



**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
South of England Region**

**Follow up/Monitoring visit to
Bath and North East Somerset BCU
Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted - July, 2003

Monitoring Visit Conducted - 4 August, 2004

Introduction

1. There are over 300 basic command units (BCUs) in England and Wales and no two are alike. They vary in size from a little over 100 officers to a little over 1,000; some serve densely populated, ethnically diverse inner cities, while others cover vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside. What they do share are some key aims and objectives, specifically to work with partner agencies on reducing crime in their areas, and do so with integrity. Scrutiny of police performance has moved from aggregate force outcomes to the performance of individual BCUs, with the recognition that policing is essentially a locally delivered service. But BCUs are not islands, they operate within a framework of policy and support determined by headquarters-based chief officer teams. The precise configuration of policing units and the balance of resources between HQ and BCUs varies across the 43 forces in England and Wales.
2. The focus on performance in reducing crime is likely to be relentless. Forces and police authorities, working with local authorities and other community safety partners, will need to raise performance outcomes year after year. Indeed, the statutory regime of *Best Value* demands 'continuous improvement' and an array of sanctions exist if authorities fail to deliver this. The potential for the service as a whole to deliver better results in crime reduction and detection cannot conceal an inescapable fact – that performance between BCUs operating in similar policing environments and with comparable resources varies to a degree that is, at times, remarkable.
3. The purpose of the follow up/monitoring inspection is to assess BCU progress in implementing the recommendations of the full BCU inspection, and also to highlight any significant developments and performance issues which have evolved on the BCU since the full inspection took place. It is not a further inspection report and makes no extra recommendations.

Significant developments since the original inspection

4. The present commander has been in post since March, 2004. He has 19 years broad policing experience, predominantly within uniformed operations. He was the District Commander for North Bristol prior to the recent force restructuring. A graduate of the Accelerated Promotion Course, he is a native of Bath and was clearly committed to providing quality of service to the District he serves.
5. The chief inspector (operations) has recently returned to duty after a period of maternity leave. Her return has provided an element of stability to the portfolio she has responsibility for and this has had a positive effect on staff.
6. The District has appointed a new Human Resource (HR) manager to take responsibility for all HR aspects on the District. This is discussed in more detail in the report. The post holder brings with her 8 years of HR experience from the private sector retail trade. She is the holder of an honours degree in Business Studies and is a graduate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
7. There were no other significant changes or developments brought to the attention of the HMIC officer.

Follow up/monitoring visit to inspected BCUs.

Bath and North East Somerset BCU.

Date of Inspection	HMIC Revisit Inspector	Head of BCU	Date of Final Report	Date of Follow Up/Monitor Visit
July 2003	Chief Supt John Green	Chief Supt Dave Hayler	August 2003	August 2004

8. The revisit to Bath and North East Somerset BCU (referred to locally as E District) took place on Wednesday, 4 August, 2004. The revisit was conducted by Chief Superintendent John Green on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).
9. In addition to conducting one to one interviews with the responsible staff for implementation of the recommendations, Ch. Supt. Green also visited the priority crimes unit and the business improvement unit.
10. The final BCU Inspection Report in 2003 made four recommendations in relation to Bath and North East Somerset BCU. These recommendations are listed below.

Recommendation 1

- The BCU management considers the balance between reduction and detection within the District in order to improve performance whilst maintaining the integrity of its recording process.

Recommendation 2

- The BCU produces a 'wiring diagram' illustrating the structure and links between the various partnership processes.

Recommendation 3

- The SMT monitors and supports the process of PDR submission for police officers and police staff.

Recommendation 4

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary considers the introduction of combined units to address child protection, domestic violence, hate crime and registered sex offenders.

