



**SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE**

**4 – 8 JULY 2005**

**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 Police National Computer (PNC) Compliance Inspection of South Yorkshire Police between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2005.
- 1.1.2 The Constabulary was subject to a PNC Compliance Audit using the April 2003 Protocols on PNC Compliance. Her Majesty's Inspector would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Force and also to place on record his thanks to all members of staff who contributed to this report and provided assistance during the inspection.
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from strategic, PNC and customer level management and users at Force Headquarters and at 2 of the 3 Borough Command Units (referred to as 'Districts'). These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors (hereafter referred to as HMIC Auditors).

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 South Yorkshire Police is the thirteenth largest of the 44 Forces within England, Wales and Northern Ireland and has responsibility for policing the county's three boroughs of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and also the City of Sheffield. It covers a geographic area of approximately 600 square miles with a resident population in excess of 1.2 million people, of which 5% are classified as belonging to a non-white minority ethnic group, predominantly in Sheffield. Historically, South Yorkshire had two main traditional industries: Steel (based mainly around Sheffield) and coal mining (based around the towns of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham). The last twenty years have seen a considerable decline in both industries, leading to an increase in unemployment and its related socio-economic problems. However, there has been a move towards tertiary industry and substantial regeneration in those areas worst affected by the demise of the coal and steel industry.
- 1.2.2 South Yorkshire Police faces the challenges posed by policing five football league grounds, and sporting events such as the St Ledger race in Doncaster and the World Snooker Championship. There is a large student population, especially at the two universities in Sheffield. The Robin Hood – Doncaster Sheffield Airport, based at the former RAF Finningley airbase, officially opened to international flights in April and there is also the existing smaller airport in Sheffield.
- 1.2.3 The Force is headed by the Chief Officer Team comprising the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, 3 Assistant Chief Constables with responsibility for Support Services, Community Safety and Personnel Services and the Director of Finance and Administration. The Force headquarters is in Sheffield, and each of the six Basic Command Units (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield Central, Sheffield North and Sheffield South) has a district headquarters.
- 1.2.4 The PNC Bureau (PNCB) is located at Atlas Court in Sheffield in a building shared with the Control Room. The Bureau is divided into

sections with responsibility for Arrest/ Summons (A/S) input, Court Results updates, an Enquiry Section dealing with officer telephone enquiries and a 24 hour section, dealing with complex searches (e.g. Vehicle On Line Descriptive Searches (VODS) and Queries Using Extended Search Techniques (QUEST)) and, Wanted/ Missing updates, Disqualified Driver updates and breaches of court orders. Each section operates on shift patterns with the A/S team covering 7am until 10pm Monday to Friday, the Court Results team covering 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday, the Enquiry Section working 8am until midnight and the 24 hour section covering all times 7 days per week.

- 1.2.5 The creation of Arrest/ Summons records at South Yorkshire is a semi-automatic process which requires the custody officer to update the local custody system with the details required to create a skeleton record on the PNC, which is the minimum amount of data required to create a new record. This is followed by the arresting officer completing a source input document (known locally as the 'CID9') which contains all the data required for a complete record on the PNC. This is posted to the PNCB who will complete the record on the system.
- 1.2.6 Magistrates court and crown court results are also updated by the PNCB. Court registers are received daily by the local criminal justice units on each District and are placed in South Yorkshire Police's internal mail system to the PNCB for input directly to PNC.

### 1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A full inspection against the 2003 PNC Protocols was carried out, covering the sections of Leadership, Policy and Strategy, People, Partnerships and Resources, Processes and Results.
- 1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of:
- **Excellent** – Comprehensive evidence of effective activity against all protocol areas.
  - **Good** – Evidence of effective activity in many areas, but not comprehensive.
  - **Fair** – Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others.
  - **Poor** – No or limited evidence of effective activity against the protocol areas, or serious concerns in one or more area of activity.

