there is some way to go; they will be reviewed when this area is inspected against the new Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) standards later this year. Currently the grade for tackling serious and organised criminality is Fair and Stable. Points to note at this stage include the following:

- Divisions are now being held to account for their contribution to tackling serious and organised crime. Operations are reviewed at their conclusion but there is no structure in place to disseminate good practice or lessons learnt.
- While there has been an increase in the resources dedicated to tackling serious and organised crime, a high proportion of those resources continues to be abstracted to other areas of work, impacting upon the capacity of the dedicated units to perform their core functions.
- Witness protection arrangements are being reviewed by the force and resources have been sought to put an additional detective inspector in place to manage witness protection. This initiative would, if implemented, improve the force's capacity to provide an effective service.
- Training has been given to operational officers to improve their knowledge of the powers available to seize assets from criminals, supplemented by a guide to staff on asset recovery powers. Divisional detective chief inspectors are now championing the use of these powers.

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	Good
Performance management	Grade
Performance management	Good
Protecting Vulnerable People	Grade
Child abuse	Fair
Domestic violence	Good
Public protection	Fair
Missing persons	Good

Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	GOOD
-------	------

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 (ASB) 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

NWP aims to deliver services which enhance the feeling of safety of people living in, working in or visiting North Wales. The force has established Neighbourhood Policing in all its communities and there is a clear drive for the Neighbourhood Policing teams to influence quality-of-life issues. Each Division is subdivided into district areas, each headed by an inspector. These are responsible for the local delivery of Neighbourhood Policing. Neighbourhood Policing is successfully using the skills of a range of officers, PCSOs, special constables, police staff and members of the wider policing family to solve problems. A strong feature of Neighbourhood Policing delivery is the Dyna Ddigon (That's Enough) strategy, a force-wide initiative which aims to reduce the harm caused to communities by ASB. There are 21 Dyna Ddigon sites across the force area and the approach has been recognised by the Home Office as an example of good practice. The majority of Neighbourhood Policing teams are based in police stations, and all have access to partner resources.

NWP has had to meet some challenges in relation to budgetary pressures, which have led to the redeployment of some community beat managers (CBMs). Despite this, the force has maintained 100% coverage of Neighbourhood Policing teams across its communities. A key factor in this has been the force's success in recruiting its target allocation of 157 PCSOs.

- As part of the inspection process a telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents was carried out, consisting of six questions about their experience and view of how Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered. The results of three of the questions fell within the national average range, while three were below the national average range.
- Chief officers provide clear leadership for Neighbourhood Policing. All chief officers undertake patrol days with CBMs and conduct environmental visual audits (EVAs) with staff and partners, giving them the opportunity both to set out their strategic vision for Neighbourhood Policing and to check the reality of service delivery on the ground. Each visit is formally assessed on the four criteria of community engagement, EVA, neighbourhood management database and Neighbourhood Policing plans. This demonstrates a real commitment and has an impact on staff, partners and the community.
- The Chief Constable chairs the community policing board, which is run along project management guidelines. A sergeant has recently been seconded into the staff office to support further development of Neighbourhood Policing under the direction of the assistant chief constable (ACC).
- Two years ago the force introduced the role of partnership superintendent on each of its three divisions. This role has provided strong leadership at a local level and the commitment is recognised by partners.
- The rationale for the staffing of Neighbourhood Policing teams is based upon neighbourhood profiles and demand and is the responsibility of divisional commanders, who have to agree deployments with the ACPO team.
- CBMs are required to enter into a 'contract' to remain based within their neighbourhood for two to three years; evidence shows that such continuity is well regarded by members of the community.
- The consultation arrangements for the definition of neighbourhoods varies across the divisions. The force has looked beyond what may ordinarily be defined as a 'neighbourhood' by looking at communities across neighbourhoods. For example, in Central Division the force engages with faith communities, while Eastern Division specifically engages with the business community. Both approaches provide alternative engagement opportunities. The force has recently had to redeploy some CBMs due to budgetary issues; however, more PCSOs have been put into place, with the police authority and communities being consulted about the impact of these changes.
- There are established arrangements across the force – through neighbourhood forums, surgeries and joint action groups – to identify the public's priorities for policing in their local area. These arrangements ensure the active engagement of partners in the delivery of neighbourhood management.
- In providing a locally tailored service, the force has not lost sight of the key links between Neighbourhood Policing, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism (CT). This is driven through the security review panel and discreet operations as appropriate.
- Partners are involved in joint strategic assessments and tasking and co-ordinating processes through the joint action groups. Neighbourhood issues are raised at a strategic level and partners including local authorities, the fire and rescue service,

the Crown Prosecution Service and the probation service are engaged in the delivery of community safety. Partners attend appropriate tasking and co-ordination group meetings and participate in 'away days' with divisional command teams to set priorities.

