Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HMIC Inspection Report

Bedfordshire Police

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Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent both of the Home Office and of the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005 and has thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC then consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking fewer but more probing inspections. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence will be gathered, verified and then assessed against an agreed set of national standards, in the form of specific grading criteria (SGC). However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

Programmed frameworks

This report contains assessments of the first three key areas of policing to be inspected under HMIC's new programme of work:

1. Neighbourhood Policing;
2. performance management; and
3. protecting vulnerable people.

Neighbourhood Policing has been inspected not only because it is a key government priority but also, and more importantly, because it addresses a fundamental need for a style of policing that is rooted in and responds to local concerns. The police service must, of course, offer protection from high-level threats such as terrorism and organised criminality, but it

also has a key role in tackling the unacceptable behaviour of the minority of people who threaten the quality of life of law-abiding citizens.

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

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

Risk-based frameworks

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

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

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

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

The grading process

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

Excellent

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

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

Good

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

Fair

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

Poor

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

Developing practice

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

Future HMIC inspection activity

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

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

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

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

The area served by Bedfordshire Police covers the two-tier county of Bedfordshire and the Luton Unitary Authority, with a population of 573,800 comprising 236,974 households in 120 villages and towns. The force covers a diverse mix of urban and rural areas. The force area includes the urban areas of Bedford, Dunstable and Luton; smaller towns such as Ampthill, Biggleswade and Leighton Buzzard; and a large rural area.

The Bedfordshire County BCU is coterminous with the area covered by Bedfordshire County Council (the first-tier local authority) and Luton BCU is coterminous with Luton Unitary Authority. The proposed unitary status of Bedford Borough Council from 2009 and the uncertainty over the position with Mid and South Bedfordshire will be an influencing factor for the future.

Bedfordshire's transport infrastructure includes sections of the M1 and A1 trunk roads, some of the busiest roads in Europe, and Luton International Airport. In addition, both East and West Coast Mainlines pass through the county.

Local features and amenities include Woburn Abbey and Safari Park, Luton Town Football Club and Whipsnade Zoo. Two major developments are currently proceeding through planning processes: Centre Parcs is planning a new holiday village near Ampthill in Mid Bedfordshire; NIRAH, a proposed tourist/research centre that would be the largest freshwater aquarium in the world, is proposed for former clay pits south of Bedford.

The newly formed University of Bedfordshire has a major campus in Bedford in addition to its Luton base.

Demographic profile of force area

There is a wide diversity of communities, particularly in Luton and Bedford, with Luton having a proportionally high number of black and minority ethnic (BME) residents. Projected developments under the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy and the East of England plan identify Bedfordshire as an area for significant growth by 2021 (a 23% rise in the housing stock is projected). Future developments include major expansion of Luton International Airport and new tourist facilities (Centre Parcs and NIRAH).

In 2006, Bedfordshire County had an estimated 162,800 households (from population estimates and forecasts 2006, produced by Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council). Major housing developments planned for Bedfordshire under the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy and the East of England plan are now starting. Between 2006 and 2021, some 41,600 new households are planned to be built (around a 25% increase on the current housing stock). Approximately 50% of this housing is due to be built in South Bedfordshire, adding considerably to the housing density, which is already greater than across the rest of the county. Accompanying these housing developments the population of Bedfordshire County is anticipated to rise by 15% over the same period.

Luton and Bedford have a significant night-time economy, with a large number of bars and clubs. Dunstable has a smaller night-time economy. Luton and Bedford are also large commercial centres, with a significant number of daytime commercial and retail visitors.

Strategic priorities

The police authority (PA) and force's vision is:

> *"Bedfordshire will be a place where the police engage with citizens and key partners to provide high levels of reassurance and public safety."*

Everyone who works for Bedfordshire Police has a part to play through a shared mission:

> *"Delivering a quality policing service in a customer-focused way."*

Bedfordshire Police's three-year local strategic plan shows the six principles in which it will develop new skills and new ways of working into the longer term:

- *Maintaining a citizen focus in all that we do*
- *Reducing crime*
- *Investigating crime*
- *Promoting public safety*
- *Providing assistance*
- *Managing our resources.*

The force's actions and activities for 2007/08 focus on two key strategic priorities:

- **Reassurance** – increasing community confidence, safety and satisfaction by improving visibility, neighbourhood policing, and care for victims and witnesses.
- **Crime management** – helping to drive down crime by improving investigation and end-to-end crime management processes.

Force developments since 2006

A significant development in the force took place in April 2007 with the changing of the force structure. Three directorates were formed: protective services, territorial policing and corporate services, each led by a chief officer. The deputy chief constable (DCC) leads protective services, the assistant chief constable (ACC) leads territorial policing and the director of corporate services leads corporate services. These changes will contribute to the more effective delivery of services across all policing areas.

In April 2006 Bedford and Dunstable divisions amalgamated into one, forming J division. The main reasons for this change were to achieve co-terminosity with local authorities as well as improve service efficiency.

Findings

National summary of judgements

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Neighbourhood Policing				
Neighbourhood Policing	**6**	**14**	**21**	**2**
Performance management				
Performance management	**6**	**29**	**8**	**0**
Protecting vulnerable people				
Child abuse	**3**	**17**	**21**	**2**
Domestic violence	**1**	**13**	**27**	**2**
Public protection	**2**	**16**	**23**	**2**
Missing persons	**1**	**21**	**21**	**0**

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing	**Grade**
Neighbourhood Policing	**Poor**
Performance management	**Grade**
Performance management	**Fair**
Protecting vulnerable people	**Grade**
Child abuse	**Fair**
Domestic violence	**Poor**
Public protection	**Fair**
Missing persons	**Fair**

Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	POOR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

National contextual factors

The national Neighbourhood Policing programme was launched by ACPO in April 2005 to support the Government's vision of a policing service which is both accessible and responsive to the needs of local people. It was anticipated that, by April 2007, every area across England and Wales would have a Neighbourhood Policing presence appropriate to local needs, with all Neighbourhood Policing teams in place by April 2008. For local communities this means:

- increased numbers of police community support officers (PCSOs) patrolling their streets, addressing anti-social behaviour and building relationships with local people;

- access both to information about policing in their local area and to a point of contact in their Neighbourhood Policing team; and

- having the opportunity to tell the police about the issues that are causing them concern and helping to shape the response to those issues (Home Office, May 2006).

By focusing on the key areas of resources, familiarity/accessibility, problem identification and joint problem solving, this inspection has identified the extent to which Neighbourhood Policing is being implemented. It has also examined forces' capability and commitment to sustain implementation beyond April 2008.

Contextual factors

In common with other forces, Bedfordshire has not yet fully embedded Neighbourhood Policing. In part this is to be expected owing to such a significant change in how resources in the form of specialist police officers, PCSOs, volunteers and support staff are selected, trained and deployed. However, the pace of the transition by the force to Neighbourhood Policing, compared with peers, has been slow. The development of Neighbourhood Policing is set against a background of other significant change within the organisation namely the amalgamation of two divisions, the merging of specialist crime support and operational support to form the protective services directorate and introducing the volume crime management model to territorial divisions.

Although there are examples of how Neighbourhood Policing has made a positive impact in some areas of the force, this recent inspection has shown that Bedfordshire Police needs to make more progress to implement a number of elements critical to the success of Neighbourhood Policing. They include the introduction of neighbourhood profiles, effective engagement, joint problem solving and making sure that training reaches all staff.

The appointment of a new ACC to the force will be an opportunity for the Neighbourhood Policing project to regain the momentum that has been lost through a number of chief officer

changes at that level over the last six months. Recent evidence shows that progress is now being made under the leadership of the ACC.

Bedfordshire is divided into ten inspector-led neighbourhood areas (ILNAs) with each ILNA further divided into safer neighbourhood teams (SNTs), of which there are 36. The SNTs cover a total of 150 neighbourhoods between them.

