



**NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE**

**29 MARCH – 1 APRIL 2004**

**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER**

**COMPLIANCE REPORT**

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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a PNC Compliance Inspection of North Yorkshire Police between 29<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004.
- 1.1.2 North Yorkshire Police was selected for inspection as part of the annual inspection programme operated by the PNC Compliance Audit Team. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors adopt a risk based approach to the annual plan using statistical information provided by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) on a monthly basis. The monthly statistics, supplied to HMIC and all forces in the United Kingdom, outline performance of Forces in relation to the key performance indicators of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) PNC Compliance Strategy. (see para. 1.4.3)
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from strategic, PNC and customer level management and users at Force Headquarters and at two of the three Area Command Units (ACU - referred to in this report as Division). These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 North Yorkshire Police are responsible for policing the largest county in England. North Yorkshire covers 7,770 square kilometres from Selby in the south to Richmond in the north. The county also boasts two national parks, namely the North Yorkshire Moors and the Yorkshire Dales and also has over 72 kilometres of coastline. The Force shares its boundaries with six other police forces, namely Durham, Cleveland, Lancashire, Cumbria, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.
- 1.2.2 Operational policing services are currently provided from three devolved geographical divisions, known locally as areas: Western Area with headquarters at Ripon, Eastern Area with headquarters at Malton and Central Area whose headquarters are in York. Support functions are carried out from the Force Headquarters at Newby Wiske.
- 1.2.3 The Force is headed by a chief officer group which has responsibility for the strategic direction and control of the force. The group is led by the Chief Constable, a Deputy Chief Constable, a newly appointed Acting Assistant Chief Constable, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The current Force strength is approximately 1,400 full-time equivalent police officers, 700 police staff, 160 special constables and approximately 30 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO).
- 1.2.4 The PNC function within North Yorkshire Police is managed by the Administration of Justice Department, which has responsibility for the Records Management Unit (RMU), the PNC Bureau, PNC Liaison and other administrative support functions including Firearms Licensing and Administration of Justice Units.

- 1.2.5 The RMU is responsible for the input of Arrest/Summons reports, Court Results, vetting checks on behalf of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), Bail Conditions, Keywording, Back Record Conversion and the management of outstanding Impending Prosecutions. The RMU operates between the hours of 0900 hours and 1700 hours Monday to Friday.
- 1.2.6 The PNC Bureau is responsible for updating vehicle and property records, Wanted/Missing reports and Disqualified Drivers. They are also responsible for conducting Vehicle On-Line Descriptive Searches (VODS) and Queries Using Extended Search Techniques (QUEST) searches on behalf of the Force. The bureau also provides the role of DVLA Liaison for the Force. The bureau aims to provide a 24 hour/7 day service to the force but in the event that the bureau is closed, urgent operational updates are carried out by one of the controls rooms that exist within the force. Divisional intelligence staff also conduct VODS searches.
- 1.2.7 The creation of Arrest/Summons reports on the PNC is a two tier process within North Yorkshire Police. Initially, a skeleton<sup>1</sup> record is created following an automatic update from the custody record using the PNC Case Registration System (PCRS), provided by STL Limited, as the interface to PNC. Following electronic transmission of the initial charge details, the officer in the case is responsible for completing a manual Source Input Document (SID) and forwarding it with the fingerprint form to the RMU for complete update to PNC. Force instructions dictate that full and complete SIDs must be submitted within 5 days of a person being processed via the custody suite.
- 1.2.8 Court Results are currently received by the RMU from the Magistrates Courts in hard copy format. The average length of time to receive the print outs ranges between 5 days and 65 days. At the time of the inspection, work was at the latter stages to introduce access to the court information via Equis<sup>2</sup> terminals situated in the RMU. This initiative should enable the force to gain access to the relevant information within 1 to 2 days of an offender appearing at court, depending on validation of the information at the court. Crown Court results are sent manually from the Crown Courts to the Force and as a result can take considerably longer to arrive at the RMU.
- 1.2.9 Since September 2003, the Force has been running a major forcewide initiative known as 'Operation Delivery'. This initiative is aimed at reducing the levels of outstanding identified criminal suspects with the intention of accelerating the development of National Intelligence Model structures and processes. At the time of the inspection, the Force had made an additional 4,500 arrests since the initiative commenced.

### **1.3 Methodology**

- 1.3.1 A full inspection against the 2003 PNC Protocols was carried out, covering the sections of; Leadership; Policy & Strategy; People; Partnerships & Resources; Processes and Results.

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

<sup>2</sup> The system used by the Magistrates Courts to record the outcomes of court hearings.

1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of;

- **Excellent** - Comprehensive evidence of good performance against the ACPO performance indicators and effective processes. Good-to-strong positive result trends over the last twelve months.
- **Good** – Evidence of average/above average performance against the ACPO performance indicators and effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive. Results over the last twelve months show performance is not on target but is heading in the right direction.
- **Fair** - Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others. Some favourable external comparisons but performance over the last twelve months against the ACPO performance indicators has not been on target and in need of improvement.
- **Poor** - No or limited evidence of effective activity. Performance against the ACPO performance indicators over the last twelve months has been poor and/or deteriorating markedly and in need of improvement.

1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with documentation to support their adherence to the protocols. This was followed up by a visit to the Force with HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducting numerous interviews with key staff. The visit to the Force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection, which was based upon reality checks. The reality checks included a review of processes within the RMU when updating PNC records from source documentation.