- NWP uses both the SARA model – scanning, analysis, response, assessment – and the victim offender location model to solve problems. It has developed resources for Neighbourhood Policing teams on its intranet site, based upon Home Office and NWP problem-solving toolkits. The site also provides a resource library of posters and information literature that is used by the teams.
- Neighbourhood Policing teams engage with a range of partners including Communities First, council wardens, the probation service, youth justice teams and tenants' and residents' associations to problem-solve locally. NHP teams undertake joint patrols with council wardens, where these exist.
- Each of the three divisions has a dedicated partnership analyst, funded via the community safety partnerships, and an additional dedicated analyst is employed in headquarters to improve the approach to problem solving and performance management in Neighbourhood Policing.
- In response to requests to all CBMs for specific community intelligence, the principal force analyst is starting to profile different communities in North Wales. This analytical work identifies, among other things, areas containing migrant workers, new and emerging communities, nationalities within existing communities and a range of housing issues.
- A number of specific joint training seminars have been held with partners. For example, partners are involved in a programme of two-day joint training sessions which cover the philosophy of Neighbourhood Policing and practical issues such as securing funding and problem solving.
- Scheduled courses are ongoing and 200-plus staff have already attended the two-day course with the remainder scheduled to attend. This year's ACPO roadshows have also started and include the Neighbourhood Policing teams.
- The force has a two-day training course for CBMs and PCSOs, based on the Centrex training, which has covered issues such as obtaining funding and how to chair meetings.
- PCSOs receive basic training which has been acknowledged as improving. PCSOs state that there is now a good mentoring scheme in place for them which is competency-based.
- Some CBMs and PCSOs have been trained in mediation skills to provide an alternative, restorative-based approach to resolving problems. This is an example of an innovative approach to resolving conflict within communities.
- Training has been evaluated and evolved since inception. As a result, the force has introduced mentoring for PCSOs. CBMs and PCSOs are currently attending joint training and some have attended national Neighbourhood Policing seminars.
- The work of Neighbourhood Policing teams is acknowledged in a number of ways. Staff receive letters from communities and councillors, gain formal recognition through force award processes such as the Community Beat Manager of the Year

award and, importantly, receive day-to-day feedback from their senior managers. CBMs are in receipt of special priority payments in recognition of the challenging nature of the role.

- Staff interviewed have performance development review objectives linked to Neighbourhood Policing. Officers interviewed state that they have investigative workloads which are manageable.
- A force-wide protocol on information sharing with partners is in place, along with a joint community safety protocol; a separate protocol is in place with the local health trusts. There is evidence of information sharing from a range of sources.
- Quality of service (QoS) has been built into the force performance review process at divisional level through the weekly performance review, where the divisional senior management team (SMT) assesses QoS with district inspectors and sergeants. All victims of hate crime are invited to a personal interview so that the force can learn from their experience of how it has dealt with them, and focus groups are held for priority crimes such as dwelling burglary. The force has established a QoS group which reviews survey activity and commissions action plans. Western Division is tailoring its response to communities to ensure that the right QoS is provided. It has undertaken research into the different communities it is serving (eg Polish and traveller communities) to ensure that cultural issues are understood. The force has recently undertaken a survey of schoolchildren from which it has identified hate crime as a problem.
- There is evidence that the force uses community impact assessment appropriately. Examples were given of its use in relation to disorder in Wrexham and an ongoing murder investigation in Eastern Division. Neighbourhood Policing staff are linked into these assessments, as is the independent advisory group (IAG). Examples were provided from Central BCU of the use of the IAG in sensitive arrests in the community.
- There is clear evidence that force systems and processes are aligned to Neighbourhood Policing. This is apparent from call-handling processes, use of the records management system (RMS), ACORN and the Dyna Ddigon initiative.
- CPA and hot-spot profiling link with partners' data to establish deployment priorities. The Dyna Ddigon initiative recognises ASB issues that require intervention and therefore deployment. In addition, community priorities and the joint action groups influence deployment decisions.
- The force seeks to identify and spread lessons from the ACPO visits to Neighbourhood Policing teams and is establishing a Neighbourhood Policing forum on the force intranet. Learning from experience is taking place – for example, changing the focus of meetings to respond to public requirements and establishing a police portal to aid community contact.
- Clear processes are in place to hold Neighbourhood Policing teams to account, from PCSOs through to district inspectors. Regular reviews take place in performance meetings. The force has a comprehensive Neighbourhood Policing assessment form based on the principles of Neighbourhood Policing. The CBMs hold their teams accountable in terms both of performance figures and community indicators such as tension and letters of complaint. An ACPO staff officer has now been appointed, part of whose remit is the development of a Dyna Ddigon and Neighbourhood Policing performance management framework. Already implemented are a series of

scheduled ACPO visits, which will include a structured visit to every neighbourhood constable by the end of the calendar year and will concentrate on Neighbourhood Policing delivery and performance against an agreed template.

- A community contact database is an innovative approach developed by NWP. Its evolution has progressed from an embryonic stage into one of wider consultation. Three forces are now involved in its continual development, and business processes have changed to reflect this.
- Partner reluctance has not been a barrier to implementation of NHP; however, relationships are at differing stages of maturity. The ACPO team and SMTs are aware of the areas which require more investment; this is apparent from the interviews conducted with the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), the ACC and SMT members.
- The community policing board has been revamped and is now chaired by the Chief Constable. Membership includes the ACC, divisional chief superintendents and the chief superintendent (administration of justice department). A major aspect of the work to be undertaken over the coming one to two years will be addressing the public reassurance and education issues, as highlighted by the British Crime Survey. The board is supported by a dedicated Dyna Ddigon delivery manager who is based in the ACPO staff offices, and by a member of the finance department who ensures that sound project management principles are applied. As a part of the current work plan, each district inspector is required to complete a local Neighbourhood Policing delivery plan with a section on both internal and external communication plans.
- The force is currently piloting a community portal in three areas – Holyhead, Flintshire and Rhyl – to ensure that Neighbourhood Policing consultation meets the needs of communities. This will feature information about Neighbourhood Policing and community forums. The forums are intended to give the public an additional means of raising issues and priorities with the force and will be linked to partner websites. The portal will also feature blogs (internet diaries) from the district inspectors, and a performance monitoring regime will assess the timeliness of responses to any issues raised.
- The Neighbourhood Policing strategy has recently been refreshed to reflect the Dyna Ddigon approach. Two post-holders (inspector and sergeant ranks) have been seconded to force headquarters to promote the continued development of Neighbourhood Policing.
- A review of the performance management framework for Neighbourhood Policing is being undertaken to deliver a more outcome-focused approach based on the long-term reduction of crime, increasing public reassurance and improving public confidence. This includes the development of local policing plans by the district inspectors and a performance bias concentrating on engagement, EVAs, public protection, problem-solving action plans and communication with communities.
- Special constables are involved in the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing in varying ways across divisions – some special constables are specifically aligned to Neighbourhood Policing teams.
- The force's development plan from the ACPO national Neighbourhood Policing project team has been signed off. The force still utilises the liaison officer as a point of contact and consultation, and he has acted as a critical friend to divisions.