Each SNT has a sergeant assigned to supervise the team, which comprises police constables and PCSOs and, in some cases, special constables and volunteers.

Strengths

The Neighbourhood Policing board is chaired by the ACC who is accountable for the strategic delivery of the Neighbourhood Policing project. The board is informed by divisional project boards, the plural policing forum and the force PCSO forum. The PA is represented on the Neighbourhood Policing board and the community engagement committee. There is contribution to the project by the authority at a strategic level.

The project plan is detailed and includes plans for coverage of PCSOs and team members, community engagement and training. All tasks have owners and critical paths with milestones. Actions are followed up through the Neighbourhood Policing project board. The force has supplied data for the ACPO tracking process.

In C division, neighbourhoods have been based on census information and a series of demographic and data sets. A degree of local knowledge was also applied to determine the most appropriate set of neighbourhoods. SNT boundaries have been aligned to local council boundaries to aid service delivery but this is at a level above neighbourhoods.

The ILNAs in J division were decided upon based on ward boundaries and in consultation with partners, but not with community consultation. Consultation of partners was aimed at statutory partners rather than specific consultation of independent advisory groups, charitable and other voluntary organisations.

In identifying learning needs from performance and implementation, the Luton Pathfinder introduced 'knowledge-sharing forums' to share experience and best practice. The plural policing forum and the PCSO forum have continued the work of the knowledge-sharing forums.

Within the county BCU at Brickhill, the crime reduction measures introduced by the SNT and North Bedfordshire community safety partnership, in conjunction with Brickhill Parish Council, provide an example of effective partnership working to reduce crime and reassure the community. After consulting with communities, a local community action safety group comprising police, residents and parish council representatives set out a plan covering crime prevention, intervention and enforcement. Measures include additional police surgeries at St Marks Community Centre, securing appropriate meeting places for young people, installation of security fencing, lighting checks and an informal forum for residents to meet and get to know each other. Feedback has been provided to the community. Partners involved in this initiative describe the police as giving "100% effort" in this project.

During reality checking by the inspection team staff in Bedford, local shops and business premises were visited. Managers and staff were aware of their local SNT officers and had contact details for the local team. Of the members of the public spoken to, none knew the name of local officers but they were aware of various means of contact, ie telephone, visit to police station. Mobile police stations were also seen in a number of areas with officers engaging with communities.

SNTs are developing links with communities. In Luton East, a street meeting was advertised to residents in one ward, giving two weeks' notice of the meeting date. On the night, doors were knocked and a number of residents joined the meeting to determine local priorities for the street, together with partners. The priorities, which included tackling anti-social behaviour, formed part of an area action plan. This approach to community consultation is potential best practice and should be developed and promulgated across the force. Visibility and accessibility have improved in certain areas and local people are becoming more aware of their neighbourhood beat managers and PCSOs.

An example of improving communication is in Luton where an officer within the SNT identified that there were a number of deaf people in the neighbourhood where she was working. The officer learned to communicate with sign language in order to understand and address the needs of this sector of the local community. The officer has ensured that colleagues are aware of this skill.

Best practice is being developed within the community cohesion units (CCUs) at Luton and J Division, where staff have built up a considerable number of community contacts. The units research and prepare a weekly community impact assessment (CIA), which is fed into tactical tasking meetings, to inform local policing priorities. Actions are created from the CIA and fed into the operational performance group. The units have developed strong links with other specialist departments to inform the whole policing picture. Information from units is cascaded to the SNTs, where it is used to inform and provide reassurance to the community.

The links between Neighbourhood Policing and the work undertaken by the CCU will assist in identifying and developing strategies to meet the needs of emerging communities.

J Division has recruited 41 volunteers, a number of whom assist to operate the enquiry office at Dunstable. A similar arrangement exists at Leagrave police station; this enables the station to be operated as a local community and SNT base (see Areas for improvement).

The force rewards good work by means of awarding certificates and bonus payments. A number of SNT officers who had received such rewards for good work felt this to be an appropriate reflection of their work within the community. Neighbourhood Policing officers do not, as a matter of course, receive a special priority payment.

The human resources (HR) strategy specifies clear role definition, performance expectations and training for teams, but there is still work to be done regarding the delivery of such (see Areas for improvement). Job descriptions and role profiles for officers and PCSOs deployed within SNTs have only recently been introduced (1 April 2007).

Each crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) within the force area now has a PA member assigned to it. The authority has recently introduced a new community engagement committee to specifically monitor the performance of shared targets set by CDRPs.

Issues of counter-terrorism are linked into Neighbourhood Policing, with SNTs having received briefings from Special Branch officers.

Work in progress

The appointment of a new ACC should bring leadership, stability and direction back to the Neighbourhood Policing project; early signs are encouraging with renewed support being provided to the project team and accountability introduced to divisions. Neighbourhood Policing action plans exist for the two BCUs; the change in strategic lead for Neighbourhood Policing will add fresh impetus and renewed focus of progress on actions.

A comprehensive engagement strategy has been drafted that sets out methods to be used for engagement with communities. However, as neighbourhood profiles have not yet been completed, the communities have not been formally 'defined'.

The neighbourhood cycle of engagement has been identified, which details the process for initial engagement, problem solving, assessment and feedback. The engagement process and the development of the neighbourhood action groups will be largely based on existing fora. The regularity of the cycle will be informed by the community. Although there are some examples of effective neighbourhood policing, the force still has considerable work to do to ensure there is effective engagement with all neighbourhoods. Evidence could only be provided of where the more traditional forms of engagement, ie consultative groups, were taking place and evidence could not be found of where there was more than 50% engagement (across the force area) with communities. The force needs to build on well-arranged engagement events, such as the one held at Goldington involving residents and partners from local authorities, primary care trust (PCT) and fire service. The event was led by the North Bedfordshire District chief inspector and supported by the PA.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the force action the engagement strategy as a matter of priority.

A partnership strategic assessment is planned in the future, but until recently there has been a lack of analytical capability to prepare such a document and support the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing. An analyst, funded by the Marsh Farm Trust, has recently been appointed in Luton and is dedicated to supporting Neighbourhood Policing. In Bedford County, division negotiations are taking place with the three CDRPs to agree joint funding for an analyst in each.

A communications strategy has been developed at force level for Neighbourhood Policing, but has not yet been fully implemented. Although there has been some activity, eg local media and newsletters, there is more work to be done. There is a need to embed cultural change across the organisation. A lack of understanding among officers as to the purpose of the Neighbourhood Policing project has led to many SNT staff feeling undervalued within the organisation.

The force has not taken opportunities to fully market and publicise Neighbourhood Policing to communities or internally to officers and staff. There is a distinct lack of publicity material at police stations and the force headquarters. The force website covering Neighbourhood Policing could be more impactive and dynamic. The *'C' Side* magazine, an informative BCU publication, was discontinued because of lack of finance. Only the County BCU has a dedicated press officer. Both BCUs now have communications as a feature within their Neighbourhood Policing action plans, but this is without any guidance or assistance from the headquarters corporate communications department.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the force ensures the benefits of effective communication, marketing and publicity are fully realised.

The structure and mechanism for two-way joint partnership tasking have been identified but need further development. In J Division, the CDRP structure was revised in September 2006 to coincide with the divisional restructure. A well-attended overarching responsible authorities group was introduced and three operational delivery groups serve as the local tasking and co-ordination meetings, with the division providing analytical support.

The force is rolling out Blackberry hand-held terminals to SNT staff, with staff currently undertaking a one-day training package for the equipment. This will enable officers to self-brief (subject to adequate analytical support being in place) and will provide access to databases, such as the Police National Computer (PNC).

The accommodation strategy for Neighbourhood Policing focuses upon establishing local policing bases and identifying locations from which officers can work and hold neighbourhood surgeries. In addition, the force is looking to identify local drop-in points. Initial success has been achieved with co-location for the SNT for Luton at the borough offices and advanced plans for a partnership-funded renovation of shop premises at Marsh Farm, also in Luton. There are a number of 'Cop Shops' across the County Division, which serve as local community bases for SNTs. The force estates department needs to ensure it is fully contributing to the process of identifying and acquiring suitable premises for teams.

