

Strategic Policing Requirement

Bedfordshire Police

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Introduction

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) was issued in July 2012.¹ This document sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The SPR respects the operational independence of the police service, advising what, in strategic terms, it needs to achieve, but not how it should achieve it.

The particular threats specified in Part A of the SPR, and referred to as the national threats in this report, are:

- terrorism;
- civil emergencies;
- organised crime;
- public order threats; and
- large-scale cyber incidents.

Part B specifies the policing response that is required nationally, in conjunction with other national agencies, to counter these threats. This policing response is described in the SPR as follows:

*“the combined national **capacity** of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national government strategies. Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective **contributions** they will make to it;*

*the **capabilities** that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes; the requirement for **consistency** among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated with, or work effectively alongside, each other. In some instances this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies; and*

*the **connectivity** arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be co-ordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other*

¹ In accordance with section 37A Police Act 1996. Available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-policing-requirement

agencies – such as the Security Service and, from 2013, the National Crime Agency. The combination of consistency and connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners.”

We report the findings from this inspection of Bedfordshire Police which took place during September 2013 against each of these requirements.

The breadth of requirements that are set out in the strategic policing requirement are outside the scope of a single inspection. Therefore, it has been necessary to plan a series of inspections over three years so that the police response to all the national threats can be examined individually and in-depth over that period.

This year, HMIC has examined how well police forces have established arrangements to respond to strategic policing requirement threats and has conducted in-depth examinations of the police response to two of the national threats: the threat to public order; and the threat of a large-scale cyber incident.

We have produced the following three national reports, available at <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic>:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the requirement;
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats to public order; and
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats of a large-scale cyber incident (including criminal attack).

This report sets out what we found when we examined the arrangements that Bedfordshire Police had in place to meet the strategic policing requirement and follows the format of the first of the national reports listed above.

Bedfordshire Police has formed a strategic alliance with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Constabularies. The strategic alliance has developed arrangements for providing joint protective services². These arrangements support the three forces' capabilities to meet the strategic policing requirement.

² The 2005 HMIC report 'Closing the gap' describes the term 'protective services' as police forces' capabilities to protect the public from threats of a serious nature like serious organised crime, terrorism, public order and civil emergencies. This is explained as being in contrast to local policing where the police work **with** the public at the neighbourhood level to tackle anti-social behaviour, or where the police work **for** the public in dealing with volume crime.

Capacity and contribution

Terrorism

The chief constable understands her role in tackling the threat of terrorism. The force, together with the counter-terrorism network, has the capacity it needs to contribute to the national counter-terrorism effort. The force is linked to the national counter-terrorism network through the regional counter-terrorism intelligence unit managed by Bedfordshire Police and subsequent to our inspection; the chief constable sits on the national policing governance board that governs the national counter-terrorism policing effort.

Bedfordshire Police has recorded its assessment of threats that it faces from terrorism and domestic extremism within a comprehensive police and crime strategic assessment document and a force strategic risk register, which record a range of threats faced by the force. The police and crime strategic assessment provided to HMIC was dated November 2012 and the strategic risk register was dated July 2013. An assessment has also been prepared about threats from terrorism and extremism within the force area.

The force is linked to the national counter-terrorism network through the regional counter-terrorism intelligence unit managed by Bedfordshire Police. This unit and the network provide most of the force's specialist counter-terrorism capability. Special branch officers working within the joint protective services co-ordinate local intelligence gathering and provide links between national counter-terrorism arrangements and force staff.

Civil emergencies

The force, together with the Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum, have the capacity to respond to local civil emergencies and to contribute to national emergencies.

The local resilience forum is chaired by a Bedfordshire Police chief superintendent, and the deputy chief constable also attends.

A progress update document contains records of the risks faced by the local resilience forum and measures taken to manage those risks. The document provided to HMIC was dated April 2013 and therefore was current.

Emergency planning for the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire forces is undertaken within the joint protective services unit. Each resilience forum member contributes to fund central administration which is located within Central Bedfordshire Council offices.

Through the strategic alliance Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire forces have sufficient trained staff for responses to civil emergencies. Records of skills are maintained by the joint protective services operational planning and specialists support unit. The Eastern Region Information and Coordination Centre based within Essex Police headquarters co-ordinates cross-border mobilisation for public order and most specialist skills. Norfolk Constabulary manages chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear responses on behalf of the region.