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

#### **1.4 Current Performance**

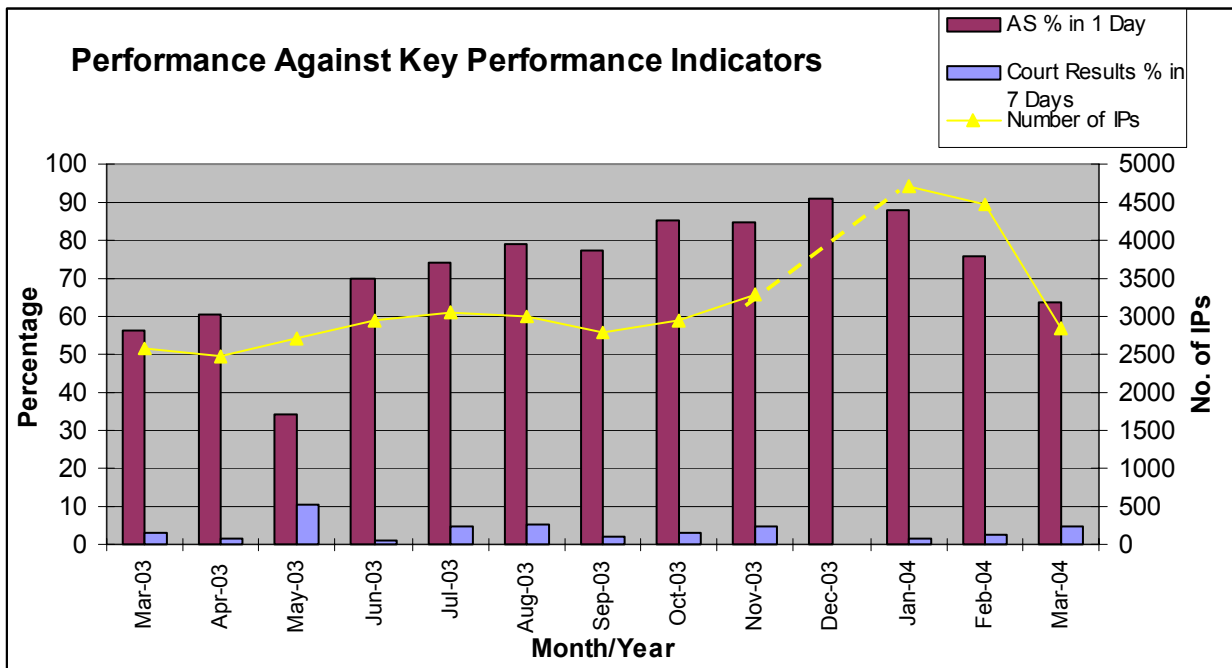
1.4.1 On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2000, ACPO Council endorsed the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling;

- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Relevancy

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

- 1.4.3 With regards to individual forces, a number of performance indicators (PIs) specifically for PNC data standards were set. Each force has a responsibility to achieve the targets set by the PIs in order to improve their position for each of the aspects mentioned above. The key PIs of the strategy are as follows: -
- i. Arrest & Charge – 90% of cases to be entered within 24 hours (where forces are using skeleton records as initial entry, full update must be achieved within 5 days)
  - ii. Court Case Results – 100% to be entered within 72 hours of coming into police possession. (Magistrates Courts have their own target of three days for the delivery of data to the police, therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 7 days, to take account of weekends and holiday periods)
- 1.4.4 North Yorkshire Police have experienced mixed results in terms of timeliness of input of skeleton Arrest/ Summons records in the 12 months to February 2004. In March 2003, the force was achieving 56.3% of records within 24 hours against the target of 90%. There were continued improvements until December 2003 when the peak of 90.8% was achieved. However, in the first three months of 2004, this performance has declined with the force only achieving 63.9% in March 2004, below the national average of 81.1%. In a similar trend to the percentage entered within 24 hours, the time taken to enter the quickest 90% showed signs of improvements towards the latter part of 2003 but with declining performance in the first quarter of 2004. Since August 2003, the time taken to enter the quickest 90% reduced from 30 days to 1 day in December 2003, achieving the ACPO target. However, during 2004, performance has declined considerably from 3 days in January 2004 to 57 days in March 2004. This is well above the England and Wales national average of 20 days.
- 1.4.5 The performance trend in relation to Court Results has been less consistent and current performance is well below the ACPO target of 100% within 7 days of the court appearance. Over the last twelve months, performance has ranged from 10.7% in May 2003 dropping to 2.5% in February 2004. In December 2003, the Force failed to register a single result within the target time as 0% of cases were updated within 7 days of the appearance date. In terms of the number of days to enter the quickest 90% of results, performance ranges from the Force's best performance of 31 days in April 2003 to a high of 468 days in December 2003. The latest data available at the time of writing this report, March 2004, showed that the Force is taking 81 days to enter the quickest 90% of court results. This is above the national average of 70 days. This is viewed as an area of concern by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.
- 1.4.6 At the time of the inspection, the number of outstanding impending prosecutions (IPs) owned by the Force had increased by 73% from 2,586 in March 2003 to 4,475 in February 2004. The increase was, in part, due to the introduction of Operation Delivery that had seen an increase of 4,500 arrests compared to a similar period in the previous year and also to a build up of a back log of court registers awaiting input to PNC. During the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that the reviewing of old IPs has been reduced in the last eighteen months due to limits on resources. In anticipation of the inspection, work within the RMU had been focused on removing the backlog of court results. The result of this focus is displayed in the latest data which shows that in March 2004, the number of IPs stands at 2,837, a net increase of 9.7% from March 2003. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors remain to be assured that the Force is continually managing all its outstanding cases on PNC.

1.4.7 A graph illustrating North Yorkshire’s performance in the 12 months to March 2004 is shown below.



Note: The dotted line between Nov 03 and Jan 04 for the Number of IPs has been included to show the trend during the period, although PITO have been unable to provide IP statistics for Dec 03..