- The abstraction policy for Neighbourhood Policing defines abstraction and sets a maximum limit of no more than 20% of time away from the core role. The force duty management system is being used to monitor abstractions and the results of such monitoring are subject to ACPO performance review with divisional command teams.

Areas for improvement

- A lack of understanding of the role of Neighbourhood Policing teams is evident among some response officers. Some divisions have aligned their CBMs' and response sergeants to foster greater understanding and co-operation. The force should consider how its internal communications strategy can be used to improve understanding of the role.
- Some Neighbourhood Policing supervisors have responsibility for high numbers of staff – ie in excess of 20 – and associated performance development reviews. The force should consider the sustainability of effective supervision where such high supervisory ratios exist.
- The force has a comprehensive visual audit regime which involves partners. District inspectors expressed concern that, while the audits positively identified quality-of-life issues (such as ASB, criminal damage and graffiti) which all partners can play a role in resolving, the number of plans and actions generated for partners could prove burdensome and needs to be kept under review and subject to negotiation.
- There is no commonality across the force on the types of incident to which CBMs are deployed. While it is recognised that Neighbourhood Policing provides a localised response, the force control centre would benefit from clear guidance tailored to the divisional deployment plans. Call handlers tag incidents for CBMs, but as these are not always accessed by the CBMs, call handlers have to chase them. The force has recognised that there cannot be a model for Neighbourhood Policing imposed on each area, but the officer in charge of the division would be assisted by having clearer guidance tailored to the divisional deployment plan.
- Call handlers have access to appropriate details of CBMs and are able to direct calls appropriately, although the details held by the OCD are not always up to date. Calls are handled according to the national four-stage standard and there are clear links between call reception, dispatch, the crime desk and supervisors.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Neighbourhood Policing community portal

PROBLEM:

How to make the most effective use of the internet in public engagement and exploit other technology. The community portal allows NWP to interact with the public in relation to activities in their locality.

SOLUTION:

NWP has launched a Neighbourhood Policing communities forum to offer full engagement for a wide cross-section of local communities. The portal contains a detailed narrative on the work of the force, together with divisional, area and personal profiles. Specific information on crime and incidents on a local basis will become the norm.

The community portal is jointly owned by the public; local areas are coterminous with territorial inspector's area. Residents are able to post items of interest on a number of different forums as well as registering their opinion or supplying information about particular problems in the locality.

Neighbourhood officers are able to use the forums to gauge public opinion on any particular matter and an established monitoring regime is in place to monitor the timeliness of responses given to any issues raised. Web logs from chief officers and local policing teams regularly feature along with contact details, crime information, advice and local environmental audits.

The communities portal can be accessed via the force's main website.

OUTCOME(S):

This initiative has further developed the ability to engage and interact with the community at a local and force level. The aim of this portal is to bring NWP closer to the communities that they serve and to open a new straightforward approach to information sharing. This remains one part of a larger engagement strategy to enable NWP to make the best use of technology. The next phase will include the provision of remote access via kiosks at strategic points across the force area and the introduction of podcasts.

FORCE CONTACT: Force Analytics, ACPO Staff Office – 01492 511225

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Neighbourhood management database

PROBLEM:

The community contacts database (CCDB) was designed as a tool to assist in the local management of community issues and to record interactions with the community. While it remained an effective tool, it had become dated and new ways to record the data were needed.

SOLUTION:

For the past few years NWP has been developing and using a progressive database to record interactions with the public, known as the CCDB. The database, which was initially maintained electronically in an MS Excel spreadsheet, has evolved over time. It was recognised that the CCDB involved too much bureaucracy and as a result, in collaboration with two other Welsh forces, it has been upgraded, significantly altered and re-launched. It is now known as the neighbourhood management database and is attracting national interest.

The upgrade represents significant improvements to the system for end users, virtually eliminating previously identified problems with duplication. A web developer has been appointed, jointly funded by the three Welsh forces, to ensure the continued development of the database in accordance with requests for change agreed by the All Wales Neighbourhood Policing Forum.

OUTCOME(S):

The comprehensive neighbourhood management database is used to manage neighbourhood profiles, logging all contact details together with notes of local meetings. It lists the names of key individuals and groups (community/town councils, schools, licensed premises, faith groups etc) within the district, recording when they were last contacted, any issues raised and action taken to address those issues. It also provides an audit trail, a robust management tool and continuity in the event of staff moving on.

FORCE CONTACT: Force Analytics, ACPO Staff Office – 01492 511225

Performance Management

GRADE	GOOD
-------	------

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

NWP has a comprehensive performance management framework which is based upon the Analytics model. This approach to performance management uses performance data to influence decision making and long-term problem solving. A range of data is used to challenge performance at all levels of the organisation. The framework supports not only quantitative performance analysis against targets, but also qualitative analysis through comprehensive survey activity and audit processes.

The force has clear accountability mechanisms at force, divisional, district and individual levels. Regular reviews of performance are held with staff at all levels, with active chief officer involvement. Chief officers are assigned individual objectives, including specific diversity objectives, which are monitored by the police authority.