Serious organised crime

Bedfordshire Police has appropriate capacity to meet threats from serious organised crime, either with its own trained staff, or through its regional organised crime unit, known as the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU).

The force has included an assessment of threats from serious organised crime within its police and crime strategic assessment and applies nationally approved methods to disrupt organised crime groups.

The strategic alliance's response to serious organised crime is led by the joint protective services assistant chief constable. Each force within the strategic alliance has its own task-allocation and co-ordinating arrangements to make sure that resources are deployed against the most serious crime groups. The joint protective services unit receives requests for assistance from the three forces and co-ordinates responses to the most serious crime groups with the regional organised crime unit. Chief officers across the Eastern region are co-operating to increase the capabilities of the regional organised crime unit, in accordance with recommendations issued by the national lead for tackling serious organised crime.

Public order

The chief constable understands her role to provide police support units³ to deal with public order incidents across force boundaries and to make a contribution to the national requirement.

Bedfordshire Police had not completed a force level public order strategic threat and risk assessment in accordance with nationally issued guidance but had assessed the potential for public disorder within its police and crime strategic assessment and was contributing to a regional public order threat assessment at the time of our

³ Police Support Units are the basic formations used by the police service for the policing of major events. The composition of a police support unit is standardised across all of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and consists of one inspector, three sergeants and 18 police constables, plus three drivers trained and equipped to carry out public order tactics to national standards, with three suitably equipped personnel carriers. Formations of a sergeant and six constables are referred to as serials.

inspection. It is not clear, from the assessments available, how the force decided the number of police support units that it needed to respond to local threats.

The requirement for Bedfordshire Police's contribution for national public order mobilisation is three police support units. Bedfordshire has sufficient trained staff, and equipment including transport for six complete police support units. For each force, HMIC compared the number of police support units they declared they had, with the number of that they told us they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder. The force assessed that it needed three police support units to respond to local threats and it therefore had a sufficient number.

The force, through its alliance, has sufficient staff to support public order policing, including specialists and senior officers to command responses to major events and public disorder.

The use of mutual aid – the provision of support between police forces – is another indicator of the extent to which police forces either have or do not have sufficient trained public order resources. Data provided by forces on their provision and receipt of mutual aid for 2011/12 and 2012/13 show that Bedfordshire was one of 12 forces that were net recipients for public order policing mutual aid.

Large-scale cyber incident

The force's plans to respond to the threat of a large-scale cyber incident were still under development at the time of our inspection.

The response to cyber threats is led by the joint protective services unit assistant chief constable. Cyber threats are considered within the force's police and crime strategic assessment and recorded within the force's strategic risk register.

Bedfordshire Police had not assessed the threats or the potential impact of a denial of service⁴ attack on the force's systems, but was aware of the risk owing to an incident of a denial of service attack on a neighbouring police force's website. Business continuity plans⁵ for losses of information technology include contingencies for fall-back to paper and arrangements with neighbouring forces to use their command and control systems, in the event of cyber attacks on the force's systems.

The force has a limited understanding of the extent of cybercrime within its area and therefore has not developed a significant capability to investigate it. The force would

⁴ A denial of service attack is an attempt to make a computer or network of computers unavailable to its users.

⁵ Business continuity plans set out how the force will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to normal business in the quickest possible time afterwards.

need to rely on national capabilities to assist in providing a response if it faced a significant cyber issue.

Bedfordshire Police has secured funding to improve its capability to investigate cybercrime. Other than this focus on investigation, the force has not prepared comprehensive plans to tackle cyber threats, including those to support victims and potential victims through prevention, preparing for recovery and protection of systems.

Capability

Terrorism

Bedfordshire Police has, or has access to, the necessary capability to conduct complex investigations into terrorism. It has the systems in place to manage the training of special branch officers to maintain the necessary skills to provide specific counter-terrorism capability. Bedfordshire is the lead force for the Eastern Region Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Unit (ERCTIU)

The ERCTIU produces a quarterly threat assessment; a six weekly review document; a quarterly review of the threat for the six chief constables and PCCs of the Eastern region and an annual counter terrorism local profile for each force in the strategic alliance.