1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC Auditors with documentation to support its adherence to the protocols. This was followed up by a visit to the Force with HMIC 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 reviewing PNC data against source documents and a review of PNC policy 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 On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy were replaced by the timeliness standards contained within the newly published Code of Practice for the PNC. The PNC Code of Practice, developed by the National Centre for Policing Excellence and endorsed by ACPO, is a statutory code made under s.39a of the Police Act 1996 (inserted by section 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002). It provides scope for the Home Secretary to invoke statutory intervention for forces failing to comply. 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 standards set within the Code of Practice. The timeliness standards within the Code are as follows:

- 90% of recordable offences entered onto PNC within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings. The commencement of proceedings being defined as when a person is arrested, reported or summonsed.
- 50% of all finalisations being entered onto PNC within 7 days of the information being received by the police. This target increased to 75% on 1 July 2005, six months after the commencement of the Code. (Courts have their own target of 3 days for delivery of data to

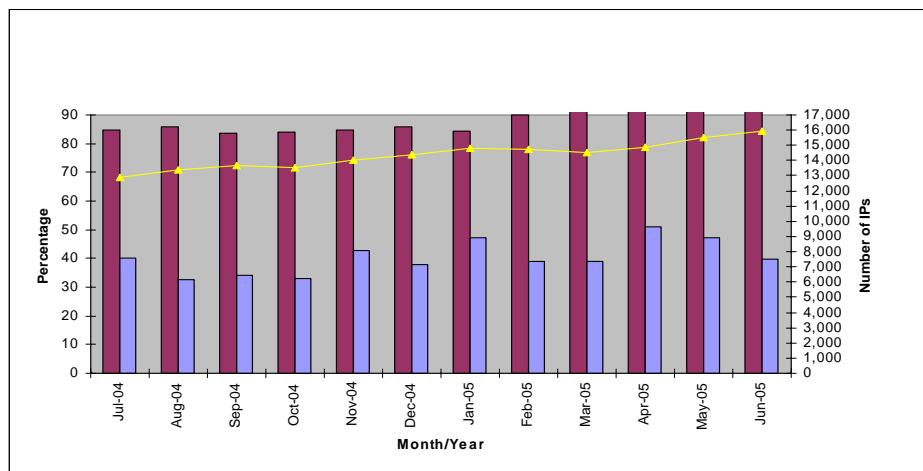
the police. Therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 10 days.)

1.4.4 In June 2005, South Yorkshire Police input 93.4% of Arrest/ Summons (A/S) updates on PNC within 24 hours. This shows an improvement in performance in the 12 months to June 2005 from 84.7% in July 2004. Whilst such an improvement is to be commended the Force has, at the same time, failed to meet the ACPO Compliance target which states that forces who create skeleton records on the PNC should update the full record within 5 days. This is required for operational policing and investigative purposes. At the time of the inspection, South Yorkshire had a backlog of 9000 records on the PNC which required a full update. This equates to 2 months' worth of records (the Force inputs around 4000 records each month). A cynical individual could infer from this that the Force is working to achieve the 24 hour target at the expense of quality.

1.4.5 South Yorkshire's performance in terms of court results is poor, as displayed in the PITO statistics. The Force is in the bottom quartile of Force's in England and Wales. Performance has remained static in the 12 months to June 2005. In July 2004 the Force entered 40.1% of results within 7 days of the court date. This has fallen to 39.7% being entered within 10 days in June 2005. South Yorkshire Police is not therefore complying with the Code of Practice in this area of activity which requires the Force to input 75% of court results within the required time limit

1.4.6 In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs) South Yorkshire has shown an increase of 27% in the 12 months to June 2005. According to the March data provided by PITO, 22% of all South Yorkshire's outstanding prosecutions were more than 12 months old and analysis of the figures shows that only 4 forces in England and Wales have more old cases as a percentage of the total outstanding. HMIC Auditors remain to be assured that the Force is able to confirm that any outstanding case that is over 12 months old is legitimately outstanding.