The force saw a 6.33% increase in total crime per 1,000 population in 2006/07 compared with the previous year, with reductions in some key crime types, such as domestic burglary (measured per 1,000 households), which fell by 6.61%. The force improved its sanction detection rate in many areas, notably domestic burglary, vehicle crime and violent crime, and achieved an overall sanction detection rate for all crime of 30.52%.

Strengths

- The police authority performance review committee robustly holds the chief officers to account for force performance on a regular basis, and both national and local objectives are debated with the authority. Individual ACPO portfolio holders are assigned targets by the authority. Each ACPO member has six objectives, including

a compulsory diversity objective, achievement of which is linked to performance-related pay.

- The force has developed a comprehensive strategic performance management framework which was implemented in April 2006. The framework is based on the Balanced Scorecard methodology, integrating consultation – external (eg public, CSPs) and internal (eg command teams, National Intelligence Model control strategy, police authority) in order to formulate the force's priorities. It takes into consideration national guidelines and recommendations of work commissioned from Warwick University Business School.
- The framework's objectives will take into account the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS), acknowledging the need to integrate partners into shared objectives and targets. The framework, however, is not reliant on knowing the final format of APACS, allowing the planning cycle to continue while waiting for the APACS structure to be finalised.
- The force links together a number of interoperable systems, including the command and control (intergraph computer-aided dispatch – iCAD) and crime management (niche RMS) systems, to manage and challenge performance.
- The force can demonstrate a clear understanding of the wider issues connected to CT and serious and organised crime. NWP is involved in the all Wales group which is working towards establishing a shared CT unit.
- Performance management data is used to influence joint targets and objectives with partners. The community safety operational plan clearly sets out joint priorities with partners within a performance management framework which is linked to finance. Divisional commanders are responsible for driving this forward through the joint action groups.
- Quarterly performance review meetings with divisions are attended by at least two chief officers. A booklet of performance information – incorporating Neighbourhood Policing, protective services, volume crime, occurrence management and resource management – is produced in advance by the force analytics section for the division to consider. All members of the divisional SMT, including human resources (HR) and finance professionals, are held to account for performance. The meeting involves dialogue between the SMT, chief officers and the analytics unit, who analyse and prepare performance information about the division, with an exchange of views and ideas to improve performance.
- Activity-based costing is used to calculate efficiencies, with monthly information on crime and sickness efficiency published in the MI bulletin. The force is also analysing quarterly data that contributes to the year-end frontline policing measure in order to effect change and maximise productivity throughout the year.
- There is a clear accountability framework for functions devolved to divisions, aligned to performance measures; regular reviews of performance are undertaken by Divisional SMTs. A wealth of individual performance data is held by the force and is utilised to recognise both good and poor performance. Where an officer or PCSO is identified as underperforming, the data is debated with the divisional command team and where appropriate an action plan is put into place.
- QoS has been built into the force performance review process at divisional level through the weekly performance review, at which the SMT reviews the quality of

services delivered with district inspectors. All victims of hate crime are invited to a personal interview, and QoS focus groups are held for the victims of priority crimes, such as dwelling burglary, to enable the force to learn from the victims' experience.

- The force is using its Analytics capability to predict future performance and examine how abstraction rates are likely to impact upon crime detection and reduction rates. This information feeds the National Intelligence Model process when resourcing decisions are being considered at level 2 tasking and co-ordinating meetings.
- Analysts use the Executive Information System and i2 geo-mapping system to integrate performance management data into the strategic assessments which they produce.
- A QoS group examines the findings of the British Crime Survey and Policing Performance Assessment Framework surveys. This group considers the links to National QoS Commitment and has introduced action plans for improving the way in which staff keep people informed. It is anticipated that information derived from this group will become part of the monthly performance bulletins.
- A dedicated business benefits realisation accountant is linked into improving efficiency. Activity-based costing data is used to challenge resourcing decisions.
- Comparative data is used by the force to identify how performance can be improved within a framework that has regard to European Convention on Human Rights fairness, performance and supervision. An example of this is an examination of the use of officer discretion across divisions, which examines and probes the variation in arrest rates per incident attended.
- The force encourages managers continuously to improve performance in their area of responsibility. An example of this is work undertaken within the OCD to move away from simple data targets to analysis of performance in three areas of business – supervision, hotspots and abandoned call rates – with a view to realigning processes and staff and thus improving performance.

Work in progress

- An Analytics forum, bringing together staff at all level, is being developed to promote a wider understanding of the benefits of the Analytics approach to continuous improvement.
- The performance manager is currently drawing together a revised framework which will encompass all strands of performance management within a single, interlinked framework.
- The force has measures in place to assess individual officer performance, although these do not take account of the varying roles undertaken by CBMs; and the force is working to develop a tailored assessment process, linked to outcomes.

Areas for improvement

- The robust performance framework and the development of the Analytics approach are not yet well understood throughout the force. This is particularly so at district

level, and a communications strategy to promote greater understanding would benefit the force.

- Intelligence analysts use i2 to draw data from the Executive Information System. This tool works well but analysts have to spend time in data cleansing, due to the poor input quality of some data at the point of entry. Officers and staff need to be made aware of the importance of getting data input right first time, allowing analysts to focus on their core role.
- Divisions are not always informed of what performance issues will be raised at quarterly performance reviews, leading to disproportionate effort in preparing for the meeting. The force should consider setting out a schedule of the issues, including finance and HR, that will be subject to challenge, allowing a more considered approach to be taken but retaining the facility to cover newly emerging factors.
- Although the force collects a significant amount of survey data in relation to call handling, the positive feedback does not always reach frontline staff; the force should ensure that the data is used for internal feedback as well as improving service delivery.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Performance management

TITLE: Analytics

PROBLEM:

An opportunity was seen to challenge and develop thinking and problem solving, using analytical processes, and to further develop understanding at a strategic level.