The strategic alliance recognises the importance of preventing people from becoming radicalised for violent extremism and the joint protective services counter-terrorism and domestic extremism unit has produced a 'prevent' tactical delivery plan, which outlines how the forces will work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. There is also a specific prevent joint group that manages activity within certain areas of Bedfordshire.

All four strands of the CONTEST⁶ strategy are co-ordinated by a strategic board chaired by the joint protective services unit assistant chief constable. The strategic board is supported by a tactical CONTEST group which implements the strategy.

The training lead for the joint protective services unit manages training requirements. Counter-terrorism staff are trained to national standards and their skills are recorded on a database maintained for the joint protective services unit by the head of training. This supports managers in their planning to maintain skill levels for the unit.

Bedfordshire Police has access to sufficient trained staff to support all four strands of the counter-terrorism CONTEST strategy.

⁶ CONTEST – The government's counter-terrorism strategy. The four strands are: pursue, prevent, protect and prepare.

Civil emergencies

The force is meeting the strategic policing requirement to provide capability to meet civil emergencies which span the borders between Bedfordshire and surrounding forces.

Bedfordshire and Luton local resilience forum members prepare the community risk register and agree what needs to be done to manage the risks that have been identified. The progress update document demonstrates that action is monitored and recorded against each of the risk areas. Local resilience forum activity is co-ordinated by an executive group, which meets twice a year, and quarterly support group meetings.

Civil contingency plans, business continuity plans and civil emergencies requirements are dealt with by a team in the joint protective services unit. There are three unitary authorities within the Bedfordshire and Luton local resilience forum partnership, Bedford, Luton and Central Bedfordshire. The local resilience forum has a command and control plan for use in the event of an incident, which was reviewed in June 2013.

There are sufficient trained staff within the force to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. While Bedfordshire Police does not have officers trained to lead the tactical response incidents (silver commanders), the other forces within the strategic alliance have officers who could perform these roles if required. It is accepted that the police response to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident in the Eastern region would be regionally co-ordinated by Norfolk Constabulary.

Serious organised crime

Bedfordshire Police has the capabilities required, either internally or through officers provided by the regional organised crime unit, to meet threats from serious organised crime.

Force leaders are part of the regional arrangements for tackling serious organised crime and they attend governance meetings for the regional organised crime unit. Owing to levels of crime in certain parts of Bedfordshire, the force receives considerable levels of resources from the regional organised crime unit. HMIC found that, in the Eastern region, chief constables have agreed their detailed plans for the further development of the regional organised crime unit.

Capabilities to conduct complex investigations and disrupt the activities of organised crime groups are co-ordinated in accordance with the level of harm the groups threaten. There is a way to intensify the response from the force, joint protective services unit and the regional organised crime unit to make sure that the most appropriate resources are used.

Public order

Bedfordshire Police has the capabilities required to respond to public order threats.

The force's public order capability is shared within the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire joint unit that is led by an assistant chief constable. He represents the three forces at the Association of Chief Police Officers⁷ Eastern region public order public safety working group.

The force did not at the time of the inspection provide HMIC with a self-assessment of its public order capability using the College of Policing capability framework although we can subsequently confirm it was complete and available at the time.

Public order training for the three strategic alliance forces is provided by the joint protective services unit's public order trainers who are accredited to national standards. A memorandum of understanding formalises arrangements for public order training delivery between Bedfordshire Police, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Essex Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Norfolk Constabulary and Suffolk Constabulary, specifically for the delivery of a number of command and specialist courses and sharing of accredited trainers.

HMIC tested, without notice, the force's capability to mobilise and conduct mutual support across boundaries to outbreaks of public disorder. The force would be able to deploy sufficient resources for an initial response and deal with simultaneous incidents. Control room staff do not have access to information about officers' skills and would rely upon the resource management unit, which is available during office hours, to identify trained staff. This means they would not know which officers were suitably trained to call out when the resource management unit was not staffed and a public order incident requiring additional officers occurred beyond the capacity of the force's initial response out of hours. Information was available within the control room about the availability of senior leaders trained to command public order responses, so they would be able to arrange the leadership for the police response. Control room staff were also aware of how to secure assistance from neighbouring police forces.