1.4.7 A graph illustrating South Yorkshire Police's performance in the 12 months to June 2005 is shown below:<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Key: Purple columns indicate A/S performance, blue show court results performance and the yellow line shows the increase/ decrease in Impending Prosecutions.

## 1.5 Conclusions

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

**Poor** – No or limited evidence of effective activity against the protocol areas, or serious concerns in one or more area of activity.

1.5.2 This assessment is based on the detailed findings of the report which highlight serious concerns in some areas of activity. In particular, the Force is performing poorly in relation to the input of court results and a review of the processes involved is urgently required if the Force is to improve in this area.

1.5.4 The findings of this report should read in conjunction with the previous reports and recommendations relating to the 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*

1.5.5 A summary of good practice points, along with recommendations for improvement can be found at Appendices A and B of this report.

## 2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

### 2.1 Leadership

#### 2.1.1 Role of the PNC Steering Group

2.1.1.1 At the time of the inspection, the PNC Steering Group (PSG) at South Yorkshire was being chaired by a Chief Superintendent. In addition, a review of the minutes showed that some representatives were delegating attendance at the meetings with the resulting risk that the strategic outlook of the meetings was being diluted. A number of earlier reports by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, including the thematic report 'On The Record' highlighted the crucial role of chief officer involvement on PNC Steering Groups. This was, in fact, one of the few areas of consistency in forces who were seen as performing well in earlier inspections and its importance cannot be over-emphasised. It is therefore important that the Force satisfies itself that a strategic outlook is able to be maintained and that all stakeholders are represented at the meetings.

2.1.1.2 In addition, the Force provided HMIC with a copy of the Terms of Reference for the PSG. These were out of date and required membership was limited. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that the Force had recognised these issues and the document had been re-drafted at the PSG prior to the inspection, however the minutes of this meeting were not yet available.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that the strategic position of the PSG is maintained and all members make every effort to attend.**

## 2.1.2 Responsibility and Accountability

2.1.2.1 At the time of the inspection, South Yorkshire Police had no process for the production of management information with regard to PNC performance. As a result, District Commanders and the management responsible for PNC updates, such as Criminal Justice Administration, were unaware of how their officers/ staff performed in this area of activity.

2.1.2.2 Without meaningful management information, it is not possible for senior officers and departmental heads to improve the timeliness and quality of data provided for input to PNC. Management information would also enable the Force to identify trends at individual, District, departmental and Force level. This in turn would assist the Force in identifying the reasons for under-performance to enable solutions to be put in place.

### **Recommendation 2**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force develops and reacts to monthly performance data in relation to PNC data quality and timeliness.**

## 2.1.3 Quality Assurance (QA)

2.1.3.1 The PNCB has a QA team of two (filled by four individuals on a part-time basis). This team has responsibility for quality checking the data input to PNC by the Bureau. The team dip sample magistrates court results input (approx. 20%) and 100% of Wanted/ Missing entries. In addition, new starters in the Bureau are each assigned a mentor, who is a more experienced member of the team who will quality check 100% of the new starter's PNC entries until the Force is satisfied that the desired level of competence is achieved.

2.1.3.2 However, the QA team does not check any Arrest/ Summons entries on the PNC, nor are Crown Court result updates quality assured. As a result, the Force is unable to provide any assurance that the quality of its data entry is of an acceptable standard across the PNC and any poor quality inputs can remain undetected on the system. This exposes the Force to the risk of litigation if inaccurate data is held about a person on the system and it may hamper the progress of an investigation.