In developing the structure for staff within SNTs, training needs have been scoped and the force has purchased the trends and performance statistics problem-solving database from Hertfordshire Constabulary; this system uses the scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) and PAP problem-solving models.

Training does not currently fully equip teams and supervisors with the skills to fulfil their roles. There is a good and productive relationship between the Neighbourhood Policing project manager and head of training. The Centrex training package is being introduced for all SNT staff. The package has been adapted following consultation with a focus group of SNT staff. This is a modular training package that, when completed, will result in the attainment of a certificate in Neighbourhood Policing. The force has recently employed a training evaluator, who will evaluate the Neighbourhood Policing package. Training delivery is due to commence in July 2007.

Training on community intelligence has not yet taken place for Neighbourhood Policing officers or analysts.

The force does not have a succession plan for officers serving in SNTs. The ACC is leading on this issue to ensure tensions in prioritising staff between Neighbourhood Policing and other policing areas are resolved.

The force has introduced the SOLUTIONS programme, which comprises "concentrated weeks of activity". The programme will be launched on 1 June 2007 and will invite partners and communities to identify locations where concentrated efforts will "clean up the area" and improve the quality of life. The first event will commence operational planning in August with a delivery date of mid-October 2007. The programme will be linked to the National Intelligence Model (NIM) tasking process to prioritise the work.

SNTs have a named officer as the initial point of contact for the communities. At present, this is the sergeant within the team. The names of all officers on teams are detailed on the website, with the majority having their photographs also displayed. In order to promote SNTs, leaflets have been used in some areas to inform communities of the SNTs and their objectives. 'Wraparounds' have also been distributed, twice yearly, in local newspapers. Posters have been prepared and newsletters drafted.

There are numerous protocols in place to share information; this causes confusion for those trying to work through the process. Existing protocols have been combined into one that will provide clear direction and understanding about the information-sharing process. This work commenced in December 2006 and is awaiting an endorsement from Bedford Borough Council before being fully adopted. The effect of improved information sharing and the

potential for the receipt of an increased amount of community intelligence have not been scoped.

Ringmaster is well developed in the county division and joint funding with partners has been found to relaunch the system in Luton. This will commence in August 2007.

Areas for improvement

In exploring whether Neighbourhood Policing is a philosophy or style that runs through the force, a feeling was expressed at SNT level and found throughout most of the force that Neighbourhood Policing is a 'bolt on' rather than an integral part of mainstream policing. In part this is because of a lack of control and guidance at a senior level.

Between 2004 and April 2006, when Safer Neighbourhoods was launched, there has been a series of name changes to the role of officers working on community policing. This has led to confusion with partners as to what the current scheme is owing to the number of launches over the years. Improved marketing and publicity should assist in resolving this issue.

Strong leadership was displayed by a number of inspectors and sergeants interviewed but each has been developing their teams in different ways owing to a lack of corporate guidance. Although a corporate model exists, up until recently there has not been effective direction, monitoring and accountability on delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the force ensures mechanisms are put in place to provide a more consistent approach to the continued development of Neighbourhood Policing across the force area.

A view shared by a number of SNT sergeants was that the teams did not always get allocated officers with the suitable skills and aptitude to become effective Neighbourhood Policing officers. A number of sergeants have been advised to stop writing directly to officers whom they consider to be ideally suited for SNTs. This practice simply reinforces the view that they are secondary in importance to other areas of policing. This does not represent the view of the force who would seek the opposite, ie the encouraging of officers to join teams.

The Neighbourhood Policing project team remains focused upon the delivery and roll-out of the project. There is reduced capacity on the team, which inhibits the ability to monitor and evaluate progress of the project. Although divisions have action plans prepared by the force project manager, there needs to be a considered judgement as to when the force closes down the project. At this stage there is still more work to be completed at a corporate level.

Although consultation took place on how neighbourhoods should be decided upon, between Luton Borough Council, the five area committee meetings and a two-day consultation process within a shopping centre, the view of officers who were involved in contact with shoppers felt it was more about informing the public what the neighbourhoods would be rather than true consultation.

Although informal networks exist, key individual networks (KINs) listing community representatives and other interested parties have not yet been listed by the force. This will only take place when community profiles have been written. Divisions have been tasked to have KINs in place by the end of September 2007.

There has not been a consistent approach to Neighbourhood Policing in the force. The pathfinder site for Neighbourhood Policing was Luton, but the county BCU introduced a

different structure prior to any evaluation of the pathfinder. A corporate approach to Neighbourhood Policing is lacking.

An abstraction policy of staff required to spend at least 80% of their time on their designated neighbourhoods is in place for SNT staff. The policy provides levels of authority for SNT abstraction in the event of major or critical incidents and other emergencies. Although there is evidence of policy compliance in some areas, this is not the case across the force. The target should be monitored closely.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the force introduces robust procedures for the monitoring of abstractions.

BCU commanders do not yet have performance development review (PDR) objectives for the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing. The force has not fully integrated objectives for SNT officers into their PDRs. There are mandatory objectives for race and diversity, engaging with communities and reducing criminal damage, but PDR objectives varied within these themes. The accountability framework for SNTs has not yet been determined.

The template devised for neighbourhood profiles is informative. However, no profiles have been completed. Profiles are the cornerstone of Neighbourhood Policing and need to be completed at the earliest opportunity to inform the delivery of local priorities.

Call-handling and communications (CHC) staff do not have a delivery or deployment framework for SNT officers. This causes confusion with identifying who should attend different categories of incident. Investigative workloads for SNT officers are appropriate but, owing to a lack of resilience on response and a lack of clear guidance for CHC, SNT officers are often called to attend incidents that do not fall within their perception of SNT duties. This causes tension between departments and does not assist in the delivery of an integrated customer service.

SNT officers attend local community meetings, including parish council and area safety committees. The meetings attended are existing forums and there has not been a change in community representation at meetings. In effect, the hard-to-reach groups remain hard to reach and the force should consider reviewing the approach to such groups to ensure inclusion. It is perceived by some partners that the SNT structure has not brought anything different to the determining of local priorities and community involvement. SNT could be marketed as a new product and the opportunity for change.

The force has a number of support groups: Gay Police Association, Black Police Association, Disability Awareness and Network of Women. It was felt that earlier consultation with the support groups could have established effective links internally and externally with minority sectors of the community, ensuring engagement and inclusion in the developing Neighbourhood Policing project.

There is no identified link between the Neighbourhood Policing project and the National Quality of Service Commitment. These should be aligned and monitored to support effective delivery of policing to the national standard.

Each division has defined the staffing levels for the SNT, based on the results of the force restructuring project. The numbers of resources required to deliver the project have been determined but there is a shortfall, particularly for the Luton SNT, of 14 out of the 28 constables. Recruitment and placement of 124 PCSOs has been achieved, with all staff either in training or in their allocated post by May 2007. The force target for PCSOs is 128.

The plural policing forum and the PCSO forum are the mechanisms currently used to identify learning needs. An action plan should be drawn from these meetings to track progress.

The CCU gathers process and disseminates community intelligence to inform the wider picture upon organised crime and counter-terrorism. The process needs to be incorporated into the formal force structures and developed as a best practice model. This will ensure that the force is further able to develop communication links in tackling counter-terrorism and informing the national picture.

The force has access to multiple data sources – J Division has SCRIBE, which is a partnership information-sharing process and also BIG (Bedford Intelligence Group). Arrangements to access partner data need to be progressed in C Division. There is disparity as to how partner information is used to inform local priorities and the extent to which community involvement is integrated within the processes.