A police support unit carrier was seen by the inspection team and found to be fully functioning and equipped to national standards. However, interviews revealed that some of Bedfordshire Police's support unit carriers are also used as prisoner transport. In the event of them being required for public order use, facilities fitted for the transport of prisoners would need to be removed, thereby delaying the deployment of some carriers.

⁷ ACPO is the Association of Chief Police Officers, the professional body that coordinates the leadership of the police service, develops policy and establishes standards.

Large-scale cyber incident

Bedfordshire Police, like most forces, is not yet able to identify or understand fully the threats, risks and harm posed by cybercrime. The force is not yet taking full advantage of opportunities being made available to train its staff to deal with cybercrime.

Bedfordshire Police's senior leaders demonstrated a lack of understanding of what constituted a large-scale cyber incident at the time of our interviews. The chief officer team recognises the potential for crimes previously committed in the real world, like bullying, fraud and harassment, to move online. However, the force has very limited cyber investigation capability currently within the force's serious organised crime unit. It includes a small online undercover policing and open-source monitoring (such as searching the internet and other public records) capability.

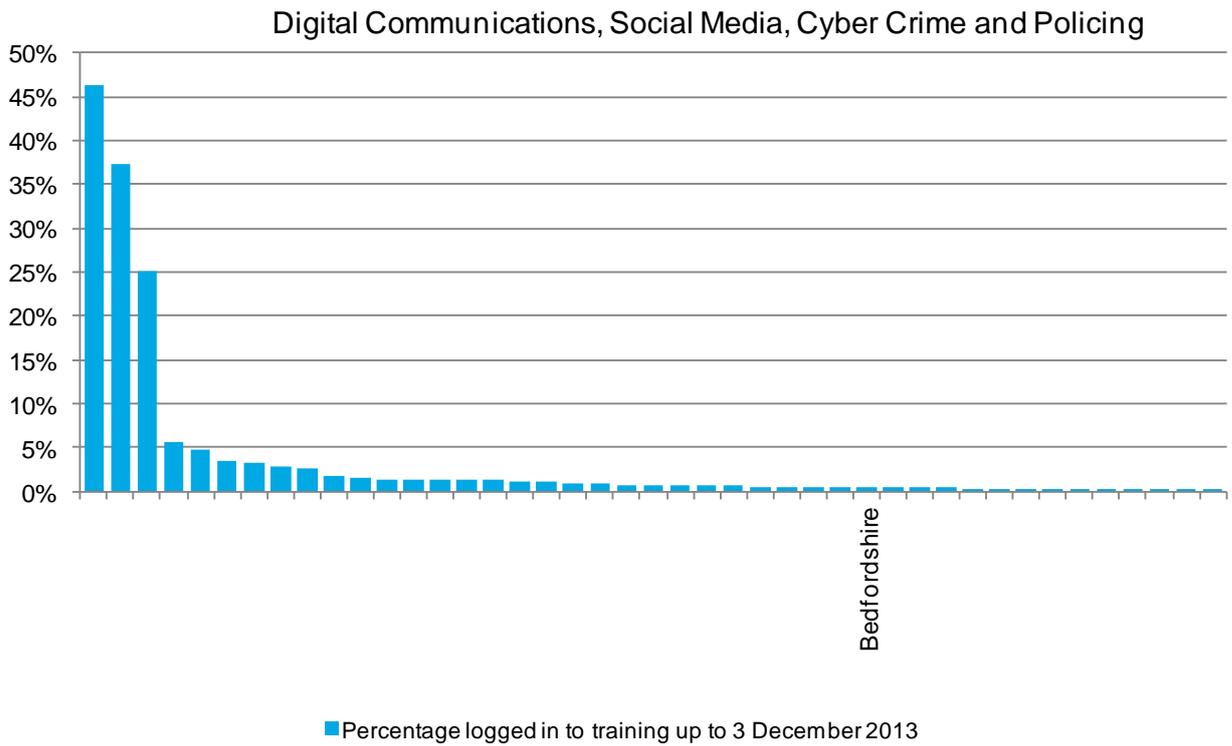
The force recognises that it would probably not have the capability, in terms of skills and equipment, to deal with large-scale cyber incidents but would rely on ERSOU or the National Cyber Crime Unit of the National Crime Agency to provide those capabilities.