### **Recommendation 3**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that South Yorkshire Police expand its QA processes to ensure that all updates and all members of staff have their work checked on a dip sample basis.**

## 2.2 Policy & Strategy

### 2.2.1 PNC Policy and Strategy

- 2.2.1.1 South Yorkshire Police has no documented policy or strategy for PNC. A formalised strategy document or strategic action plan, outlining roles and responsibilities and covering topics such as Marketing and Awareness and PNC Security, would provide a framework to assist the Force in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of PNC usage throughout the Force. It would ensure that the Force gives 'ownership' of issues to individuals or departments, and generates a proactive approach to PNC. Importantly, it would help to ensure that the Force is getting a maximum return on its investment in the system and that officers gain optimal benefit from the information which is stored on it

#### **Recommendation 4**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force formally documents a strategy for PNC. The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and any previous HMIC reports where no or limited progress has been made.**

### 2.2.2 PNC Security

- 2.2.2.1 With regard to system security, HMIC Auditors reviewed five key areas. These are User Access, Transaction Monitoring, Data Protection Auditing, the Role of Professional Standards and the Information Security Policy. Each of these raised some areas of good practice but also some areas of concern and these are discussed further below.

- 2.2.2.2 Access to the PNC is managed by the PNC Bureau. The Force has processes in place to ensure that a user is only given access to the system upon completion of a training course. However the process for amending or removing access is ad hoc and there is therefore the risk that there are users with access to the system who no longer require it in fulfilment of their duties. Whilst HMIC Auditors do not question the integrity of the work of the Bureau, there is some risk to the organisation in having individuals able to make such changes to system access with no independent auditing of the activity being carried out.

#### **Recommendation 5**

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

- **Introduces a process to ensure that movers and leavers have their access amended or removed from the system as appropriate;**

- **Introduces an independent audit, at least annually, of all user access administration.**

2.2.2.3 Transaction monitoring is a requirement of the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual. It is a process where police officers and staff are asked to verify their reasons for performing transactions on the PNC and, as such, is an important activity in the prevention and detection of misuse or abuse of the PNC. At South Yorkshire this is a function of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) who selects at random five transactions per day for verification. A standard pro forma is faxed to the officer or member of staff requesting evidence of the reason for the check, e.g. an incident log reference. However, this audit process is insufficient to ensure that each check is followed through to a satisfactory conclusion and the volume is inadequate (equating to less than 1% of the total number of PNC transactions conducted by South Yorkshire Police).

#### **Recommendation 6**

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews its transaction monitoring procedures to ensure that a robust process is in place to detect misuse/ abuse of the PNC.**

2.2.2.4 Data Protection Audits are also conducted by the DPO at South Yorkshire. The DPO performs an annual risk assessment of its IT data systems following which decisions are made as to which systems are audited. This process complies with the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual. Upon completion of an audit the recommendations are provided to the Professional Standards Committee which has responsibility for ensuring that all relevant actions are completed.

2.2.2.5 However, the DPO has only been able to complete 2 audits in relation to the PNC in the last 12 months due to claimed resourcing issues. In addition, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors noted that there is no representative from the PNC Steering Group at the Professional Standards Committee in order to drive changes arising from data protection recommendations for PNC. In the current climate post Bichard Inquiry, it is imperative that forces ensure that data protection issues identified are rectified as a matter of priority

#### **Recommendation 7**

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

- **Ensures that sufficient data protection auditing is undertaken of the PNC;**
- **Satisfies itself that there are suitable accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that data protection recommendations are implemented.**

- 2.2.2.6 HMIC Auditors also reviewed the role of the Professional Standard Department (PSD) with regard to PNC issues at South Yorkshire. The PSD is independent of operational activities and such independence is viewed as good practice. In addition, the Data Protection Unit sits within the PSD which ensures that PSD is notified of any breaches of system security and the PSD has PNC trained operators to enable them to conduct investigations involving PNC activity.
- 2.2.2.7 Finally with regard to PNC system security, HMIC Auditors reviewed the Force's system security policies, in particular, the System Security Operating Procedure. HMIC Auditors were disappointed to note that the Force's IT System Security Policies did not include any specific mention or appendix for the PNC. An absence of local policies may result in officers and staff not fully understanding their own roles and responsibilities in relation to information security on the system.