There is not an overarching policy for deployment of special constables to Neighbourhood Policing. In Luton, the Special Constabulary has aligned to Neighbourhood Policing. There was some resistance to this change of direction, with special constables expressing the view that they joined the organisation to take part in proactive, response duties. This led to a further realignment where the special constables work from Luton Central sector, policing the night-time economy, primarily over weekend evening shifts. The officers were concerned at the lack of consultation over the changes. There is a lack of co-ordination over special constable duty schemes: SNT officers had not been aware of availability or that special constables would often be willing to work additional shifts to assist with local targeted policing operations. In the J division structure, the special constables are not yet aligned to SNTs.

At SNT level, it was felt that community priorities were lost within the tactical tasking and co-ordination group (TTCG) process, with a lack of integration of community versus force priorities. Officers felt that they had accurately identified community priorities, in partnership, but that they were then usurped and not tasked within the true spirit of Neighbourhood Policing.

Although the neighbourhood prioritisation model exists, there is not a defined process in respect of identifying and agreeing local priorities, agreeing an appropriate response and 'signing off' priorities. There is a question over whether lower level priorities should feature within TTCG if no additional resources are required. The delivery of local priorities needs to be measured, monitored, evaluated and fed back to the community.

Joint problem solving and the links between Neighbourhood Policing and NIM are not yet embedded within force processes. There is an inconsistency in partners' attendance at TTCG meetings and the process has not been formalised.

Performance Management

GRADE	FAIR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

National contextual factors

There is no single accepted model of performance management across the police service but any such model or framework must be fit for purpose. Ideally, forces should demonstrate that individuals at every level of the organisation understand their contribution to converting resources into agreed delivery, and know how they will be held to account. On a daily basis, first-line supervisors monitor, support and quality assure the performance of their teams. At the other end of the spectrum, chief officer-led performance meetings – often based loosely on the American Compstat model – are a vehicle for accountability and improvement. Robust leadership, a commitment to improvement and reliable, real-time information systems are all critical factors in effective performance management.

There is no mechanistic link between overall force performance and the grade awarded in this framework. The grade is based on the quality of the force's processes that enable it to identify and react to changes in performance.

Contextual factors

Performance management exists within Bedfordshire but still requires development before being firmly embedded, especially at the divisional team level. This should not be difficult to introduce because evidence was found of where managers were provided with reliable, timely and relevant management information.

The performance management framework in the force has not been mapped out in detail and there are inconsistent processes in managing performance within divisions.

Evidence was found of where good and poor performance is being effectively managed but more needs to be done to ensure managers have processes in place to ensure that areas outside of core priority crimes are monitored and effectively managed to promptly identify any decline in performance. Examples are domestic violence (DV) risk assessments and the completion of risk booklets (as highlighted in the protecting vulnerable people (PVP) section of this report).

As a result of recommendations from the Axon report (an external and independent study as to how the force could reorganise at a strategic level), a new structure was introduced in April 2007, which has seen a transition to three directorates: protective services, territorial policing and corporate services, each led by a chief officer. These changes will allow for more effective performance management as well as improved levels of service and efficiency.

Following the introduction of the new structure, there has been renewed focus on a number of force-level projects, such as Neighbourhood Policing, and introduction of the volume

crime management model (VCMM). This focus needs to be maintained to ensure there is no further slippage on these pieces of work, which are critical to the force.

Strengths

The force has integrated its performance management and review processes with partners within local criminal justice boards (LCJBs). There are shared targets and, in the case of the LCJB, chaired by the Chief Constable, monitoring reports are produced by the LCJB performance manager. The joint performance monitoring group reports to the LCJB on delivery from actions arising.

Each CDRP within the force area now has a PA member assigned to it. The authority has recently introduced a new community engagement committee to specifically monitor the performance of shared targets set by CDRPs.

A new strategic initiative being pursued by the force is the joint major investigation team (MIT) with Hertfordshire Constabulary. Plans are advanced, with a decision made by both forces to co-locate specialist officers within one location. The Bedfordshire DCC is programme director for this piece of work, which is due to be completed by late 2007. This will go some way to meet policing demands beyond its own geographical area.

To improve accountability and reporting, the annual policing plan (APP) has been split into three sections. The first is a concise, public-facing strategic document that highlights force priorities. The second is a separate APP target-setting part, with each of the targets assigned a chief officer lead and performance reported to the appropriate PA committee. The final part is the APP action plan, which details actions and identifies senior managers responsible for delivery of the same. Progress on these actions is presented and monitored by quarterly PA committee meetings.

To better co-ordinate delivery against the APP, the force has replaced the business change programme board with three programme boards that align with the new directorates of protective services, territorial policing and corporate services. The chief officer portfolio lead chairs the relevant programme board, with a strategic overview provided at a higher level by the business change sponsoring group, chaired by the Chief Constable.

Key projects are managed using PRINCE 2 methodology (see Areas for improvement) and co-ordinated by the strategic programme co-ordinator within the corporate development department. Monthly reports on progress are reported to boards. The PA is represented and contributes to various projects, eg the PA vice-chair sits on the Neighbourhood Policing project board and the PA chair has attended project workshops on the VCMM.

The force and PA use a variety of means to engage with communities, partners and staff (see Areas for improvement) to inform plans. These include PA-led consultation events, CDRP forums, independent advisory groups and, more recently, a community event at Goldington involving residents and partners from local authorities, PCT and fire service. The PA is leading on the use of citizen panels in Bedford and Luton and obtains feedback from its council tax leaflet and the local policing summary, which is produced as a wraparound for local newspapers.

The force has a good record of development, costing and use of activity analysis, and activity-based costing to identify how police resources are being applied. Recent examples are the use of PCSOs at Luton, where it was identified that a significant amount of time was being spent in stations.

A professional relationship exists between the force and the PA. Appropriate support is provided to the PA by the force to allow the authority to perform its key responsibilities of consultation with communities, planning and scrutiny of performance.

The force NIM strategic assessment is considered as part of the annual planning process. The force control strategy sets out priorities that are then adopted by divisions.

Comparative data is monitored at force, BCU and at a number of team levels (see Areas for improvement). The data is reported formally on a weekly and monthly basis and in PA monitoring reports. Most similar force comparison is used at force and BCU level. The use of comparative data is particularly advanced within the call-handling centre with performance by teams data available to all managers, supervisors and staff and used to identify good practice as well as spot under-performance.

The vision for the force is "Bedfordshire will be a place where the police engage with citizens and key partners to provide high levels of reassurance and public safety"; the two key priorities are reassurance and crime management. The vision and key priorities are consistent with strategies of partner agencies and with the national community safety plan (incorporating the national policing plan).

Historically, business and financial planning processes have been aligned for a number of years, with HR, training and information systems and technology (IS&T) plans feeding into the planning process, as well as being informed by strategic decisions. The corporate services directorate also includes the performance development unit; this will assist in more effective communication and decision making because HR, finance and IS&T also sit within the same directorate.

The force has policies covering reward and recognition. These include the paying of bonus and priority payments for good work and designated posts and the awarding of modest payments to staff who have contributed to the force or divisional suggestion schemes. A new monthly Chief Constable's recognition and meritorious award has been introduced and divisional commanders also have a system of awarding certificates to officers and staff. J Division in particular has a well-constructed page on the force intranet publicising recipients, outlining their roles and providing details of what led to the recognition. Awards are representative of the workforce.

There is tangible evidence of focus on customer service, which stems from the Chief Constable. From what is predominantly the first point of contact for most users, the CHC, through to patrol officers and support staff, the desire to provide and improve on customer service is evident. As an example, the CHC has well-developed performance indicators and systems in place, from individual PDRs to team performance reviews, to ensure high levels of service are achieved.

Each BCU has a customer services manager whose main purpose is to ensure good customer service. This is achieved through close monitoring of complaints, including service complaints and ensuring the victims code and standards are complied with. Detailed reports of complaints and outcomes of intervention are provided to divisional leadership teams and individuals subject to complaint. Complainants are also invited to attend focus groups to secure continuous improvement in customer focus to the BME community.