The force has not taken steps to improve its cyber skills profile by working with academic institutions, undertaking specific recruitment or looking for volunteers or special constables with the requisite skills.

The College of Policing has developed eight computer-based training courses to improve the police service's knowledge and skills to deal with cybercrime. Data have been provided and analysed to understand the proportion of officers and staff who have sought the training up to the beginning of December 2013.⁸ Tables that show the proportion of staff, for each force, who have signed in for the training are included in our national report on the police service's response to cyber threats. The following charts demonstrate how many of Bedfordshire's workforce enrolled for three of the eight e-learning courses designed to improve awareness. The courses were selected to be representative of the force's commitment to this aim for both general frontline policing (Digital Communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing introduced in April 2013 and Cybercrime and Digital Policing – Introduction, introduced in August 2013) and for investigators (Introduction to Communications Data and Cybercrime introduced in July 2011).

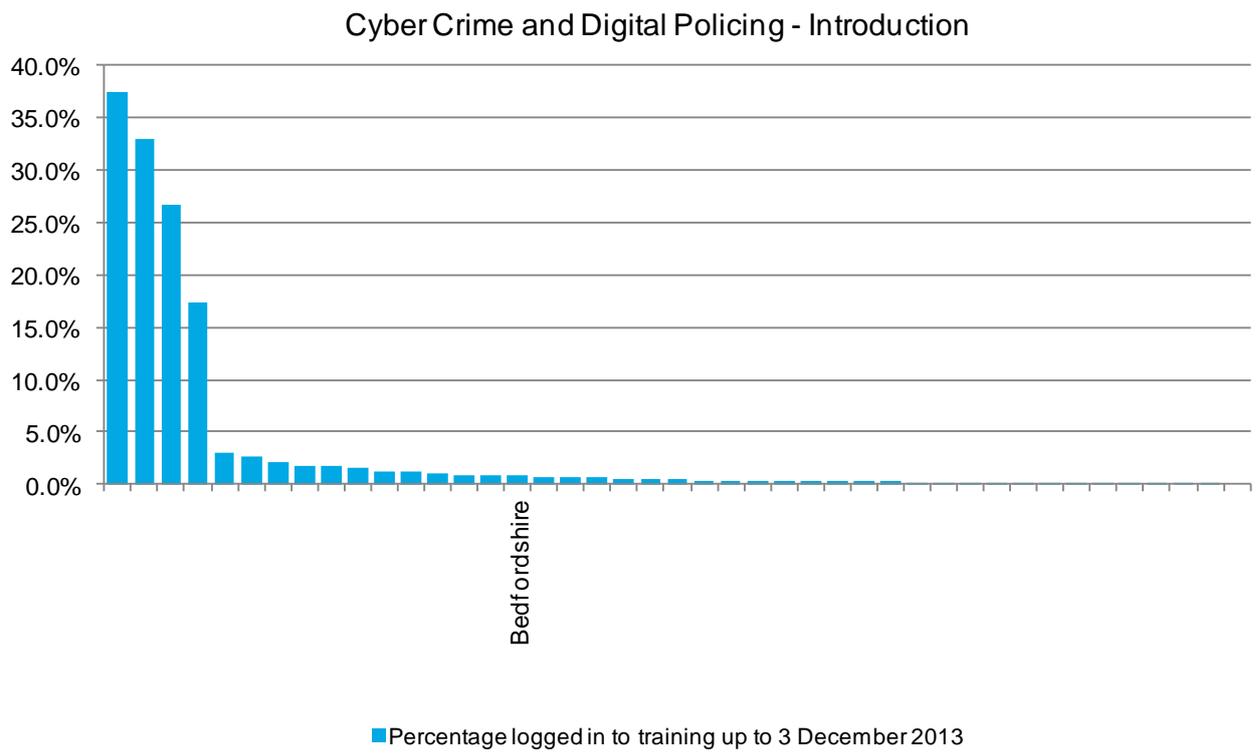
⁸ Information provided by the College of Policing dated 10th February 2014 – completion figures for Communication Data and Cybercrime Modules (period ending 31 January 2014).