**Recommendation 8**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force updates its System Security Operating Procedure to include a section on the PNC.**

**2.3 People****2.3.1 Marketing and Awareness**

2.3.1.1 During meetings and focus groups, HMIC Auditors noted variable levels of awareness among officers and staff of the PNC and its functionality as an aid to operational policing. In addition, knowledge of the existence of the PNCB and the support it aims to provide to officers ranged from no knowledge through to a view that it was a very insular department, separate from the rest of the organisation.

2.3.1.2 It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that a focused marketing campaign should be carried out to raise the profile of the PNCB and to raise the level of awareness of PNC functionality. This campaign should be developed as part of a marketing strategy owned by the PNC Steering Group but using expert resources that may be available to it, for example, the Corporate Communications Department, the force intranet or the services of the PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation) PNC Customer Services team.

**Recommendation 9**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force publishes and implements a Communication Strategy to raise awareness for the effective use of PNC across the Force.**

## 2.3.2 PNC Training

2.3.2.1 PNC Training was a further area at South Yorkshire where opportunities to improve were identified by HMIC Auditors. The Force has six accredited PNC trainers, two of whom are part-time. These individuals plan and deliver courses on an annual basis the aims & objectives of which are publicised on the Intranet. The Force has implemented good practice through the introduction of an awareness session delivered by PNCB staff during officer probation training. Decisions concerning whether an individual in a particular role requires PNC training are taken by the Training department in conjunction with the PSG. This has led to some confusion in the Force and lengthy delays in obtaining training. This issue had been identified by a South Yorkshire Police Authority during a recent audit although HMIC Auditors would be surprised if the Force had yet had sufficient opportunity to put the recommendations into place yet.

2.3.2.2 At the end of each course, the trainee sits an assessment and must obtain 70% to be given access to the PNC. This is viewed as good practice. Furthermore, each candidate is asked to complete a "Happy Sheet" to rate the course, its content, the training facilities and the trainer, as a form of training evaluation. However, no post training evaluation is conducted, for example three months after the course, which would assist in training design through an evaluation of whether the course provided the trainee with the correct tools/ information back in the workplace.

2.3.2.3 Whilst refresher training is provided this is only given to system users who have had a long period of absence. Therefore, there are PNC users at South Yorkshire who were trained to use the system 15 years ago who have received no training since 1990. The PNC and its applications have changed considerably since this time, with new functionality having been added, such as driving licence and insurance information, to which these users have access but have had no formal training.

2.3.2.4 The final point to be made in respect of PNC training, is the lengthy delays experienced by the PNCB in obtaining courses for its staff. This is due to the claimed resource constraints of the Training department resulting in a reluctance to run courses for a small number of people. Since turnover in the PNCB is low, and the work performed there, on the system is very specialised, the PNCB have experienced difficulties in obtaining places with the result that staff are not able to fulfil their roles and therefore best use is not being made of the resources available in the PNCB.

### **Recommendation 10**

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

- **Introduces post training evaluation after trainees have had the opportunity to put the training into practice and;**

- **Introduces mandatory re- assessment for PNC operators with refresher training to be provided to any candidate who fails a re- assessment;**
- **Considers, if needs cannot be met internally, the introduction of reciprocal training arrangements with nearby Forces for specialist PNC courses to address the training needs of the PNCB.**

## **2.4 Partnerships and Resources**

### **2.4.1 Relationship with the courts**

2.4.1.1 The Force has made recent progress with regard to its relationship with its local courts. An inaugural meeting had been held between the manager of the Criminal Justice Unit and the manager at the courts with the intention of this becoming a regular meeting to progress issues. HMIC Auditors were encouraged by this activity and would recommend that future meetings are minuted in order to ensure that any actions identified by either party can be progressed.