**1.5 Conclusions**

1.5.1 HMIC’s assessment of PNC compliance within the Force has been assessed as: **FAIR**.

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

1.5.2.1 Her Majesty’s Inspector is concerned that there is no strategic direction for PNC within the Force. The lack of a PNC Steering Group within the Force has not provided the PNC with the necessary profile to ensure that improvements in performance can be made and that the force can maximise its use in the investment being made to PNC.

1.5.2.2 The Force has been unable to develop consistent performance in relation to the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy for PNC. The Force is constantly firefighting, transferring resources to tackle backlogs whilst introducing backlogs in areas where resources have been removed. However, Her Majesty’s Inspector is pleased to note that plans to improve performance in both the creation of the A/S reports and the updating of court results are in the latter stages. The introduction of an electronic SID and the building of an interface for the court results should provide an opportunity for the Force to improve performance and provide consistency to performance.

1.5.2.2 Further work is required to improve the communication of information throughout the Force. This was viewed as a generic problem throughout the Force and not specific to PNC issues. However, the awareness of functionality of the PNC that assists operational policing on a daily basis requires immediate attention to make the most of opportunities arising from use of the system, e.g. vehicle insurance and driving licence information.

1.5.2.3 Her Majesty's Inspector is encouraged to find a strong audit regime within the Information Compliance Unit. Consistent, robust auditing of PNC is important to ensure that data owned by the force is reliable and up to date. The Information Compliance Unit has a well established risk based process to develop an annual audit plan.

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

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

1.5.2.5 A summary of good practice and recommendation from this report are shown at Appendices A and B of this report. Summaries of the recommendations of the previous reports are shown at Appendices C to F of this report.

## 2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

### 2.1 Leadership

- 2.1.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were disappointed to find that there is no strategic direction or long term planning process for the future of the PNC within North Yorkshire Police. The Force does not currently have a PNC Steering Group although PNC issues are discussed at the Force's Information Management Board (IMB), a strategic group chaired by a Chief Superintendent. Following a review of previous minutes of the IMB, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that PNC does not receive the necessary level of attention within the IMB. Many items raised within the meeting relating to PNC are often left until the end and if time is not available to discuss the issues, they are carried over to the next meeting. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were encouraged to note that plans are being developed to introduce a PNC Steering Group and that the newly appointed chief officer is committed to raising the profile of PNC and maximising opportunities to improve performance. It is also planned that the chief officer will chair the new PNC Steering Group.
- 2.1.2 The lack of strategy is a factor in the poor performance of North Yorkshire over the last twelve months. The Force is operating in a reactive manner to issues that arise for PNC and there is a culture of 'firefighting' in the RMU. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also found that the management structure, including lines of reporting and communication, may be an additional factor. In order for a chief officer to make decisions relating to PNC, for example resource issues, they must first be provided with sufficient information to make that decision.
- 2.1.3 In the case of North Yorkshire, there is currently no PNC Steering Group but there are also three layers of management between the PNC Liaison Officer, the first point of contact for performance information, and the chief officer. The PNC Liaison Officer reports to Head of Criminal Justice, who in turn reports to a Superintendent, the Head of the Administration of Justice (A of J). The Head of A of J reports to the Acting Assistant Chief Constable. The result is that the chief officer is unaware of the Force's performance, both against the ACPO performance indicators and in comparison to other forces. Ideally, the PNC Liaison Officer should have a direct line of communication to the chief officer, either formally via the PNC Steering Group or less formal on an ad hoc basis when the need arises.

### Recommendation 1

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police continue with plans to introduce the PNC Steering Group. Membership of the group should include representation from all stakeholders and the frequency of meetings should be set at intervals that will allow all members to attend. The group should have clear and defined terms of reference, including the development of a strategy for the future of PNC.**

2.1.4 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were encouraged to learn that Management Information is supplied to Chief Officers and Area Commanders, concerning the quality of information being supplied by officers submitting manual SIDs. The RMU collate information relating to quality issues and record the performance of officers in a database. The contents of the database are distributed to command teams to enable any necessary action to take place against officers who persistently submit poor quality information. During focus groups and interviews, officers were aware that SIDs should contain good quality information and that forms would be returned if substandard information was supplied to the RMU. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider this as good practice.

## 2.2 Policy and Strategy

2.2.1 With regard to policy and strategy, the inspection highlighted some areas of good practice and some that warrant review. These can be described under three broad headings: PNC Policy & Strategy; Security and Data Protection. Each of these topics is discussed in further detail below.

### 2.2.2 PNC Policy & Strategy

2.2.2.1 North Yorkshire Police do not currently have a formalised strategy for the PNC. There is a need for the Force to develop a documented strategy to enable it to plan how it will ensure that the force is maximising its use of PNC. A documented strategy, incorporating topics such as Marketing and Awareness, Security and Training will provide a suitable framework to improve performance and exploit opportunities to improve efficiency. A strategy would also provide ownership of issues to stakeholders enabling the Force to become proactive as opposed to the current state of reaction.

### Recommendation 2

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police urgently considers a formal documented strategy for PNC, either a PNC Strategy in its own right or incorporated into a local Information Management Strategy (See Recommendation 2 of the HMIC PNC Data Quality and Timeliness 2<sup>nd</sup> Report – Appendix F). The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.**

2.2.2.2 In addition to lack of strategy, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also found that there are no policies concerning the use of PNC, nor the submission of data for update to PNC. From discussions with staff, it was discovered that this problem was not specific to PNC as there are many functions within the Force where no policies exist.