Figure 1: Digital communications, Social Media, Cybercrime and Policing⁹



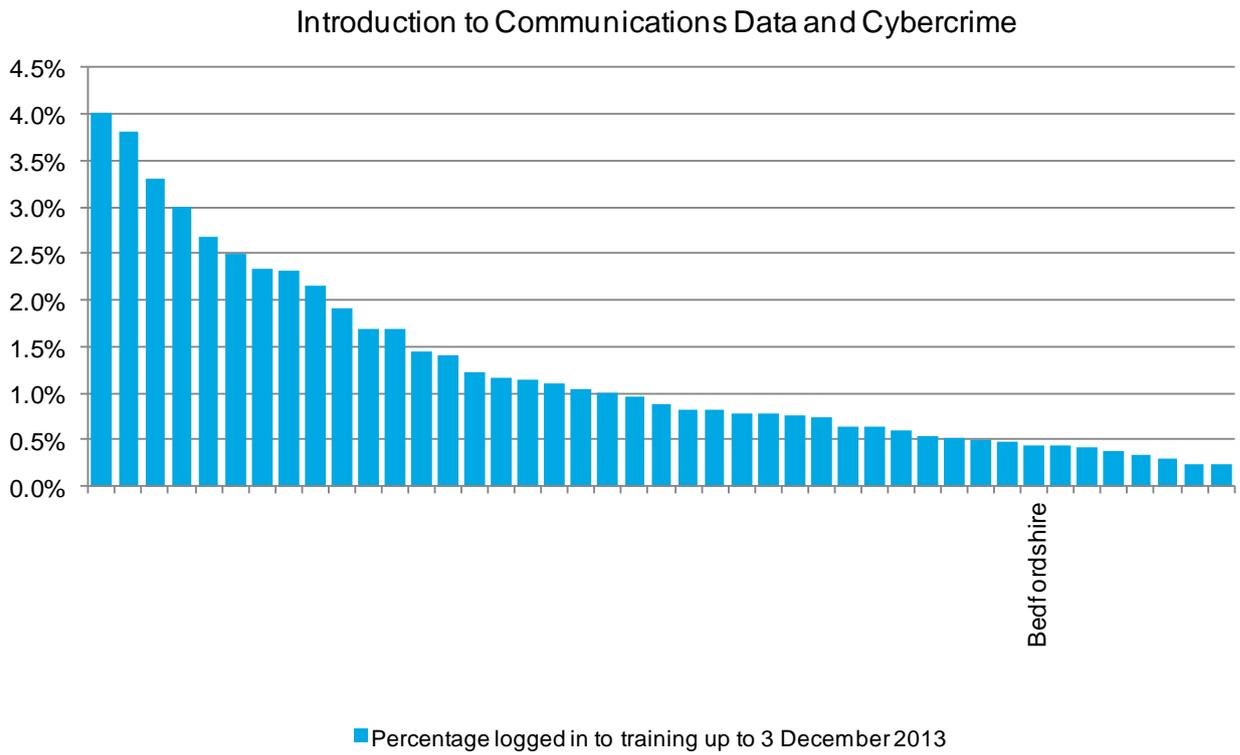
⁹ This course, designed for all staff, aims to develop awareness of digital communications technology and its impact on different areas of cybercrime, social media, law enforcement and policing. Cybercrime.

Figure 2: Cybercrime and Digital Policing – an Introduction¹⁰



¹⁰ This course is designed for all police officers, special constables and other individuals in a law enforcement community. It is aimed at helping them develop a general awareness of the types of emerging threats and risks from criminals exploiting technology. The training is linked to relevant legislation and also covers cybercrime prevention.

Figure 3: Introduction to Communication Data and Cybercrime¹¹



¹¹ Aimed at investigators, this training demonstrates the skills needed for a basic level of understanding of the uses of communications data in law enforcement including guidance on cybercrime prevention.

Consistency

Public order

Arrangements to train public order officers, and procure public order equipment, are consistent across all forces in the Eastern region.

The force purchases public order protective equipment in accordance with national standards. There is a joint procurement unit for the strategic alliance and this unit purchases equipment to a specification agreed with specialists from all three forces.