## **2.5 Processes**

### **2.5.1 Creation and update of Arrest/ Summons (A/S) reports**

2.5.1.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy were replaced by the timeliness standards contained within the newly published Code of Practice for the PNC. The PNC Code of Practice, developed by the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) and endorsed by ACPO, is a statutory code made under s.39a of the Police Act 1996 (inserted by section 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002). The Code stipulates that 90% of recordable offences be entered onto PNC within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings. The commencement of proceedings is defined as when a person is arrested, reported or summonsed. However, for forces who create skeleton records on the PNC, the ACPO Compliance Strategy target which requires them to update the full record within 5 days still applies after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005.

2.5.1.2 At the time of the inspection, South Yorkshire Police was meeting the 90% target outlined in the Code and was able to achieve this by having an electronic solution which created a skeleton record directly from the custody system. However, the Force was failing to update the full record within 5 days and had a backlog of 9000 records which required full update. HMIC Auditors were surprised to discover that the PNCB were undertaking administrative tasks in relation to fingerprints, a task normally performed by the Finger Print Bureau.

2.5.1.3 In addition, reality checks conducted by HMIC Auditors showed that officers were not submitting the CID9's in a timely manner. Of the records checked, 20% had failed to submit the CID9 to the PNCB within 5 days. This made it impossible for the Force to meet the full update target. The Force was considering the purchase of an electronic data

warehousing system for the CID9's, which it is believed would improve the timeliness of submission of the full record. HMIC Auditors would encourage the Force to arrive at a decision or an alternative solution on this.

- 2.5.1.4 Finally, when carrying out reality checks of documents, HMIC Auditors discovered that the dates being sent to PNC, which are used to calculate the timeliness statistics on a monthly basis, are not in accordance with the Code of Practice that came into effect on 1st January 2005. The Code states that the measurement for timeliness is from the 'commencement of proceedings' which in the case of an arrest is the time and date that a person is arrested. At South Yorkshire the time and date of the decision (e.g. to charge/ bail/ release) by the custody officer is transmitted to PNC. During reality checks of documents, none of the cases would have affected the overall statistical performance of the Force, however, HMIC Auditors were informed that there are a growing number of cases within the force where a custody extension is required to obtain more evidence before making a decision. In these cases, despite a potential three day delay in making a decision, the performance of the force would be unaffected because the time and date recorded on PNC would still be the decision time, giving the impression that the target had been met.

**Recommendation 11**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews its processes for the full update of A/S records to ensure that all PNC records are complete, accurate, timely, and that the force complies with the Code of Practice.**

- 2.5.2 Update of court results
- 2.5.2.1 The update of court results on the PNC is a manual process at South Yorkshire and gave HMIC Auditors cause for concern. Magistrates court registers are received at the District Criminal Justice Units (CJUs) via an electronic system, known as Equis, with the exception of Sheffield Magistrates who email their results directly to the PNCB. The District CJUs spend approximately half an hour each day printing off the latest court registers which are then placed in South Yorkshire's internal post system for despatch to the PNCB. However, due to the route of the internal mail system, the results are taken first to Police Headquarters where they are logged as received and then despatched again to the PNCB. This process means that the PNCB receive the results several days after the original print out in the CJUs, in some cases up to 7 days later. As a result, the Force is consistently failing to meet its target as outlined in the Code of practice.
- 2.5.2.2 The above problem has been exacerbated recently in the PNCB due to a backlog in the PNC being updated and anecdotal evidence was obtained of this causing difficulties for officers who were unable to rely on the PNC data and were having to contact the PNCB and the courts directly to ensure that they had the most up to date information. At the time of inspection, 2 new members of staff were in the process of being

trained to input court results and the Force believed that this would assist in clearing the backlog.

#### **Recommendation 12**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force investigates electronic solutions for the provision of magistrates court results to the PNCB. In the interim a review of the paper flow within the internal mail system should be undertaken to remove unnecessary delays.**

#### 2.5.3 Non – custody cases

2.5.3.1 During the inspection HMIC Auditors reviewed the process for PNC updates for cases which do not pass through custody, e.g. individuals reported for summons for a recordable offence. Under the Code of Practice for PNC the system should be updated within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings and, as such, these cases are included within the Code. At South Yorkshire, these cases are captured by the officer faxing a form to the PNCB for the creation of a skeleton record. This should be followed by a CID9 being posted to the Bureau to enable the full record to be updated.