SOLUTION:

- Staff officers to the DCC, who holds the performance portfolio in the force, became the leads on analytics, founding an analytics unit within the ACPO suite.
- Two members of the unit attended a key conference in Chicago, 'Executing an Analytics Based Strategy'. Key speakers were leaders in the field of analytics and balanced scorecard methodologies, such as Dr Robert Kaplan, Dr David Norton, and Dr Thomas Davenport.
- Further research was undertaken on methodologies and software tools, which remains an ongoing process.
- Quarterly forums are chaired by the DCC with attendees ranging from superintendents to performance analysts. The range of attendees is important to get buy-in throughout the organisational hierarchy, improving the understanding of the analytical techniques available not only by those who will be undertaking the analysis, but also by those who will task the work to them.
- Analytical work conducted on demand profiling and matching staffing to demand has been recognised as forward thinking. An entry into the Operational Research Society President's Medal award in relation to the work has been submitted and is currently being assessed.

OUTCOME(S):

The work undertaken has enabled the analytics unit and performance analysts across the force to develop the information they are able to provide to the chief officers and command teams. Hypotheses are tested in depth with a greater drive to explore issues not previously examined.

FORCE CONTACT: Kirsty Wernham, Force Performance Manager/DCC Staff Officer
01492 511225

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Performance Management

TITLE: Performance management framework for Neighbourhood Policing

PROBLEM:

NWP has been at the forefront of performance management. However, the evolution of Neighbourhood Policing teams has provided challenges in terms of the historical quantitative performance management framework and its suitability for use in the Neighbourhood Policing environment.

SOLUTION:

A bespoke performance management framework for Neighbourhood Policing has been developed containing both quantitative and qualitative measures. The force recognised that all aspects of Neighbourhood Policing should be accounted for in the performance framework and that no compromise could be made in crime reduction and sanction detections. In addition, traditional enforcement, response and criminal investigation needed to be included, but it was also paramount to include engagement, visibility, abstraction from core role, protection, action plans, environmental audits and public communication. By developing a new framework, NWP has moved its Neighbourhood Policing teams towards achieving their aims of safety, satisfaction, reassurance and protection.

OUTCOME(S):

This performance framework has facilitated formal recognition of the highest performers. It has also identified poorer-performing individuals and teams and allowed remedial action to be taken to improve performance and increase satisfaction with service delivery.

A recent independent survey highlighted a number of areas:

- Local officers were perceived to have the most impact on a neighbourhood;
- Respondents were more worried about being a victim of crime outside rather than within their local neighbourhood;
- There was a significant improvement in the number of respondents who know their local officer or PCSO; and
- Respondents were most likely to say they felt their area was either the same or safer than a year ago.

FORCE CONTACT: Force Analytics, ACPO Staff Office – 01492 511225

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

The force achieved an overall Fair grade for protecting vulnerable people (PVP) in the 2006 baseline assessment. The 2007 inspection provides assessment grades for the four individual elements of child abuse, domestic abuse, public protection and missing persons.

PVP deals with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical and where a poor police response poses risks for those concerned. The interdependencies between the four component elements of PVP are recognised by the force. Each division has a dedicated public protection unit (PPU) with operational accountability and control devolved to divisional commanders. Strategic and policy responsibility is retained centrally by the strategic PPU. These multidisciplinary PPUs have responsibility for the investigation of child abuse, domestic violence, the abuse of vulnerable adults and the management and monitoring of sex offenders and dangerous offenders.

Strengths

- The force has realigned responsibilities at chief officer level so that the PVP portfolio is held by the ACC, who chairs the strategic public protection meeting with standing agenda items for all disciplines. The meeting is attended by command team members, the head of public protection and lead members from the police authority. This allows the force to maintain a tight corporate framework in this area.

- The chief officer team clearly recognises the way in which the force needs to develop performance in this area. It has, equally, shown a commitment to doing this, as evidenced by the recent appointment of a dedicated detective superintendent for public protection, and the commitment of £195,000 to provide administrative support and training for PVP.
- The Chief Constable has required all district inspectors to incorporate public protection issues into local policing plans. This is a positive step in raising both awareness of the risk carried and chief officers' expectations of inspectors in monitoring performance information and in managing risk. The standard of the plans is subject to scrutiny through the ACPO quarterly performance review process meetings with divisions.
- Effective links are achieved across the PVP disciplines via the daily PPU briefings. Lessons learnt are disseminated through the force system which is owned by the professional standards department.
- The detective superintendent (public protection) is undertaking a review of how the force provides services to protect vulnerable people. Crucially, the review is supported by investment which will allow the force to increase its capacity and capability. The force has established a project board, led by a chief officer, to oversee the implementation of change.

Work in progress

- Finance has been made available to increase the administrative support for staff in the PPUs, which will allow specialist officers to concentrate on their core roles of protecting children, supporting the victims of domestic abuse and managing sex offenders.
- The force is currently reviewing the welfare screening arrangements for staff working within the PPUs to provide mandatory face-to-face meetings on a rolling six-monthly cycle. This is currently in place for those working within sex offender management and these arrangements will be extended to all PPU staff in the near future, replacing the current process which screens staff through an electronic questionnaire.

Areas for improvement

- Some specialist officers and supervisors are required to provide divisional night and weekend cover. An internal review has recognised the potential benefits of this, but consideration needs to be given to the impact of these abstractions on the officers' ability to perform their core role.
- Across the PVP framework there is evidence of varying levels of training in the four disciplines. The force should consider a corporate approach to delivering minimum levels of training for staff.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	FAIR
-------	------

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 protection of children is a strategic priority for NWP and the force has based dedicated specialist child abuse investigators in divisional PPUs. The units work closely with colleagues from local authority social services departments to safeguard the children of North Wales. The units investigate all intra-familial cases of abuse, and also referrals in relation to professional childcare workers, carers and those in positions of trust who are alleged to have abused children in their care.