In J Division, by effective use of survey data, an issue of a disproportionately high number of complaints from members of BME communities was identified. The divisional customer services manager personally visited a number of complainants and provided a synopsis of

the key issues to senior managers. This has not only provided details for managers to act on but improved confidence among minority groups.

Chief officers own and are actively involved in the force performance process. This is achieved by the Chief Constable chairing the force quarterly performance review process and with each division having a similar quarterly process with the chief officer portfolio lead. Monday to Friday, daily priority crime groups detailing allegations against targets are provided to supervisors and managers.

The recent in-house developed feature, websearch, linked to the force crime recording system, allows supervisors and managers to quickly identify officers who have crimes outstanding as well as identify good performers.

Guidance on dealing with poor performance is detailed in HR policies, eg capability procedure, and evidence was provided of where this procedure had been effectively used.

There is understanding and clarity around the roles and responsibilities for performance between the PA and force. Chief officer portfolios are clearly defined owing to the new structure and cover protective services, territorial policing and corporate services. The PA is provided with quarterly performance reports, which are examined at the authority performance committee.

Annual Data Returns (ADR) are managed by the performance development unit. All ADR and other data returns have been submitted to time and quality standards. Bedfordshire was a lead force in the roll-out of the National Management of Information System (NMIS) and is supporting the testing of the NMIS data hub pilot.

Work in progress

A review of PA member responsibilities is being carried out: the aligning of PA members (link members) to divisions and to functions will improve the ability of the PA to hold the force to account.

Key performance indicators are being developed for the protective services directorate and for Neighbourhood Policing. Both these pieces of work need to be accelerated owing to the level of risk currently carried within the public protection unit (PPU) (see Areas for improvement in the PVP section of this report) and the level of expenditure on Neighbourhood Policing.

Areas for improvement

Although the vision and strategic priorities for the force are clearly written, few supervisors or staff interviewed were familiar with them. Many staff did, however, volunteer the phrase "If they are happy we are happy", which is used as a strap line to reinforce the need to deliver a quality service. This element was clearly understood.

The force core leadership development programme contains a module on performance management and the confidence and performance programme includes input on managing teams and customer care. The force needs to ensure such training reaches all inspectors and sergeants (and equivalent police staff).

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the force ensures that an appropriate level of training on performance management is provided for all managers and supervisors.

The force has limited internal audit/inspection resources in the form of two information compliance auditors and a crime registrar with a team of four. The compliance auditors undertake activity within a prioritised programme. Audit and inspection is heavily weighted towards PNC compliance, as opposed to a wide range of high-risk areas to the force. Divisions also carry out local audits, which would be better informed if each had a risk register (feeding into the force register).

Performance management with some notable exceptions, eg CHC, more or less stops at team level. Throughout the inspection, there was clear evidence of managers being held to account by chief officers, but this did not exist all the way through to the majority of police constables and police staff.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the force identifies and publishes a performance management framework through to team level and one that is consistent throughout the force.

Bedfordshire is a small force in comparison with many others and the challenge still remains focused on identifying and marshalling resources to deal with demands beyond its county boundaries, such as counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime. Recognition is given, however, to the successful operation run by the force during the recovery of vehicles, in Luton, used by terrorists involved in the 7/7 bombings.

Under the new governance structure, there is improved programme management in the force. However, a legacy still exists at J Division of the poorly managed migration from two divisions to one post-April 2006. The merger lacked a robust governance structure and was not effectively project managed; consequently there are a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, including changes to recording systems. A significant number of staff within the division still regard the move as a change in name only, despite the recent concerted efforts of the command team to bring in a one-team approach.

The monitoring of the VCMM project has been strengthened and remedial action taken. There had been slippage in implementation, and exception reporting identified a number of actions of where the project had fallen behind. The introduction of the business change sponsoring group should prevent projects such as this and Neighbourhood Policing falling behind.

A number of partners at CDRP level felt that they had been consulted on changes after decisions had already been made by the force. Examples provided were the force alcohol policy and the young persons strategy, where the consultation period was perceived to be rushed and did not allow any time for considered reflection because of publishing deadlines decided on by the force. The local Police Federation also felt that they could have been consulted more especially in relation to Neighbourhood Policing.

A sample of PDRs was examined during the inspection. One PDR was a good example of where poor performance had been identified by the immediate supervisor and expectations with actions agreed. A number of others had objectives that were role rather than performance focused; this was particularly prevalent among those held by police staff. Many PDRs examined had not been countersigned by the second line manager.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the force ensures the PDR process is a meaningful activity with effective dip-sampling of PDRs to include a qualitative assessment.

Developing Practice

TITLE: Move to a three directorate structure to enhance performance management and embed business change

PROBLEM:

Bedfordshire Police engaged process management consultants to take a holistic look at the organisation to address the financial shortfall in 2007/08. This presented an opportunity for a force executive-led review to make improvements in organisational governance to enhance business change delivery, performance accountability and alignment to Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS).

SOLUTION:

The solution was concerned with improving the lines of accountability, delivering effective project management and providing greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities for performance addressing the SGC for performance management and aligning to APACS.

The force engaged external consultants in the summer of 2006 to take an organisation-wide look at both delivering financial savings and strengthened governance arrangements. The force executive took the opportunity to design a new organisation structure that was fit for purpose, to deliver policing for the 21st century in Bedfordshire. The model was endorsed by the consultants.

The new policing structure has enabled the force to separate and clearly distinguish between level 1 (territorial policing directorate) and level 2 (protective services directorate) policing for delivery and performance management. In addition, bringing together all the business support functions into a single corporate services directorate plays a key part in allowing operational staff to focus on core policing activities. Overall, the three-directorate approach will improve efficiency and service provision with a focus on value for money.

The territorial policing directorate includes County (J) and Luton (C) BCUs plus a new citizen focus division that covers the end-to-end processes of call handling, community safety and criminal justice. The overall command, performance management and business change activities of territorial policing is the responsibility of the ACC.

The protective services directorate includes intelligence, serious and organised crime, counter-terrorism, PVP, firearms, contingency planning, strategic roads policing, forensic science, professional standards, and MIT. This directorate is addressing improvements in capability and capacity for protective services in line with national requirements. The DCC is in overall command of protective services and is developing a robust performance framework.

Corporate services comprises the headquarters and divisional business support functions, with formal organisational structures coming into effect late 2007/early 2008. The director of corporate services is responsible for the creation and future leadership of the corporate services directorate. In particular, service level agreements are being established, which will ensure these functions enable front-line delivery and their performance can be measured via a framework in development.

Three business change programmes have been designed around each of the directorates, with an underlying portfolio of projects to deliver the 'step changes' required. The ACC, DCC and director of corporate services are senior responsible owners for their respective programmes.

OUTCOME(S):

1. Greater clarity on the responsibilities of the force executive members in relation to performance.

2. Development of performance frameworks for the three directorates

3. Establishment of programme boards to consider progress against both the delivery of their underlying portfolio of project and also HMIC WIP/AFIs. Each programme is developing a vision and blueprint to increase capacity and capability.

FORCE CONTACT: Parjinder Basra – 01234 842273

TITLE: Creation of a major incident team and public protection unit

PROBLEM:

Bedfordshire Police's performance on its two BCUs was being hampered by officers being 'abstracted' to major incidents for lengthy periods of time. Level 2 performance was also impacted with the constant abstraction of the (then) drugs and serious crime unit to staff major incidents.

In addition, response and management of areas of vulnerability was spread across the organisation with some responsibility sitting on BCUs (eg DV) and others in the centre (eg child protection). This did not create a resilient or robust structure to address the needs of vulnerable people.

SOLUTION:

As part of the force's Reorganisation and Restructuring project, proposals were developed for the creation of a major incident team (MIT) and a PPU, both of which would have their own clear command structures in the new protective services directorate.

The solution was concerned with improving the accountability and resilience to staffing levels in the PVP SGC. The strategic planning framework leading to the creation of the PPU and MIT enabled the force and authority to resolve tensions between priorities, as highlighted in the SGCs for performance management.