2.5.3.2 Reality checks conducted by HMIC Auditors showed that in 60% of such cases, a CID9 had not been submitted by the officer up to 4 months after the initial PNC entry had been made. The Force had no process in place to hold the officers accountable for non- submission of data and, therefore, these updates were unlikely to ever be received. This information is vital if the Force to use the PNC to its full potential, for example using the enhanced search facilities such as QUEST. It is therefore possible that investigations are being hampered by inadequate data being held on the system.

#### **Recommendation 13**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that South Yorkshire Police implements processes to ensure that officers are held accountable for the submission of complete data for PNC.**

- 2.5.4 Driving licence application
- 2.5.4.1 South Yorkshire Police had taken a decision not to use the driving licence application on the PNC and a review of the PSG minutes showed that this had been the subject of ongoing discussion for some time prior to the inspection.
- 2.5.4.2 However, a national decision was taken in June 2005 that all forces should be using this application which is of assistance to officers in relation to road traffic offences. South Yorkshire therefore needs to consider the implications of this national decision and ensure that it is able to accommodate the new directive, e.g. by training PNC operators to use and understand the data.

**Recommendation 14**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force makes preparations to implement the national policy decision in relation to driving licences.**

- 2.5.5 Ad hoc intelligence updates<sup>2</sup>
- 2.5.5.1 South Yorkshire Police captures ad hoc intelligence updates by officers faxing a form CID122 to the PNCB for update on the system. HMIC Auditors commend the Force for taking steps to ensure that all relevant information is input to PNC.
- 2.5.6 Availability of PNC Checks
- 2.5.6.1 South Yorkshire Police officers obtain PNC checks via radio from the Central Communications Room. During the course of the inspection, HMIC Auditors discussed with operational staff the ease with which PNC checks can be carried out. The feedback received was that officers often experience lengthy delays in obtaining radio checks and officers were allowing individuals to go rather than waiting a considerable time for the PNC check. The result is that officers are stopping vehicles and people, often alone without having sufficient information about the vehicle or person to ensure their safety or may allow an individual to go who may be wanted by the police.

**Recommendation 15**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that resources are available to meet demand for the provision of PNC checks to officers.**

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

2.5.7 Finally with regard to processes, a more positive note. HMIC Auditor reality checks showed that the quality of updates performed by the PNCB was, on the whole, of good quality with only a few minor errors being identified. In addition, the PNCB updates all relevant information with which it is provided, for example all disposals and remand information including bail conditions.

## 2.6 Results

2.6.1 In terms of Arrest/ Summons (A/S) updates South Yorkshire has shown an improvement in performance in the 12 months to June 2005. In July 2004 the Force was inputting 84.7% of records within 24 hours, rising to 93.4% in June 2005. Whilst such an improvement is to be commended the Force has, at the same time, failed to meet the ACPO Compliance target which states that forces who create skeleton records on the PNC should update the full record within 5 days. This is required for operational policing and investigative purposes. At the time of the inspection, South Yorkshire had a backlog of 9000 records, as discussed earlier.

2.6.2 In terms of court results, South Yorkshire is in the bottom quartile of Force's in England and Wales. The Force's performance has not improved in the 12 months to June 2005 and remains at around 40% of results being entered within the required time limit. South Yorkshire Police is not therefore complying with the Code of Practice in this area of activity which requires the Force to input 75% of court results within 10 days of the court date.