The division-based units have operational accountability and control is devolved to divisional commanders but with strategic and policy responsibility retained centrally. There are clear lines of accountability from the division-based PPUs through the divisional commander and from the central PPU detective superintendent (public protection) to the ACPO lead.

The force’s response to child abuse features within its strategic priorities. All district inspectors are required to identify the issues relating to PVP which feature in their local policing plan.

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

Strengths

- The NWP child protection guidelines set out clear guidance, with intranet links to associated documents and resources. The force policies are based upon, and consistent with, the ACPO guidance.
- Each division holds a daily briefing where referrals, as well as information from RMS and iCAD, are considered; detective sergeants mark off or allocate referrals as appropriate.
- On a day-to-day basis staff engage effectively with social services departments and take appropriate action to safeguard children; staff have good relationships with colleagues in partner agencies. At the daily PPU meeting, the detective sergeant assesses where a joint investigation is required and tasks staff to liaise with social services colleagues.
- The force is contributing positively to case conferences, strategy meetings and case discussions. The majority of these are dealt with by PPU detective sergeants, with some allocated to detective constables for further information gathering following the daily briefing. The strategic PPU conducts a quantitative audit of divisional representation at case conferences.
- The force uses the RMS to record and manage child abuse investigations; the iCAD system flags addresses where child abuse allegations have been made, so that the information is available 24/7 to officers attending any incident.
- The RMS automatically generates a task for supervisors to check the work of child abuse investigators. Decisions made are recorded on this system and supervisors regularly dip sample to quality assure investigations.
- Staff have job descriptions which reflect their role and all receive a yearly performance development review. Where staff are required to perform duties in relation to domestic violence, they have received relevant training.
- Inspectors are clear as to their responsibilities as designated officers in relation to taking children into police protection when they are deemed to be at risk of significant harm.
- All officers are trained in joint investigation and achieving best evidence. Currently, approximately 70% of all child abuse investigators are trained in the Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme (ICIDP) or equivalent.

Work in progress

- Representation at local safeguarding children boards varies across the divisions. The force has identified this problem and chief officers have stipulated that a senior member of the divisional command team should attend.
- The force has undertaken a survey of secondary school children in order to identify issues of concern for children; this information will be used in its widest sense to identify how NWP can better safeguard young people.

- A recently introduced central audit function in the strategic PPU is piloting key performance indicators for child abuse. The audit function has recently gathered baseline data which will be used over the next six to twelve months to influence divisional performance.
- Management information is available through the RMS in relation to workloads. The force is currently introducing the following key performance indicators: number of sanction detections, repeat victims, risk resolution and activity measurement.

Areas for improvement

- A disparity is evident in the level of resources invested by divisions in child abuse investigation. The force has reviewed staffing levels previously, particularly in light of the Laming recommendations, but there is no documented rationale for current levels. Some divisions have adequate structures and resources in place to deal with the volume and complexity of their work, whereas others are struggling to cope with demand. The force needs urgently to review resources against demand and complexity.
- The disparity in resource levels affects the quality of supervision both of the staff delivering the service and of the management of risk. Examples of some sound supervisory practices contrast with difficulties of supervision experienced in other areas. The force needs to keep supervision levels in the PPUs under review.
- The force deems it desirable that child protection officers are trained detectives but there is no requirement to have attended ICIDP. Those who are not trained detectives are generally allocated less complex cases, but the force should nevertheless consider how it will bring all child protection officers up to ICIDP status.
- Child abuse investigators assist in providing 24/7 cover for domestic abuse issues, which detracts from their capacity to deal with child abuse issues, because of both the abstraction itself and the subsequent rest days. The force should review resilience in PPUs to minimise any detrimental impact upon the child protection function.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	GOOD
-------	------

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

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

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

As with the investigation of child abuse, responding to and investigating domestic violence is the responsibility of all police officers. Again, however, forces have dedicated staff within this area of work, although their roles vary. In some forces staff undertake a support/liaison 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

NWP has dedicated specialist staff to co-ordinate the force's response to domestic violence. Specialist domestic violence officers, based within divisional PPUs, provide a tailored response to victims of domestic violence. The force has a policy of positive action with regard to the arrest of domestic violence perpetrators and has agreed a joint target with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to increase the number of prosecutions for domestic violence by 15%. Strong management arrangements are in place that accurately identify domestic violence incidents. Key to this process is the integration of the crime recording, incident recording and custody system through the niche RMS. The force is making progress in service provision in this area and is raising awareness of homicide prevention.