2.2.2.3 In terms of PNC, it is important that the responsibilities of all people, whether they are using PNC for themselves or on behalf of somebody else, are clearly defined and also what penalties may exist for non-compliance with the policy. Officers are currently accountable for the quality of information they supply, but this is on an informal basis. A policy will provide the formal solution required to hold staff truly accountable and also raise the awareness amongst staff.

2.2.2.4 Within the RMU, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discovered that despite no policies being in existence for PNC, documented procedures were being developed to enable the day to day running of the department and the training of new staff. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that in order to develop robust procedures, a suitable policy should exist first. A policy, outlining individual responsibilities will provide more clarity to the procedures, enabling staff to become more aware of the reasons for doing certain functions. The high turnover of staff and the need for procedural guidance for new staff were provided as an explanation for expediency of the procedures, however, a policy must also be developed.

### Recommendation 3

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police:**

- **Develop suitable policies for the management of PNC. The policies should outline the role and responsibilities of staff across the various functions relating to the use of PNC and include details of penalties for non-compliance.**
- **Document forcewide procedures in support of the policies outlined above.**

### 2.2.3 Security

2.2.3.1 Responsibility for the granting and removal of access to PNC rests with the PNC Bureau. On successful completion of a training course, the PNC trainer sends an e-mail to the PNC Bureau listing candidates on the course who require access. The nature of the course, for example Names Enquiry or Vehicle Enquiry, and the job title of the candidate determine what level of access a user is given to the system. Due to time constraints during the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were unable to examine user groups and training records. However, they are of the opinion that only suitably trained staff are given access to the system.

2.2.3.2 In terms of the removal of access, for example if a member of staff leaves the Force or changes posts within the Force to one that requires less system access privileges, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were less convinced that a robust system exists. There is no formal mechanism to notify the PNC Bureau of personnel changes within North Yorkshire Police. Whilst there are logical obstacles to overcome before a user can gain access to PNC, the current situation means that users are not being removed in a timely manner.

2.2.3.3 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also learned that currently the Force does not alter a user's access level if their role changes. The reason for this is to reduce the burden on the PNC Trainers if a user decides to move roles again in the future and requires a high level of access. This approach is leaving the Force open to potential misuse of the system as users are being given access to more areas of the system than they require in fulfilment of their duties. At the time of the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that user access levels and numbers of users were being reviewed, to reduce the risks of misuse.

**Recommendation 4**

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

- **Introduce a formal mechanism to notify the PNC Bureau of personnel changes. Information should be supplied on a regular basis, either weekly or fortnightly, detailing staff who have left the force and also staff who have changed roles within the force.**
- **Introduce a Force Policy in relation to the supply of information and the granting and removal of user access.**

2.2.3.4 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also encouraged to learn of plans for the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) to become more proactive in identifying misuse of Information Technology within North Yorkshire. The PSU has recently introduced the Professional Standards Information Unit which has responsibility for monitoring the use of systems or reacting to intelligence that a system is being misused. This is viewed as good practice by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

#### 2.2.4 Data Protection

2.2.4.1 Data Protection within North Yorkshire is the responsibility of the Information Compliance Unit (ICU). The ICU have overall responsibility for Data Protection, Information Security and Freedom of Information.

2.2.4.2 The Information Compliance Consultant (ICC) is responsible for the day to day management of the ICU and has developed a risk based audit plan for PNC data, based upon the guidance provided in the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were provided with empirical evidence that the force is meeting the objectives of the plan and that all necessary data audits have been completed. In addition to planned audits, the ICC also initiated ad hoc audits to provide further assurance that data on the PNC, owned by North Yorkshire Police is reliable and accurate.

2.2.4.3 The ICU is also responsible for carrying out transaction monitoring on the PNC. An IT system randomly selects a time of day and the three users who conducted transactions at that time, or as close to that time as possible, are selected. Once users have been selected, the ICU print details of all their transactions for the day and sends them out for verification. Up to a maximum of 15 transactions per user, per day are sent. Upon receipt of the list of transactions, a user must indicate the reasons for the transactions then have the documentation endorsed by a line manager before returning it to the ICU. An escalation process, via the PSU, also exists when replies are not received or information returned suggests that a transaction may not have been done for a legitimate purpose. During interviews and focus groups, all officers and staff were aware of this process and found it to be a suitable deterrent against misuse of the system.

2.2.4.4 The Information Security Policy was also found to be up to date and written in accordance with the ACPO Community Security Policy and BS7799. The policy is updated on an annual basis but ad hoc updates are made when required, for example, if a new system is introduced or changes to functionality are made to a system.

## 2.3 People

### 2.3.1 Marketing

2.3.1.1 The level of awareness of the various functions that PNC carries out was very low throughout the Force. Many officers were unaware of the Vehicle On-line Descriptive Search (VODS) or Queries Using Enhanced Search Techniques (QUEST) and the investigative capabilities these provide. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also concerned with the lack of knowledge of recent developments to PNC that provide operational benefits to officers, for example the introduction of vehicle insurance data and access to driving licence information. In one focus group, some officers were surprised to learn what information was available to them.

2.3.1.2 During interviews and focus groups, staff reported that operational officers suffer from 'information overload' concerning communication on issues that affect their work, resulting in a degree of apathy when information is received. Furthermore, the media used to convey messages was also cited as factors to poor communication. A large amount of information is stored on the Force intranet, however, officers stated that there is little time to spend navigating their way around the sites to find information. The Force also uses a concept known as 'Message of the Day' whereby a 'pop-up' message appears on screen at your first log on during a day. However, it was stated that if somebody is off work for two weeks, for example on annual leave, they will return to 14 messages, resulting in the messages being cleared without being read properly. Another method used by the Force is forcewide e-mail messages which are messages sent to all e-mail account holders. Any user can initiate a forcewide e-mail hence there are large numbers being sent on a number of issues. Similar to Message of the Day, the result is that officers do not read the e-mails before clearing them, often missing useful information.