2.6.3 Finally, with regard to outstanding prosecutions on the PNC in the 12 months to June 2005 these had increased by 27%. According to the March data provided by PITO 22% of all South Yorkshire's outstanding prosecutions were more than 12 months old and analysis of the figures shows that only 4 forces in England and Wales have more old cases as a percentage of the total outstanding. In April 2001, HMIC supported by the Home Secretary stated that all forces should be in a position to confirm that any outstanding case that is over twelve months old, is legitimately outstanding. HMIC Auditors were informed that cases are reviewed on a 'come to notice' basis and, as such, are not being routinely reviewed and updated. Therefore, HMIC Auditors remain to be assured that the Force is able to provide such confirmation.

### **Recommendation 16**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force implements procedures to review outstanding prosecutions on a continuous basis.**

**APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOUTH YORKSHIRE****Recommendation 1**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that the strategic position of the PSG is maintained and all members make every effort to attend.

**Recommendation 2**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force develops and reacts to monthly performance data in relation to PNC data quality and timeliness.

**Recommendation 3**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that South Yorkshire Police expand its QA processes to ensure that all updates and all members of staff have their work checked on a dip sample basis.

**Recommendation 4**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force formally documents a strategy for PNC. The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and any previous HMIC reports where no or limited progress has been made.

**Recommendation 5**

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

- Introduces a process to ensure that movers and leavers have their access amended or removed from the system as appropriate;
- Introduces an independent audit, at least annually, of all user access administration.

**Recommendation 6**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews its transaction monitoring procedures to ensure that a robust process is in place to detect misuse/ abuse of the PNC.

**Recommendation 7**

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

- Ensures that sufficient data protection auditing is undertaken of the PNC;
- Satisfies itself that there are suitable accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that data protection recommendations are implemented.

**Recommendation 8**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force updates its System Security Operating Procedure to include a section on the PNC.**

**Recommendation 9**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force publishes and implements a Communication Strategy to raise awareness for the effective use of PNC across the Force.**

**Recommendation 10**

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

- **Introduces post training evaluation after trainees have had the opportunity to put the training into practice and;**
- **Introduces mandatory re- assessment for PNC operators with refresher training to be provided to any candidate who fails a re- assessment;**
- **Considers, if needs cannot be met internally, the introduction of reciprocal training arrangements with nearby Forces for specialist PNC courses to address the training needs of the PNCB.**

**Recommendation 11**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews its processes for the full update of A/S records to ensure that all PNC records are complete, accurate, timely, and that the force complies with the Code of Practice.**

**Recommendation 12**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force investigates electronic solutions for the provision of magistrates court results to the PNCB. In the interim a review of the paper flow within the internal mail system should be undertaken to remove unnecessary delays.**

**Recommendation 13**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that South Yorkshire Police implements processes to ensure that officers are held accountable for the submission of complete data for PNC.**

**Recommendation 14**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force makes preparations to implement the national policy decision in relation to driving licences.**

**Recommendation 15**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that resources are available to meet demand for the provision of PNC checks to officers.**

**Recommendation 16**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force implements procedures to review outstanding prosecutions on a continuous basis.**

## **APPENDIX B – SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES AT SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

- **The Force has a Professional Standards Department which is independent of operational activities and which has good links with the Data Protection Officer.**
- **The PNCB provides an awareness session to probationer officers.**
- **The Force has implemented a process to enable the capture and recording of ad hoc intelligence updates on the PNC.**

**APPENDIX C – ‘ON THE RECORD’****THEMATIC INSPECTION REPORT ON POLICE CRIME RECORDING, THE POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER AND PHOENIX INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM DATA QUALITY - RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 9** (Chapter 5 page 86)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**APPENDIX D – PRG REPORT****“PHOENIX DATA QUALITY” RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

**APPENDIX E – 1<sup>ST</sup> PNC REPORT****POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER DATA QUALITY AND TIMELINESS –  
RECOMMENDATIONS****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 – 2<sup>ND</sup> PNC REPORT****POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER DATA QUALITY AND TIMELINESS –  
RECOMMENDATIONS****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.