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

Strengths

- The ACC provides clear leadership in improving the force's approach to domestic violence investigation. He is proactive in raising the profile of domestic violence within the force and effectively champions better service delivery. The ACC commissions regular audits to ensure policy compliance.
- A police authority lead member is involved in the scrutiny of domestic violence investigations on a quarterly basis; this is a positive means of assessing the impact of training, policy compliance and levels of supervision.
- The force has joint targets with the LCJB to increase the number of prosecutions for domestic violence, and these are jointly monitored by the LCJB.
- The force information-sharing protocol is a joint agreement between NWP and its partners, including the Family Court Service, which recognises the importance of information sharing and sets out the responsibilities of various partners.
- The domestic abuse policy has been reviewed to take on board the recommendations of a best value review; the policy was updated in August 2006 and is compliant with National Centre for Policing Excellence guidance.
- Domestic violence and data as to the force's performance in this area of business are a feature of the annual policing plan.
- All divisions feature domestic violence as a priority in their control strategy. There is evidence of analysts using data and issues of concern raised by domestic violence officers to inform the force strategic assessment. Established links to the tasking and co-ordinating process ensure that domestic violence incidents are considered at both daily and fortnightly tasking meetings.
- The force has an effective risk-assessment process in place, underpinned by the RMS. Officers complete risk identification when attending domestic violence incidents, and this also identifies potential child protection issues. A fuller, more complex risk assessment is then undertaken by specialist domestic violence officers to ensure that suitable interventions are put into place to protect both the victim and any children. Clear procedures exist at divisional level for referral to social services departments of child protection issues emerging from domestic violence incidents.
- The force engages with multi-agency domestic violence forums on a regular basis. Divisions participate in multi-agency domestic violence forums at community safety partnership level; partnership domestic violence co-ordinators (based in local authorities) are funded by the Welsh Assembly for the next two years.
- Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) are operating successfully; staff gave examples of tangible outcomes from work undertaken by partners to protect victims of domestic violence and bring perpetrators to justice. All high-risk perpetrators identified through the MARACs feature in tasking and co-ordinating processes to ensure positive action. The force undertakes audits of the MARAC process to monitor the progress of action taken.
- Officers and staff are aware of the force's positive action policy on domestic violence and clearly know what is required. The force has provided domestic violence training

to 1,678 members of staff, including those working in the control room. Officers and staff receive inputs on diversity issues relating to domestic violence; these are incorporated into a guide issued to all staff.

- Call handlers use drop-down menus to assist when taking calls, and the training received in relation to domestic violence issues has given them more confidence to handle such calls. Operators have the facility to put 'special situation' flags on incidents, which are then reviewed by the iCAD administrator.

Work in progress

- Western division has implemented a supervision checklist for finalising domestic violence investigations. The force has promoted this approach as good practice and is introducing a domestic violence investigation template which will be completed in all cases.
- Central division uses a domestic violence incident protocol which is pasted onto domestic violence action forms, to allow the duty inspector to task and monitor actions. The force should consider extending this approach across the force.
- Staffing levels for domestic violence investigation have not increased commensurately with the additional workload generated by the focus on domestic violence and the introduction of both risk assessments and MARACs. A key problem for staff is the lack of administrative support. The force has undertaken a review of staffing levels in light of the additional demand and new funds have been committed to facilitate the extra staff.

Areas for improvement

- Although a structured approach to supervision is adopted in each division, supervisors with multiple responsibilities feel stretched and cannot devote sufficient time to the supervision of domestic violence cases. A review of supervision levels within the PPU's is needed.
- Domestic violence officers have recently received the two-day Centrex training course, but this was less beneficial for those staff who had been in post for some time. Officers will gain most from specialist training at the time of, or prior to, appointment, particularly in relation to the risk assessor role which they are required to perform.
- Domestic violence officers experience difficulties in obtaining updates of bail conditions from the courts. The force should pursue this through the LCJB.
- Front-line officers complete risk identification forms when attending domestic violence incidents which are then sent electronically, via the RMS, to domestic violence officers for completion of a subsequent risk assessment. On occasions, the domestic violence officers experience problems in receiving the forms if the front-line officer does not tag the incident. Although this is not a widespread problem, front-line officers need constant reminders of the requirement to tag domestic violence incidents appropriately, and compliance with this should be monitored.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
-------	------

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.

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

Contextual factors

Public protection, by its nature, is a high-risk area of policing. However, the police alone are not responsible for managing this risk in its entirety, and the force works closely with the probation service to manage those offenders who pose the greatest risk.

NWP has dedicated sex offender monitoring officers based in divisional PPUs to manage sex offenders and violent offenders. These offenders are managed under the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), in three categories: Category 1 (registered sex offenders (RSOs)), Category 2 (other sex offenders and violent offenders) and Category 3 (dangerous offenders and potentially dangerous persons).

Sex offender monitoring officers are responsible for conducting regular visits to monitor the behaviour of RSOs and use a national computerised case management system – the Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) – to record information and link with other forces' records.

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

Strengths

- The force has realigned responsibilities at chief officer level so that the PVP portfolio is held by the ACC, who chairs the strategic public protection meeting with standing agenda items for all disciplines. The meeting is attended by command team members, the head of public protection and lead members from the police authority. This allows the force to maintain a tight corporate framework in this area.
- NWP has comprehensive policy guidelines setting out how sex offenders and dangerous offenders should be managed.
- The public protection co-ordinator in the strategic PPU receives and inputs all new notifications of RSOs. These are then allocated to an appropriate sex offender monitoring officer for ongoing management at the appropriate MAPPA level.
- There is evidence that the force contributes positively and appropriately at all levels of MAPPA, with representation by detective chief inspectors and detective inspectors at MAPPA meetings, supported by the sex offender monitoring officers. On occasions this responsibility is devolved downwards. The probation service administers the meetings and circulates the minutes; vital information from the minutes is transferred onto ViSOR.

- Sex offender monitoring officers work with other agencies to manage potentially dangerous persons. Interventions are put in place as required and where necessary cases are referred to the MARAC or MAPPA processes.
- Where appropriate, issues relating to RSOs are considered through the daily tasking process, where risk assessment and resource requirements are brought to the attention of divisional command teams. Patrol officers receive relevant intelligence briefings about RSOs to facilitate an effective flow of information between patrol officers and sex offender monitoring officers.
- Dip sampling of ViSOR records is undertaken on a quarterly basis by the strategic PPU to monitor the level of scrutiny being applied by divisional PPU supervisors to the management of RSOs.
- The use on Western Division of CBMs to conduct RSO visits has been reviewed by the force and as a result all future visits will be conducted by specialist RSO managers.
- Sex offender monitoring officers all have current job descriptions and role profiles which reflect their core roles and responsibilities.