Major Incident Team

The force designed and established an MIT with 50 staff, including 35 police officers and 15 police staff. The unit is led by a detective superintendent and reports to the head of protective services (chief superintendent) who in turn reports to the DCC. The MIT has been effective from 1 April 2007. Bedfordshire Police will achieve efficiency gains from the introduction of the MIT by reducing the abstraction of officers from divisions and improving available officer time to deal with volume crime investigation. An increased number of offences brought to justice and improved detection efficiency are anticipated. The business case for a merged Hertfordshire Constabulary and Bedfordshire Police major crime task force has now been approved by the two police authorities (in principle, dependent on demonstrator bid funding) and implementation is planned for late autumn 2007. Both forces will enjoy greater resilience through the larger number of officers and teams.

Public Protection Unit

Bringing together services to vulnerable victims under a single command structure was identified as the optimum model to provide resilience and standardised processes under a common management for all public protection work. A new detective chief inspector (head of public protection) and additional detective inspector post have been introduced. This gives both strategic, operational and performance management responsibility to a common command team to improve accountability. The PPU includes a child abuse investigation unit (CAIU), adult protection team, high-tech and online crime unit, serious sexual offences team, sex offenders management team and responsibility for DV and missing persons.

OUTCOME(S):

Establishment of new MIT and PPU, delivering improved co-ordination and capacity for officers investigating homicide/serious offences and offences committed against the most vulnerable victims. The MIT will significantly reduce the abstraction of police officers from BCUs to long-term roles within major incident rooms. A resilient serious and organised crime capability is also being developed from the drugs and serious crime unit's resources.

The new MIT improves resilience, flexibility and continuity in resourcing major incidents, adds a cold case review capability and provides greater flexibility of staff to meet variations in demand across the force area.

The PPU also provides for improved and consistent partnership working arrangements and better synergy between interrelated disciplines to deliver public protection.

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Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

National contextual factors

The assessment framework for Protecting Vulnerable People was first developed in 2006 as part of HMIC's baseline assessment programme. It replaced two existing frameworks – Reducing/Investigating Hate Crime and Crimes against Vulnerable Victims – which focussed on hate crimes (predominantly racially motivated), domestic violence and child protection. Following consultation with practitioners and ACPO leads, a single framework was introduced with four components – domestic violence, the investigation and prevention of child abuse, the management of sex and dangerous offenders, and vulnerable missing persons. Although the four areas are discrete, they are also linked and share a common theme – they deal with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response is both life-threatening and poses severe reputational risks for the force.

This year's inspection has been carried out using similar assessment standards as those in 2006. These highlight the importance of leadership and accountability; policy implementation; information management; staffing, workload and supervision; performance monitoring and management; training; the management of risk; and partnership working.

The work carried out by forces to protect the public, particularly those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm, is complex and challenging. No single agency, including the police, has the capacity to deliver the required response on its own. Success is therefore, dependent on effective multi-agency working and there are a number of established partnerships, involving a wide range of services and professionals, aimed at ensuring that an integrated approach is adopted to protecting those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm.

Contextual factors overview

For the 2005/06 HMIC baseline report, the force received an overall grading of Poor for PVP; a particular weakness was DV.

A significant development has been the introduction of the protective services directorate under the DCC. This commenced in April 2007. Included in the directorate is a new PPU headed by a detective chief inspector. The PPU will improve co-ordination and accountability in these high-risk areas.

Details of the new structure and changes have been communicated to staff by various means, including briefings to front-line staff and supervisors, newsletters, articles in force-wide news, emails and on the PPU website. More role-specific guidance has been provided to staff such as those working within the CHC.

The PPU comprises a detective chief inspector, two detective inspectors and teams covering chid abuse investigations, domestic abuse, adult abuse, public protection (monitoring of sex offenders), and a high-tech crime investigation unit. Provision has been made for a specialist missing person unit, which will be in place by late summer 2007.

Strengths

All staff interviewed were clearly dedicated to their work with many impressing the inspection team with their level of professionalism within these areas.

A monthly tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) has been introduced within the protective services command, and also within the PPU; this will assist in the prioritisation of resources and in the management of risk.

Work In Progress

A number of accountability frameworks for PVP, eg DV, public protection and missing persons, are currently being reviewed to ensure new structures and systems are incorporated into guidance. The same applies for policies and guidance that have been redrafted but are awaiting the outcome of this HMIC assessment before publication. This is a conscious decision taken by the force to ensure any areas for improvement can be incorporated.

Work is being carried out to introduce key performance indicators across all areas within the protective services command.

Areas For Improvement

More proactive work needs to be undertaken in all four PVP areas; this is an issue that should be assessed at the monthly TCG.

Formal links need to be introduced between DV and CAIUs; a monthly meeting of the PPU is a start but processes need to be developed, eg the protective services and PPU NIM tasking meetings, to ensure effective communications exist between teams.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	FAIR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

National contextual factors

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the police to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children'; safeguarding children, therefore, is a fundamental part of the duties of all police officers. All police forces, however, also have specialist units which, although they vary in structure, size and remit, normally take primary responsibility for investigating child abuse cases. Officers in these units work closely with other agencies, particularly Social Services, to ensure that co-ordinated action is taken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at risk of suffering, significant harm. The Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Membership of LSCBs includes representatives of the relevant local authority and its Board partners, notably the police, probation, youth offending teams, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, the Connexions service, Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, Secure Training Centres and prisons.

Contextual factors

The investigation of child abuse within the force is the strongest area out of the four elements of PVP. Specialist officers are experienced and well managed. They have an adequate workload and a good relationship exists with partners.

Two CAIUs are located within the force: one at Luton and the other at force headquarters at Bedford, covering the north of the county.

The formation of the PPU will assist in formalising and strengthening the working relationship of the CAIUs with specialists from DV and public protection.

Strengths

The DCC has portfolio responsibility within the protective services directorate for the investigation of child abuse. The CAIU sits within the PPU; the DCC monitors performance through the force and protective services quarterly performance review process.

Child abuse is listed in the annual policing plan under the crime management strategic priority of combining child abuse into the PPU.

Up-to-date policy and guidance (consistent with National Centre for Policing Excellence/ACPO guidance) is in place and sets out criteria for investigations. Written agreements exist between the force and local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) that ensure local multi-agency compliance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Staffing levels of the CAIUs were agreed in November 2006 after a review as part of the force restructuring project. This resulted in an additional post being created in the south team. Resources are sufficient to manage the CAIU workload; staff are not routinely abstracted to other duties.

Child protection referrals are routed through the referral unit, recorded electronically, risk assessed and an initial assessment made to determine the appropriate course of action.

Attendance at strategy meetings is agreed by the CAIU referral team and social services and complies with *Working Together*. Police attendance at initial child protection conferences and core group meetings is monitored by Bedfordshire County Council, with data reviewed by chief officers from both organisations at formal minuted meetings. Detective constables will normally attend conferences unless there are complicating factors, in which case a supervisor or the team detective inspector will represent the force.

The force uses the case administration tracking system (CATS) to record and manage child abuse investigations. CATS is also used in the identification and recording of risk to victims.

Team detective inspectors review all recorded crime for child abuse before an investigation is closed. The volume and quality of CAIU investigations is scrutinised by the PPU management team during quarterly performance review meetings.

Compliance with National Crime Recording Standard and Home Office Counting Rules is the subject of independent audit by the force crime registrar through the force inspection programme.

All specialist CAIU officers are Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme and 'achieving best evidence' interview trained. All new staff attend a two-week Centrex course aimed at child abuse investigators. Joint training with partners also takes place with specialists from local hospitals and social services.

A computerised form is used by non-specialist staff to notify the CAIU of children identified as being at risk. This data is transferred electronically to CATS by the referral team.