Performance information - 2003/04 compared with 2002/03

Crime Levels and Detections	2002/03	2003/04	% Change
Total recorded crime	16,771	15,148	-9.68%
Number of crimes detected	2413	2254	-6.59%
% Crimes detected	14.39%	14.88%	3.42%
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	98.91	89.34	-9.68%
Total residential burglary	1,194	921	-22.86%
Number of residential burglaries detected	250	134	-46.40%
% Residential burglaries detected	20.94%	14.55%	-30.51%
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	16.67	12.86	-22.86%
Total vehicle crime	3,590	2,893	-19.42%
Number of vehicle crimes detected	251	141	-43.82%
% Vehicle crimes detected	6.99%	4.87%	-30.29%
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	21.17	17.06	-19.41%
Total violent crime	1,854	2,229	20.23%
Number of violent crimes detected	469	672	43.28%
% Violent crimes detected	25.30%	30.15%	19.18%
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	10.93	13.15	20.31%
Total robbery	195	135	-30.77%
Number of robberies detected	36	23	-36.11%
% Robberies detected	18.46%	17.04%	-7.72%
Total robbery per 1,000 population	1.15	0.8	-30.43%

Sickness

Days Lost	2002/03	2003/04	% Change	MSBCU Ave 2003/04
Police officers	9.36	9.35	-0.11%	8.48
Police support staff	18.75	9.32	-50.29%	11.77

Performance information - First quarter 2004/05 compared with first quarter 2003/04¹

Crime Levels and Detections	April to June 2003	April to June 2004	% Change
Total recorded crime	3,955	3,855	-2.53%
Number of crimes detected	490	609	24.29%
% Crimes detected	12.39%	15.80%	27.51%
Total recorded crime per 1,000 population	23.33	22.74	-2.53%
Total residential burglary	273	193	-29.30%
Number of residential burglaries detected	34	18	-47.06%
% Residential burglaries detected	12.45%	9.33%	-25.11%
Total residential burglaries per 1,000 households	3.81	2.69	-29.40%
Total vehicle crime	748	618	-17.38%
Number of vehicle crimes detected	20	18	-10.00%
% Vehicle crimes detected	2.67%	2.91%	8.93%
Total vehicle crime per 1,000 population	4.41	3.64	-17.46%
Total violent crime	511	636	24.46%
Number of violent crimes detected	130	203	56.15%
% Violent crimes detected	25.44%	31.92%	25.46%
Total violent crime per 1,000 population	3.01	3.75	24.58%
Total robbery	27	27	0.00%
Number of robberies detected	6	9	50.00%
% Robberies detected	22.22%	33.33%	50.00%
Total robbery per 1,000 population	0.16	0.16	0.00%

Total Crime

11. Total crime has decreased by 9.68% between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 2.53% decrease in crime when compared with the same time period the previous year. Bath and North East Somerset record less crimes than the MSBCU and force average.

12. The number of crimes detected has shown a 6.59% decrease between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 24.29% increase when compared to the same period the previous year. Detection rates, at 15.8%, remain comparatively low although account needs to be taken of the force policy of only recording sanction detections. The BCU is below the MSBCU average but is in line with the detection rate of the Force.

¹ Please note that this performance information is based on non-validated returns received from forces by HMIC.

Domestic Burglary

13. Domestic burglary has shown a 22.86% decrease between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there is a 29.30% decrease when compared to the same period the previous year and a 22% decrease when compared to the previous quarter (January to March 2004). The level has remained below the MSBCU and force average.
14. Detections have shown a 46.40% decrease between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 47.06% decrease when compared to the same period the previous year. The BCU is currently below both the force and the MSBCU level, displaying the lowest performance since April 2002. This is a concern of the chief inspector (operations) and is under close examination by the BCU Senior Management Team (SMT). If comparisons are made on sanction detections, BANES is ranked 11th of 15 in the MSBCU group for year ending June 2004.

Vehicle Crime

15. Vehicle crime has shown a 19.42% decrease between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 17.38% decrease when compared to the same time period the previous year but a 28% increase when compared to the previous quarter (January to March 2004). The BCU is currently (June 2004) above the MSBCU average but below the force levels.
16. Detections have seen a 43.82% decrease between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 10% decrease when compared to the same period the previous year. There has been a decline in the detection rate since December 2002. The sanction detection rate, at 5.03% in the period ending June 2004, is below the MSBCU average of 9.35% and places the BCU 15th of 15 in their group.