### Recommendation 5

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

### 2.3.2 Training

2.3.2.1 PNC training is provided by one of the IT trainers within Staff Development Services (SDS). There is only one trainer in SDS accredited to train PNC and there is also a member of staff within the RMU.

2.3.2.2 The trainer from SDS is used as the primary source of PNC training but although the member of staff belongs to SDS, they are an area resource. This results in the trainer constantly juggling her time between the requirements of the area and urgent requests from the RMU who have a high turnover of staff. In some cases, RMU staff reported they had to wait up to six months before they received the necessary training to fulfil their role.

- 2.3.2.3 The IT Trainer plans training time based upon the length of certain courses. This usually consists of a week in which a name enquiry and a vehicle/property enquiry course can be carried out. There is no training needs analysis done to determine who is allocated places on courses, places are given upon demand when a request, endorsed by line supervision is received to SDS. One problem identified by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors is that there is no consistency in the decision making by line managers on different areas, resulting in an 'area lottery' for obtaining places.
- 2.3.2.4 The lack of training needs analysis and the area lottery also means that places on PNC courses are being taken by staff who will not use the system in the future. Evidence was provided to show the number of transactions being conducted by some staff, in some cases, less than one transaction per week. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that this is an inefficient way to manage the time of a scarce resource. A more robust selection process for inclusion on PNC training courses would assist in reducing unnecessary demands on the PNC trainer. A further member of staff within RMU has indicated a wish to become a PNC trainer dedicated to the RMU. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors view this as a positive step to reducing the delays in obtaining training courses for RMU staff.
- 2.3.2.5 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also learned that a PNC awareness presentation is included at Stage Five in the probationer training programme. However, whilst this is good practice, the content of the presentation is not sufficient to provide a new officer with suitable information to carry out their role in a more effective manner. The PNC trainer conducts the awareness presentation which lasts approximately three hours. The content of the training focuses on the basic functions of vehicles records and names records from the system. New officers do not receive information on recent developments such as VODS, QUEST, Vehicle Insurance and Driving Licence Details. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the Force is missing an opportunity to raise the profile of PNC amongst its junior staff and increase the benefits available from the system.

#### **Recommendation 6**

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

- **Develops a more robust selection process to ensure that training is being delivered where there is a genuine need.**
- **Considers the management of the PNC training resources, with consideration to removing them as area resources and encompassing them within a central SDS function.**
- **Reviews the content of its probationer awareness programme, providing increased focus on the operational benefits of PNC as well as the functionality it offers.**

### 2.3.3 Resources

2.3.3.1 The level of resources within the RMU has been the subject of constant discussion between RMU managers, the Head of A of J and chief officers. A business case has recently been submitted requesting additional staff to assist in meeting the requirements for PNC performance. Furthermore, another business case concerning the level of remuneration for RMU staff has been submitted as the RMU suffers from staff retention problems with an unusually high turnover of staff. At the time of the inspection, out of eleven clerks, four had been in post for a week or less and another was leaving within a week. In addition, a number of process changes were being developed in an attempt to improve performance. A new electronic SID is being developed and the RMU are gaining access to the court information, negating the need for hard copy registers from the courts.

2.3.3.2 During the inspection, it was difficult for HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors to examine the exact level of resources within the RMU. The process changes being developed will remove some of the administrative burden on the unit, providing additional capacity. In addition, a number of inefficiencies were identified (see paragraphs 2.5.2, 2.5.5 and 2.5.6) that will also provide additional capacity to the unit. Once the forthcoming changes have been implemented and the RMU staff are fully conversant with the new processes, management will be in a better position to review the resources within RMU.

2.3.3.3 In terms of the high turnover of staff, clerks in the RMU are police staff earning a grade two salary which is one of the lowest in the force. The posts are generally used as a stepping stone into the force before staff move on to better things elsewhere in the Force. This has resulted in ongoing recruitment of staff, often using temporary staff causing further demands on PNC trainers. The Firearms Licensing Unit (FLU) has recently introduced a career grade scheme, providing staff with goals to aim for and opportunities to improve. The career grading starts staff on a lower salary with opportunities to increase their pay based upon performance. The FLU has seen the turnover of staff reduce and an increase in commitment and performance from the staff.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that;**

- **A review of the resources within the RMU takes place following successful implementation of the electronic SID, access to the Equis system and the removal of inefficiencies identified in this report.**
- **Consider the introduction of a career grade scheme for RMU. The scheme should be linked to performance and quality and will enable the retention of staff, reducing training demands and reduce costs against a business case for increased pay across the whole unit.**

### 2.3.4 The PNC Bureau

2.3.4.1 There are currently eight staff employed within the PNC Bureau carrying out various operational updates, including Wanted/Missing updates, Disqualified Driver updates and updates to vehicle reports. In addition, the bureau is responsible for granting and removing user access and also provides the DVLA Liaison function.