The level of representation at LSCBs is under review owing to the formation of the PPU. The detective chief inspector PPU currently attends Luton and Bedford LSCBs. The DCC, detective superintendent protective services and detective chief inspector PPU engage in quarterly meetings with the director and deputy of Children's Services from the county council.

Work in progress

An accountability framework for child abuse investigations is being written to reflect changes in the new structure. This will clearly outline roles and responsibilities of staff and senior managers.

Job descriptions of investigators and supervisors are currently being reviewed to ensure they are up to date and that they reflect the new PPU structure.

The chief inspector from the force training and development services is a member of the LSCB training sub-group and the integrated training strategy group. A draft training strategy for the LSCB has been written, with packages planned for delivery to staff and partners.

CAIU, DV and public protection staff are now located within the same unit: the PPU. Formal monthly meetings have commenced along with a monthly TCG within the protective services command; this will improve links between the related disciplines.

Areas for improvement

Although new staff into the CAIUs receive training and are placed on specific work-related courses, existing staff, some with a number of years' service, have not received any refresher training.

The workload in CAIUs is described as manageable, but there is little evidence of any proactivity.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	POOR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

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

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

As with the investigation of child abuse, responding to and investigating domestic violence is the responsibility of all police officers. Again, however, forces have dedicated staff within this area of work, although their roles vary. In some forces staff undertake a support/liaison role, generally acting as a single point of contact for victims and signposting and liaising with other agencies and support services; in others, staff have responsibility for carrying out investigations.

Irrespective of who carries out the investigation in domestic violence cases, an integral part of every stage is the identification of risk factors, followed by more detailed risk assessment and management. In 2004, HMIC, together with HMCPSI, published a joint thematic inspection report on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence. At that time, risk identification, assessment and management were in the early stages of development throughout the service. Since then, there has been considerable progress in developing formal risk identification and assessment processes and - in a number of forces - the implementation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). Other improvements include the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts and the strengthening of joint working arrangements.

Contextual factors

Investigation and the associated support activity around DV were identified in HMIC's baseline assessment 2005/06 as requiring significant improvement. Although it is clear that progress has been made, especially in introducing the PPU on 1 April 2007, DV is still an area requiring further work.

DV units are located at Luton and within County division at Bedford and Dunstable, with staff now line-managed through the PPU.

At Luton, the establishment is one sergeant and seven police officers; Bedford, one sergeant (also covering Dunstable) and four police officers and Dunstable two officers.

Since the inspection, the force has cleared a significant amount of the backlog of work (as listed in Areas for improvement) but this has been achieved by relocating staff from County

DV to Luton and by using staff from other areas to update the CATS database, mainly working overtime. This is not a sustainable solution but a fix for the short term. The force is confident that it has a long-term solution that will be achieved by making changes to processes by using a facility on the crime management system and a central referral unit (planned for November 2007).

The resourcing levels of the DV units are well below establishment levels, with Luton especially experiencing reduced staffing levels. This increases risk to victims because thorough risk assessments have not always been carried out in a timely manner. Although their primary role is one of support to victims and witnesses, DV officers are regularly used as administrators to clear backlogs of forms and reports.

Although systems and processes in the CHC for quality control are robust and well managed, this is not the case within divisions among patrol officers and first-line supervisors.

Strengths

The DCC has portfolio responsibility for DV which sits within the PPU. He is a member of the multi-agency Bedfordshire domestic abuse chief officers group. The DCC holds quarterly review meetings with divisional commanders, which includes the monitoring and management of DV through the force and protective services quarterly performance review process.

During consultation, DV was raised as a priority by partners. It is included within the force crime management strategy within the annual policing plan.

A detective superintendent chairs the force domestic abuse strategy group and monitors progress against actions from the domestic abuse strategy implementation plan. Actions from the plan already in place are:

- development of force and partnership strategies;

- introduction of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) in Bedfordshire and Luton;

- the appointment of independent DV advisers in both divisions;

- review of the domestic abuse training programme; and

- securing of local area agreement (LAA) funding to employ a domestic abuse consultant at Luton to meet LAA financial reward targets (relating to increase of reports but decrease of repeat victims).

DV incidents are flagged on the command and control operational information system (OIS), and recorded on the crime system CMS2. Officers attending the scene of DV are required to complete a DV booklet that includes a risk identification matrix (SPECSS model). Each booklet has a unique reference number that has to be notified to the CHC before the incident log can be closed. An audit by the inspection team of incidents showed that all incidents had a unique reference number entered on to OIS.

All DV incidents are reviewed by either the CHC inspector or supervisor before they are closed. Every CHC inspector has a PDR objective covering the quality assessment of DV incidents.

Call-handling operations procedures provide clear guidance to operators within the CHC; this has been reinforced with the issue of an aid memoire to staff.

Completed booklets are forwarded to the relevant divisional DV unit for assessment by specialist DV staff (see Areas for improvement). These officers review booklets and validate risk assessment. Risk management plans are then drawn up with victims. If required, referrals to social services are made within 24 hours, but this is dependant on the timely arrival of booklets at DV units.

An assessment by co-ordinated action against domestic abuse (CAADA) has provided feedback that the MARAC meetings are working effectively. (See Areas for improvement.)

The PPU detective chief inspector and his two detective inspectors are senior investigating officers (SIOs) and provide support to other SIOs for any DV-related homicide.

Work in progress

As a result of the formation of the PPU, a more detailed accountability framework is being produced; this will reflect changes in line management and accountability within the protective services directorate.

Daily, weekly and monthly monitoring is now taking place, under the direction of the DCC, on any backlogs of referrals (see Areas for improvement), entries on to CATS and risk assessments within the DV units.

Existing domestic violence policy and guidance has been revised and will be published following the outcome of the HMIC assessment of PVP.

The force uses the CATS database to record incidents of DV. Staff have raised issues concerning the reliability of the CATS database, including issues of system speed and the amount of times the system crashes. As a result, the DCC commissioned a review of CATS, which is now subject to an action plan that includes upgrades.

CMS2 will be enabled with a new feature, '04' by September 2007. This will allow for details from DV booklets to be entered straight on to the crime recording system along with risk assessments. Plans are for the centrally located crime recording bureau to log details from officers at the scene. It is important that appropriate training is delivered to ensure all officers and staff fully understand the new process prior to implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the force ensures all staff receive appropriate training prior to implementation of the additional DV recording facility on the force command and control system (CMS2 '04').

The detective inspector has recently introduced a monthly meeting with domestic abuse officers at which a review of serious incidents and near misses is covered as an agenda item.

CAIU, DV and public protection staff are now located within the same unit: the PPU. Formal monthly meetings have commenced along with a monthly TCG within the protective services command; this will improve links between the related disciplines.

Due to the high caseload, officers within DV units are working to high demand. This is having a detrimental effect on staff welfare. The force has a policy of six-monthly mandatory referrals to occupational health, but these referrals have not been taking place. The detective chief inspector PPU has agreed a programme of referrals with the force welfare officer in line with policy. Staff will be referred incrementally up to October 2007 and then every six months.

Areas for improvement

DV booklets should be checked by a supervisor at the end of a shift prior to forwarding to the DV unit. The initial quality assurance checks made by supervisors were described as sporadic with other supervisory commitments blamed as the cause.

The quality of DV booklets varied significantly; some of those reviewed were well completed with all fields in the booklet covered and with adequate detail. Others were poor, with too little information entered.

During an audit of DV booklets by the inspection team, it was found that in excess of 1,000 booklets going back to December 2006 had not been entered on to the CATS database in the County Division. At Luton, there was a backlog of 100 high-risk cases, which had only preliminary work carried out, ie initial risk assessment followed by a phone call or letter to the victim.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That the force introduces diagnostic indicators as well as a sustainable solution to clearing DV1 backlog and risk assessments prior to the introduction of the '04' facility on CMS2.

The DV supervisor at Bedford also manages Dunstable DV unit. There is little capacity for intrusive supervision at both these locations because of the geographical locations and the tasks performed by the supervisor in the main office, eg risk assessment and attempting to deal with backlogs.