Work in progress

- The force's review of public protection recognises that Western Division would benefit from an additional sex offender monitoring officer to improve its capacity to manage RSOs. This is being addressed by the recruitment of an additional RSO manager.
- Eastern Division has adopted the (forthcoming) ACPO Guidance on Protecting the Public in respect of the timing of visits to RSOs. Central and Western Divisions are applying force policy, although this is not consistent with the ACPO guidance. The force should adopt a common policy across divisions, preferably based upon the ACPO guidance.
- The force is currently providing additional training to supervisors in relation to ViSOR. Some supervisors interviewed were unsighted on some risk management issues and their roles and responsibilities in relation to reviewing and endorsing risk management plans.
- Although sex offender monitoring officers have received training – including CEOP and National Criminal Intelligence Service training in relation to their role – none of the officers interviewed had been trained in Risk Matrix 2000. Accredited training will be delivered to all specialist staff in September 2007.

Areas for improvement

- The lack of consistency in the way that divisions input information to ViSOR is problematic. The force should issue corporate guidelines to achieve commonality, as this will provide clarity for staff as they search the system and will promote reliable information sharing.

- The force does not have a policy as to whether potentially dangerous persons should be recorded on ViSOR. At the present time, a paper file is maintained with relevant markers being placed on RMS and iCAD. The force should define its policy stance and consider placing potentially dangerous persons on ViSOR, to ensure adequate cross-border information sharing.
- Some divisions are using restricted duties officers to undertake ViSOR input duties; the force should ensure that all staff, including the new administrative staff to be recruited, are vetted.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	GOOD
-------	------

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

Analysis conducted by NWP indicates that the force receives over 1,000 reports of missing persons each year, at a potential cost to the force in pursuing enquiries of almost £2 million. The geography of the force area and the annual influx of tourists have consequences for the nature and number of missing persons reported to the force.

The force has a clear policy for the investigation of missing persons, based upon National Centre for Policing Excellence guidance, which is readily available to staff. Uniformed patrol officers are responsible for the initial investigation of missing persons, supported by a range of specialist resources which can be called upon as and when required; investigations receive robust management oversight.

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

Strengths

- The ACC has strategic responsibility for missing persons work. A clear accountability framework for the management of missing persons features the force senior investigating officer (SIO), SMT members and detective officers. The iTRACE system automatically emails these designated posts to inform them of the tasks required in reviewing missing persons investigations. The process is well understood by all involved.
- A problem profile for missing persons has been created, enabling the force to understand the nature and frequency of missing persons reports. It features the number of repeats, those missing from care, the criminality associated with some missing persons investigations, and the financial and resource implications.

- All missing persons are subject to a risk assessment. This is initially conducted by the force control room upon receipt of the report, with additional opportunities throughout the process for supervisors to reassess the risk with duty inspectors.
- Supervisors are informed of missing persons by the force control room so that an appropriate level of supervision is established at an early stage of the investigation. Staff are aware of their initial responsibilities and the roles played by their supervisors.
- Inspectors are responsible for the daily review of missing persons investigations, which are considered at daily tasking and co-ordinating meetings. Tasks generated at these meetings are monitored actively to ensure that actions are being progressed.
- The iTRACE computer system is an effective means of managing missing persons enquiries. Reviews of missing persons enquiries by inspectors, detective officers, SMTs and SIOs are automatically generated by the system, at predetermined intervals as dictated by force policy.
- The strategic PPU has responsibility for force policy and promotes policy compliance through the review process. A member of the PPU scrutinises every missing from home file on a daily basis, since they are required to do so in order that files may be closed.
- Where appropriate, officers have regular contact with social services departments and mental health professionals during missing persons investigations. Protocols are in place with various partners, including an established protocol with mountain rescue organisations relating to the search for missing persons. These protocols set out training requirements, the competencies that staff require and the role of police commanders and SIOs.
- The force has adopted joint protocols with partner agencies regarding persons missing from care. It has undertaken a problem profile in relation to persons missing from home to assist in understanding the opportunities for preventative work. This covers rates, repeats, persons missing from care, criminality and financial/resource implications, and will be used to influence the understanding of partners with a view to reducing the incidence of those missing from care.

Work in progress

- CBMs have been provided with BlackBerry devices, through which they can access the iTRACE system and manage missing persons enquiries without the need to return to the police station.

Areas for improvement

- Officers have not received training on conducting return interviews with traced missing persons, resulting in a lack of a structured approach. This is particularly evident for return interviews conducted with those previously reported as missing from care. The force should introduce guidance to officers as to the preferred structure that return interviews should follow.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	Assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AFI	Area for improvement
APACS	Assessment of Policing and Community Safety
ASB	Anti-social behaviour

B

BCU	Basic command unit
-----	--------------------

C

CBM	Community beat manager
CT	Counter-terrorism

D

DCC	Deputy chief constable
-----	------------------------

E

EVA	Environmental visual audit
-----	----------------------------

H

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

I

IAG	Independent advisory group
-----	----------------------------

ICAD	Intergraph computer-aided dispatch
ICIDP	Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme
L	
LCJB	Local criminal justice board
M	
MAPPA	Multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	Multi-agency risk assessment conference
N	
NWP	North Wales Police
P	
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PPU	Public Protection Unit
PVP	Protecting vulnerable people
Q	
QoS	Quality of service
R	
RMS	Records management system
RSO	Registered sex offender
S	
SGC	Specific Grading Criteria
SIO	Senior investigating officer
SMT	Senior management team

V

ViSOR Violent and Sex Offenders Register