- 2.3.4.2 A business case has been submitted from the bureau requesting an increase in the number of staff from eight to ten. The basis of the request is that the extra staff will facilitate a 24 hour 7 day service for the Force, by providing a shift system of five shifts with two members of staff per shift. Two staff are required on each shift for Health and Safety reasons because the bureau staff work alone on the first floor of Northallerton police station and it is not suitable for a single person to work alone. The shift system is being used with the current staff but the bureau must close if no staff are available to fulfil a shift. Staff reported that this occurs on a regular basis. In these instances, the responsibility for operational updates transfers to one of the force control rooms.
- 2.3.4.3 Using multiple layers of resources in this way, across various units, places undue demands on PNC training. There is also a risk that the skill levels of staff will decline, particularly in the control room, if staff are not using the system on a regular basis. There is also a risk that awareness of functionality will reduce and data quality issues may arise.
- 2.3.4.4 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the resources currently being deployed for PNC updating could be used more effectively, thus removing the need for additional staff. There are many staff across a number of units, RMU, PNC Bureau, Control Room and Firearms Licensing Unit, that have been trained with the necessary skills to update PNC and provide a service to the rest of the Force. The force should consider rationalising these resources to provide a more efficient service for the PNC.
- 2.3.4.5 The Force could consider merging some of these resources to provide a streamlined service. Options available are the merging of the PNC Bureau into the control room, removing the requirement for two people per shift in the bureau because the control rooms are already staffed on a 24 hour basis. A merger of this nature will also enable the bureau to operate on skeleton staff throughout the day in its current format, maintaining the DVLA Liaison role and PNC system administration. Another option the Force may wish to consider is the creation of a PNC Call Centre. A call centre will create a 24 hour PNC Bureau that provides all PNC services to the Force, including enquiries for officers over the radio, operational updates and records management. A call centre of this nature could use pooled resources from the RMU, the PNC Bureau and the control room and using existing trained staff may remove the need for additional staff. There would be initial start up costs for a project of this nature but ongoing costs will remain the same as the current situation.
- 2.3.4.6 A final option that the force may consider is the use of staff from FLU. The cycle of work in FLU, issuing and renewing firearms licenses and shotgun certificates results in periods of sustained activity, followed by prolonged quiet periods. The staff in FLU are trained to use PNC and there may be capacity to utilise these staff during their own quiet periods.

### **Recommendation 8**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews the current resources being used to provide PNC services. The review should focus on the scope to rationalise some or all of the resources to provide a more efficient service for operational policing.**

## 2.4 Partnerships and Resources

- 2.4.1 Overall, this is an area in which North Yorkshire Police has made good progress. Of particular note are the relationships that have been developed with the local Courts. This has led to the project to install access to the Equis system from the Magistrates Courts, aimed at providing the force with improved performance in the timeliness of court results.
- 2.4.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also pleased to hear that through local criminal justice boards, attended by area commanders and the courts, the needs of the police in relation to be PNC data are being considered. Whilst developments are being made centrally, via the PNC Bureau and the RMU, relationships are also being maintained at a local level.
- 2.4.3 With regards to Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPA) the Force is yet to develop relationships that will enable improved performance in the submission of the source documentation from NPPAs. Currently, the Force becomes aware of non police prosecutions when they appear on the court register, updating them on a 'come to notice' basis. This process can have a significant impact on the timeliness statistics particularly if the number of non police prosecutions is high in any month. The Force should consider devising a service level agreement (SLA) for all NPPAs that prosecute in the North Yorkshire area. An SLA, signed and agreed with the each NPPA will provide an opportunity to improve timeliness of input of non police prosecutions.

### Recommendation 9

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in consultation with Non Police Prosecuting Agencies, a Service Level Agreement is developed to ensure timely information is provided for update to PNC.**

## 2.5 Processes

- 2.5.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found a number of opportunities for improvement in the management of PNC information. These improvements can be made by removing some inefficient and unnecessary processes found within the RMU.
- 2.5.2 The creation of an arrest/summons report on PNC is currently a two tier process, initial details are created electronically via an interface from the custody system followed by complete update in RMU following receipt of a hard copy SID. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found that when staff in RMU input the hard copy SID, they must first do an initial enquiry to determine the Arrest/Summons reference from the PNC. The A/S reference is produced when the initial details are sent electronically, before the officer submits the SID and fingerprints to the RMU. When the RMU do their enquiry, they must record the A/S reference on the SID and on the fingerprints, before sending the fingerprints to the Fingerprint Bureau. Furthermore, when the SID is input to PNC, staff take a print out from PNC, attach it to the SID and file it for future reference.
- 2.5.3 In addition, when court results are being applied to PNC, a print out of the result is taken. The original SID is pulled from the filing and the copy of the court result is then attached to the SID. The result is that a lot of time and effort is being used to provide a manual audit trail, however, the audit trail is also available electronically via the PNC.

- 2.5.4 It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that if these inefficient process are removed from the responsibilities of staff with the RMU, extra capacity will be available to enable the completion of other tasks.
- 2.5.5 In addition to the detailed processes where improvements could be made, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also found an area for improvement within the RMU in general. Currently, each member of staff is assigned a number of tasks during the day, firstly, a number of SIDs must be updated, followed by a number of vetting checks on behalf of the Criminal Records Bureau then finally updating some court results. This process can result in court results remaining unfinished if an operator becomes delayed in the preceding tasks. This can escalate into backlogs if more than operator encounters delays in the preceding tasks. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the view that benefits can be obtained if individual tasks are assigned to different people, ensuring that each task receives the same level work in a single day. In order to reduce the risk of RMU becoming monotonous, responsibility for task can be assigned on a rotational basis. Rotation of the tasks will not only provide benefits in completing outstanding work but it will also improve the skills of staff enabling them to work quickly and accurately.
- 2.5.6 Furthermore, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors learned of a process that causes an unnecessary administrative burden on both the RMU and the PNC Bureau. Warning Signals are flags on the PNC that alert operators that certain individuals may have particular characteristics, e.g. a person may be violent, or they may use drugs. PNC operators use the signals to alert officers to the characteristics when officers have stopped somebody and are checking their details.
- 2.5.7 Warning signals originate from the officer in case when a person is arrested, usually linked to an offence for which they have been charged, for example, a person charged with assault will receive a 'Violent' warning signal. The warning signal can be updated when the Arrest/Summons report is being updated from the manual SID. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discovered that in North Yorkshire Police, the RMU staff will decide whether a warning signal is appropriate then photocopy the SID and forward it to the PNC Bureau for update of a warning signal. This causes additional tasks for both the RMU and the PNC Bureau. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that in order to save time and improve efficiency, RMU staff should be empowered to make the update to the warning signal themselves. RMU staff will have already made a decision that a signal is appropriate and they will also have the record open for update on their workstation.
- 2.5.8 Whilst these processes have been identified as inefficient, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware of plans to implement changes in the recording of data on PNC. A new electronic SID is being developed, removing the need for manual input by RMU staff and court results will be obtained from the Equis system provided by the courts. However, unless inefficiencies are removed from the current process, there is a risk that they will remain when the new electronic solutions are available.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in anticipation of planned changes to the Source Input Document and Court Register, the Records Management Unit carry out a detailed review to remove unnecessary or inefficient processes in order to maximise the capacity of RMU staff.**