Violent Crime

17. Violent crime has shown a 20.23% increase between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter there has been a 24.46% increase when compared with the same period the previous year and a 14% increase over the previous quarter (January to March 2004). The number of violent crimes per 1,000 population is now at the highest level since July 2001.
18. The number of violent crimes detected has increased by 43.28% between 2002/03 and 2003/04. For the most recent quarter (April to June 2004) there has been a 56.15% increase when compared with the same period the previous year. The increase on detection rates has been less dramatic due to the increase in the number of violent crimes.

Inspection Recommendations.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action taken by BCU</i>	<i>Measurable impact</i>
<p>The BCU management considers the balance between reduction and detection within the District in order to improve performance whilst maintaining the integrity of its' recording process.</p>	<p>Tighter processes implemented to identify detected crime reports which have not been submitted.</p> <p>Awareness training to all staff regarding potential offered by TIC offences.</p> <p>Dedicated staff examine vehicle crime and credit card fraud linked to priority crime.</p> <p>Crime manager part of force working party to increase vehicle crime detection performance.</p>	<p>Greater submission rate for detected crime reports.</p> <p>Sanctioned detections fully exploited. Good use made of 'Think Detections' pneumatic created by crime manager.</p> <p>Priority crime unit make best use of available time and resources to address this.</p>
<p>The BCU produces a 'wiring diagram' illustrating the structure and links between the various partnership processes.</p> <p>The SMT monitors and supports the process of PDR submission for police officers and police staff.</p>	<p>Diagram produced showing partnership structure.</p> <p>Personnel inspector, in the absence of a personnel manager to provide updates to SMT for this.</p>	<p>With publication in large format in all District police stations a greater awareness has been achieved.</p> <p>HR manager recently appointed and is a member of the District SMT. This enables timely and accurate information to be supplied to SMT as well as the portfolio owner being able to action any issues arising.</p>
<p>Avon and Somerset Constabulary considers the introduction of combined units to address child protection, domestic violence, hate crime and registered sex offenders.</p>	<p>Recommendation forwarded to Force Headquarters for consideration.</p>	<p>Considered that it is more effective to retain the status quo.</p>

Monitoring assessment & follow-up action

19. All recommendations contained within the BCU Inspection Report, which were accepted by the BCU, have been acted upon. The recommendation which has not been acted upon was a recommendation for the Force. This recommendation has been considered by the Chief Constable who submitted a paper to the Avon and Somerset Police Authority with a recommendation to maintain the status quo.
20. The appointment of a human resource manager will facilitate good implementation of recommendation 3. The new post holder is keen to implement working practices across the BCU to enhance the opportunities available through efficient management of the PDR system.
21. The new BCU commander is aware of the challenges he faces regarding detection rates across the BCU. The chief inspector (operations) and the crime manager are taking urgent action to address this. The return of the chief inspector (operations) has been welcomed by operational staff who were spoken to.
22. The inspecting officer, Chief Superintendent Green, conducted a follow up check with the priority crimes unit regarding the BCU emphasis between reduction and detection. This indicated a consistency in understanding.
23. The chief inspector (operations) has a particular concern regarding detection rates for crimes which have BCU priority. She has indicated that work to address this will need to continue. She is also taking action to improve arrest rates at incidents of domestic violence where a power of arrest is available. Her clear focus and determination are worthy of note. Her Majesty's Inspector will continue to monitor detection rates on the BCU in the coming months.
24. No further action is believed to be required by the inspection officer.

Conclusion

25. The original inspection at Bath and North East Somerset has been used constructively by the BCU. The recommendations contained within the report feature in the District Development Plan and the monthly Senior Management Team meetings.
26. The new commander has the support of the staff on the BCU and his commitment to delivering a quality of service to the District has been noted by staff. The new commander has a firm grasp of the challenges facing the BCU and articulated a determination to deliver. He faces additional challenges since the restructure of other BCUs within the Constabulary. He commands the smallest BCU in the Force which presents difficulty when trying to secure level 2 support for local policing initiatives.
27. Recent iQuanta data would suggest that the BCU should continue to pay close attention to detection rates, even when allowing for the force policy of recording only sanctioned detections.

28. The BCU has responded positively to the recommendations contained within the original inspection report. The recommendation to the Force has been discussed earlier in the report. These recommendations should now be considered to be satisfactorily actioned.