Officers from the strategic alliance of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire train and exercise their skills and tactics together. In the event of mobilisation, staff from the three forces will respond and act as mixed units; often a police support unit will consist of police officers from all three forces. Those responsible for commanding police responses to public disorder also train and exercise with units from the other forces and take responsibility for leading aspects of public order policing in other force areas.

Responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents.

Bedfordshire Police is able to operate effectively with other emergency services to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents.

The force's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear equipment is compliant with national standards and is consistent with that used by other UK forces. Interoperability has proven effective when the force's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear resources have been deployed with those from other forces.

Connectivity

Terrorism

The force and its neighbouring forces in the Eastern region have effective ways to co-ordinate and mobilise resources to deal with incidents of terrorism. These are supported by secure information technology and radio communications.

There are effective structures, supported by secure information technology and radio communications, for the co-ordination and mobilisation of counter-terrorism resources in the Eastern region. Bedfordshire Police is able to share information securely with the counter-terrorism intelligence unit, other forces in the region and the Security Service. There is effective communication using the Airwave radio system between police forces in the region and with the counter-terrorism intelligence unit.

The joint protective services unit has the capability to communicate securely with the counter-terrorism network and other agencies. They are also able to access intelligence systems across all of the three strategic alliance forces.

The force has daily counter-terrorism management meetings where information about counter-terrorism and domestic extremism activity is discussed and measures are agreed to deal with them. Daily meetings in the force link joint protective services unit and the counter-terrorism intelligence unit daily management meetings. There are also effective task-allocation and co-ordination arrangements that co-ordinate the allocation of resources between forces, the strategic alliance and the Eastern region.

Civil emergencies

Bedfordshire Police is able to communicate with other local resilience forum members in the planning of responding to civil emergencies.

The force has regular contact with other local resilience forum members through the secretarial and joint planning arrangements. Management of activity between members is recorded in progress update reports. These are comprehensive and include plans to deal with specific risks, including the staff being unavailable due to illness, or because of flooding and other severe weather. Progress in the development of significant supporting activities, like telecommunications, public and media plans and plans to deal with mass casualties are recorded in the update reports. Exercises have been undertaken to test the partnership's response to major threats.

The joint emergency services interoperability programme is developing a training programme that will improve consistency in language and operating practices between the three emergency services when responding to incidents. All three strategic alliance forces are contributing staff to help deliver this training.

Serious organised crime

The force communicates effectively with other forces in the region and with the regional organised crime unit about the mobilisation of resources, sharing of equipment and tactics, and communication with others. Also it is participating actively in the national tasking arrangements through the regional organised crime unit.

The region has an effective tasking and co-ordination process where priorities are agreed at local, strategic alliance and regional levels. Regional meetings, where organised crime group threats are discussed, are well attended by representatives from each force.

The force is able to share intelligence securely with the regional organised crime unit ERSOU.

Public order

We found that the chief constable of Bedfordshire Police is co-operating with the arrangements for cross-boundary mobilisation of officers to deal with public order incidents.

The Eastern regional mobilisation protocol provides arrangements for Essex Police to mobilise regional public order resources in response to national or regional public order events. Contact would be made with the operational policing support unit within the collaborative unit should resources be required from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire or Hertfordshire.

Bedfordshire has tested its arrangements to mobilise public order resources during the past two years.

The force has contributed resources to police major events on a number of occasions and has well-rehearsed plans to do so. During the past two years, the force has received support from other forces to police major events or deal with public disorder in the form of 52 police support units¹² and, in turn, the force has provided nine police support units to others.

¹² This analysis excluded three major policing operations – the 2011 widespread disorder experienced in England in August 2011, the London Olympics 2012 and the removal of the residents at Dale Farm, Essex in 2012 (Operation Cabinet) – as they were exceptional incidents that skewed the results

Cyber connectivity

Bedfordshire Police has not been faced with a large-scale cyber incident that would require a joint response. Staff in the force were aware, however, of where they could get help if it was needed.

The force has not had to investigate or deal with the consequences of a serious malware¹³ attack. Force leaders recognise that, if they were faced with such a challenge, they would ask for the national expertise of the National Cyber Crime Unit of the National Crime Agency or regional organised crime unit.

¹³ A computer program designed specifically to damage or disrupt a computer, mobile device, computer systems or computer network and can include programs designed to gain unauthorised access to data held on these devices.