- 2.5.9 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that quality assurance processes exist in the RMU and the PNC Bureau. In the RMU, 100% of work is checked for new members of staff, the volume of work being checked reducing as performance improves. Once a suitable level of performance is achieved, periodic checks are conducted by team leaders.
- 2.5.10 Within the PNC Bureau, 100% of all updates are checked on a regular basis. When a new shift starts work, the work of the previous shift is checked for accuracy, in addition, any updates carried by the control room in the absence of the PNC Bureau are also checked for accuracy. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that 100% checks for PNC Bureau staff is unnecessary and should only be conducted if problems or trends have been identified. Periodic checks or dip sampling may be a better use of time. However, in view that control room staff are not constantly involved in PNC updating, 100% checks are necessary to provide assurance that data is accurate and reliable.
- 2.5.11 Despite quality control procedures being in place, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were disappointed to note that the findings of quality control checks in the PNC Bureau were not recorded against individuals. Recording performance of operators is a useful tool for a Personal Development process and also to highlight improvements required to training if numerous operators make the same mistakes.
- 2.5.12 Officers who submit poor quality SIDs to the RMU have their details recorded and management information is supplied to area commanders. A process similar to this recording will benefit the RMU and PNC Bureau in developing their own staff and improving performance within the unit.

#### **Recommendation 11**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the PNC Bureau record the results of quality control. The information should contain the number of errors identified against a number of transactions completed and the type of errors being encountered.**

- 2.5.13 Whilst opportunities for improvement have been identified within the RMU, there may still be a need to review the resources allocated to the unit. The RMU are currently only updating A/S reports, Court Results from the Magistrates and Crown Courts and also carrying vetting checks on behalf the CRB. The A/S reports are only created for the Charge, Summons and Cautions as there is no process within force to enter details of cases at the point of arrest. Section 37(2) and 37(7) of the Criminal Justice Bill allow the police to record fingerprint and DNA information at the point of arrest. However, in order to record the information a PNC record of the arrest is required. North Yorkshire Police do not currently have a process to record this information and therefore, are missing opportunities to record vital forensic information that could potentially lead to an increase in detection rates.
- 2.5.14 In addition, tasks such as reviewing outstanding impending prosecutions, court remand information, keywording (a task vital for the success of QUEST) and Back Record Conversion (a process to updates microfiche records onto PNC) are not being completed. Each force has a responsibility to maintain accurate and up to date information on the PNC and in failing to carry out these tasks, the Force is not meeting its obligations. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that once inefficiencies have been removed a review of the RMU may be necessary to identify further areas where improvement can be made to increase capacity. (See Recommendation 7)

## 2.6 Results

- 2.6.1 Over the last twelve months, North Yorkshire Police have experienced varying results in their performance of entering arrest/summons information on the PNC. In May 2003, the force was only achieving 34.2% of records being entered within 24 hours against a target of 90%. However, following this month, the force managed to obtain improvements each month culminating in a high of 90.8% in December 2003, achieving the ACPO target. In the first three months of 2004, performance has started to decline with 87.7% of records being updates in January 2004, reducing to 63.9% in March 2004.
- 2.6.2 In terms of court results, the force has achieved even less success. May 2003 shows the highest recorded figure against a target of 100% of records within 7 days, when 10.7% were updated within the target time. Performance in this area has been consistently low with the force failing to register a single within the target time during December 2003. A similar trend has continued throughout the first three months of 2004. In January 2004, only 1.6% of cases were updated within the target time, rising slightly to 4.8% in March.
- 2.6.3 The performance against these two indicators in particular are indicative of how the force is currently managing the updates to PNC. The culture of firefighting is preventing the force from achieving any sustainable improvements because when improvements are made in one area, it is at the expense of work in other areas, therefore, resources are continually being transferred, in attempt to remain 'afloat'.
- 2.6.4 Outstanding prosecutions have not been reviewed for over eighteen months. This task has also been a victim of the firefighting culture in that the person responsible for carrying this work has been transferred to complete other tasks within the RMU. In April 2001, HMIC stated that all forces should be in a position to confirm that any outstanding case that is over twelve months old, is legitimately outstanding. Furthermore, forces should implement processes to ensure that cases are reviewed on a regular basis. In view that North Yorkshire Police have not reviewed any cases for eighteen months, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors remain to be assured that all cases over twelve months are legitimately outstanding.

### Recommendation 12

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reviews all outstanding cases over 12 months old to satisfy itself that the cases are legitimately outstanding. In addressing the current situation, the force should also introduce a mechanism to ensure that cases are subject of regular reviews.**

- 2.6.5 The culture of transferring resources means that the force is also failing to complete a number of other tasks which are important for the accuracy and reliability of the data on PNC. MO Keywording, which is an integral function for reliable and accurate QUEST searches, is currently not being completed. Police bail conditions are currently not being updated on the PNC. Following the amendment to the Criminal Justice Act on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, the force is now missing opportunities to obtain and record valuable DNA and fingerprint information for prisoners who are released on police bail.

- 2.6.6 The recommendations outlined so far in this report aim to improve the quality and timeliness of the data being input to PNC. The force has already recognised deficiencies in certain areas and has taken steps towards improving performance, however, further work is required to ensure that performance cannot only be improved, but also sustained on a long term basis.

## Appendix A

**Summary of Good Practices at North Yorkshire Police**

- Officers are held accountable for the quality of the source input documents they submit to the RMU. Management Information is produced on the performance of officers and circulated to senior management.
- PNC Training is modular based and access is only granted when a candidate has successfully completed an assessment of competence.
- Proactive monitoring of PNC activity is soon to take place following the introduction of the Professional Standards Intelligence Unit.
- The Information Compliance Unit produce a risk based annual audit plan, in addition, the ICU conduct 'ad hoc' audits of PNC data.
- Transaction Monitoring is carried out to a level that exceeds the recommended number of transactions. All staff are aware of the process.
- The Information Security Policy is up to date and reviewed on a regular basis. The policy is written in accordance with the ACPO Community Security Policy and BS7799.
- The force has good relationships with the local magistrates courts, culminating in access to the court's Equis system.
- Quality assurance is carried out against the work completed by staff in the RMU.

## Appendix B

**Summary of Recommendations for North Yorkshire Police****Recommendation 1**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police continue with plans to introduce the PNC Steering Group. Membership of the group should include representation from all stakeholders and the frequency of meetings should be set at intervals that will allow all members to attend. The group should have clear and defined terms of reference, including the development of a strategy for the future of PNC.

(Paragraph 2.1.3)

**Recommendation 2**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police urgently considers a formal documented strategy for PNC, either a PNC Strategy in its own right or incorporated into a local Information Management Strategy (See Recommendation 2 of the HMIC PNC Data Quality and Timeliness 2<sup>nd</sup> Report – Appendix F). The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.

(Paragraph 2.2.2.1)

**Recommendation 3**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that North Yorkshire Police:

- Develop suitable policies for the management of PNC. The policies should outline the role and responsibilities of staff across the various functions relating to the use of PNC and include details of penalties for non-compliance.
- Document forcewide procedures in support of the policies outlined above.

(Paragraph 2.2.2.4)

**Recommendation 4**

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

- Introduce a formal mechanism to notify the PNC Bureau of personnel changes. Information should be supplied on a regular basis, either weekly or fortnightly, detailing staff who have left the force and also staff who have changed roles within the force.
- Introduce a Force Policy in relation to the supply of information and the granting and removal of user access.

(Paragraph 2.2.3.3)

**Recommendation 5**

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

(Paragraph 2.3.1.2)

**Recommendation 6**

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

- Develops a more robust selection process to ensure that training is being delivered where there is a genuine need.
- Considers the management of the PNC training resources, with consideration to removing them as area resources and encompassing them within a central SDS function.
- Reviews the content of its probationer awareness programme, providing increased focus on the operational benefits of PNC as well as the functionality it offers.

(Paragraph 2.3.2.5)

**Recommendation 7**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that;

- A review of the resources within the RMU takes place following successful implementation of the electronic SID, access to the Equis system and the removal of inefficiencies identified in this report.
- Consider the introduction of a career grade scheme for RMU. The scheme should be linked to performance and quality and will enable the retention of staff, reducing training demands and reduce costs against a business case for increased pay across the whole unit.

(Paragraph 2.3.3.3)

**Recommendation 8**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews the current resources being used to provide PNC services. The review should focus on the scope to rationalise some or all of the resources to provide a more efficient service for operational policing.

(Paragraph 2.3.4.6)

**Recommendation 9**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in consultation with Non Police Prosecuting Agencies, a Service Level Agreement is developed to ensure timely information is provided for update to PNC.

(Paragraph 2.4.3)

**Recommendation 10**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in anticipation of planned changes to the Source Input Document and Court Register, the Records Management Unit carry out a detailed review to remove unnecessary or inefficient processes in order to maximise the capacity of RMU staff.

(Paragraph 2.5.8)

**Recommendation 11**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the PNC Bureau record the results of quality control. The information should contain the number of errors identified against a number of transactions completed and the type of errors being encountered.

(Paragraph 2.5.12)

**Recommendation 12**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reviews all outstanding cases over 12 months old to satisfy itself that the cases are legitimately outstanding. In addressing the current situation, the force should also introduce a mechanism to ensure that cases are subject of regular reviews.

(Paragraph 2.6.4)

## Appendix C

**PRG Report “Phoenix Data Quality” Recommendations**

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

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

## Appendix D

**Thematic Inspection Report on Police Crime Recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System Data Quality –  
‘On The Record’****Recommendation 9** (Chapter 5 page 86)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix E

**Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 1<sup>st</sup> Report****Recommendation One (Paragraph 5.2)**

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

**Recommendation Two (Paragraph 5.11)**

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

**Recommendation Three (Paragraph 5.19)**

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

**Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.29)**

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

**Recommendation Five (Paragraph 5.31)**

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

**Recommendation Six (Paragraph 5.34)**

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

**Recommendation Seven (Paragraph 6.10)**

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

**Recommendation Eight (Paragraph 6.12)**

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

**Recommendation Nine (Paragraph 6.14)**

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

**Recommendation Ten (Paragraph 6.16)**

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

## Appendix F

**Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 2<sup>nd</sup> Report****Recommendation 1**

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

**Recommendation 2**

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

**Recommendation 3**

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

**Recommendation 4**

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

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

**Recommendation 5**

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