Staff shortages at Luton were found to be having an adverse impact on performance and service delivery. This was not surprising given that five out of seven specialist detective constables were long-term absent. Three of the staff are on maternity leave and at the time of the inspection had not been temporarily replaced.

Weekend cover of specialist DV officers is limited and will be further diluted in County division if recently announced plans to relocate two staff to Luton to backfill those on maternity leave takes place.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That the force reviews the number of police officers and police staff assigned to DV units.

Staff within the units predominantly provide support to victims and do not lead on investigations. This raises issues of consistency of investigations and a potential reduction in the number of offenders taken to court.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the force ensures it has officers with the capacity, necessary skills and experience to carry out investigations into DV related crime.

Although partners at Luton praised the commitment and dedication of specialist DV officers, they expressed disappointment at having to turn away victims who had turned up to pre-

booked appointments with DV officers. DV staff shortages were given as the reason for cancellation.

The prisoner handling unit (PHU) at Bedford is aware of the issues when dealing with cases of DV and regularly liaises with DV officers to provide for an additional cross-check. Although officers and staff within the PHU have developed awareness and understanding in this field, they have not received any formal training.

Although training on DV is provided to student officers upon recruitment and through the tutoring process, this does not extend to other officers who have been in post for some time.

There is no administration facility for MARAC meetings with the work currently undertaken by a detective sergeant. CAADA has recently assessed the MARAC administration requirement as 45 hours per month.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

National contextual factors

The Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 led to the formation of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, commonly known as MAPPA, requiring the police and probation services to work together as the Responsible Authority in each area of England and Wales to establish and review the arrangements for the assessment and management of sexual and violent offenders. Subsequent legislation brought the Prison Service into the Responsible Authority arrangements and also requires a range of social care agencies to co-operate with the Responsible Authority in the delivery of the assessment and management of risk in this area. These agencies include health, housing, education, social services, youth offending teams, Jobcentre Plus, and electronic monitoring services.

Under MAPPA, there are three categories of offender who are considered to pose a risk of serious harm:

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

Category 3 – other offenders (with convictions that indicate they are capable of causing, and pose a risk of, serious harm).

To be managed under MAPPA, offenders must have received a conviction or caution. However, there are some people who have not been convicted or cautioned for any offence, and thus fall outside these categories, but whose behaviour nonetheless gives reasonable ground for believing a present likelihood of them committing an offence that will cause serious harm. These people are termed Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDPs).

Following risk assessment, risk management involves the use of strategies by various agencies to reduce the risk, at three levels:

- Level 1 offenders can be managed by one agency;

- Level 2 offenders require the active involvement of more than one agency;

- Level 3 offenders – the 'critical few' – are generally deemed to pose a high or very high risk and are managed by a multi-agency public protection panel (MAPPP).

In 2003, the Home Secretary issued MAPPA guidance to consolidate what has already been achieved since the introduction of the MAPPA in 2001 and to address a need for greater consistency in MAPPA practice. The guidance outlines four considerations that are key to the delivery of effective public protection.

- defensible decisions;

- rigorous risk assessment;

- the delivery of risk management plans which match the identified public protection need; and,

- the evaluation of performance to improve delivery.

Contextual factors

Until very recently the force was carrying significant risk because of the lack of resources dedicated to the management of registered sex offenders. Recognising the need to improve in this area, the force has invested in additional permanent staff and introduced more intrusive supervision and support for the team.

Staff training has been improved with specialist courses booked for new staff to ensure they are fully equipped to effectively monitor sex offenders.

The solution to staff shortages and shortcomings in processes is considered by HMIC to be sustainable as long as resources are left in place.

During recent inspection activity, there was a noticeable improvement in staff morale compared with earlier in the year. There was also evidence of much greater involvement at chief officer level.

Strengths

The DCC is chief officer for the protective services directorate. Public protection sits within its own right within the PPU which forms part of the directorate. The detective chief superintendent protective services represents the force at the strategic management board and is held to account at quarterly meetings held by the DCC.

Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) meetings are chaired by the MAPPA co-ordinator who is joint funded by the police and probation. MAPPA level 1 meetings are led by probation with some police input. Levels 2 and 3 are multi-agency managed with the PPU participating in sex offender management and BCUs for violent offenders (see Areas for improvement). A dedicated detective inspector attends MAPPA meetings.

Home visits are undertaken by monitoring officers working in pairs at the following frequencies: very high risk offenders every 3 months, high risk 6 months, medium risk and juveniles 9 months and low risk every 12 months.

The computerised Bedfordshire open research system is used to research linked force IT systems prior to visits of registered sex offenders (RSOs).

All officers and staff working within the sex offender management team are now subject to enhanced vetting through internal checks from the professional standards department, and external through the criminal records bureau.

Evidence was provided of work being carried out on investigating an unconvicted sex offender (currently falling outside the MAPPA criteria). Force-level resources have been

allocated to the investigation with close liaison and management by the PPU detective inspector.

Assessment of risk is integrated with other risk assessment processes eg referrals to child abuse investigation teams.

Home visits to RSOs are now carried out by dedicated monitoring officers. As highlighted earlier, the numbers of permanent staff have increased from two to four. The two longer serving officers have both attended relevant courses and are mentoring new staff using a documented induction programme.

Work in progress

A written accountability framework is being produced to formalise the recent introduction of the PPU. The framework will define lines of strategic accountability from the DCC through to monitoring officers.

Force policies on the management of sex and violent offenders have been updated to reflect the draft ACPO guidance. They are currently in draft form and will be circulated after any changes required on publication of HMIC's assessment of PVP.

Job descriptions and role profiles for all police officers and staff are being reviewed following the formation of the PPU.

Divisions send a representative to MAPPA meetings where the management of violent offenders is discussed. The force has already recognised the level of representation is too low and needs to be raised to at least inspector level and an element of continuity introduced to ensure risk is managed effectively and actions can be carried out promptly. A detective inspector attends MAPPA meetings at Luton and the level of representation from County division is being reassessed.

The MAPPA co-ordinator is also bringing up to date joint procedures and instructions.

Monitoring officers are tasked to assess risk if new intelligence/information comes to light on RSOs. The Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR) is used to detail updated risk assessments. The force is about to introduce a statistical software package to search the force intelligence and crime recording systems, OIS and CMS2, to identify and extract intelligence/crime data relating to RSOs. This will allow for more reliable risk assessing.

A monthly meeting has been established between the detective inspector and sex offender management staff. Areas covered include quality control, operations, resilience and training. Relevant issues from the meeting will eventually be fed into the PPU and protective services directorate NIM tasking and co-ordination meetings.

The four monitoring officers are supervised by a detective sergeant who also has responsibility for the force high-tech crime unit. He has recently been co-located with the monitoring officers, which will improve the level of intrusive supervision and support offered, but consideration should be given to the transferring of his other responsibilities elsewhere to ensure complete focus on public protection matters.

Monitoring officers and the team supervisor are co-located with probation and the MAPPA manager at joint-funded premises. With the increase in staff, work is being undertaken to ensure accommodation is suitable for the new team.

Following earlier inspection activity by HMIC, the force has recently introduced an action plan around sex offender management that is closely monitored by the DCC. It includes the following:

- Increase in coverage to include weekend working

- Allocation of courses to new and existing staff

- Advertise, recruit and train additional officers, including special constables to assist monitoring officers during periods of abstraction, eg annual leave

- Replacing the vacant part-time ViSOR administrator post

- Data cleansing of ViSOR records

- Back record conversion of risk levels on to ViSOR

- Quality assurance checks on ViSOR nominal records

- Improvement of turnaround time of minutes from MAPPA meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That the force uses the ongoing quality assurance on ViSOR records to identify their level of preparedness for the introduction of the ViSOR national standards.

Welfare support to monitoring officers should be formalised and monitored to ensure appropriate levels of support are in place. A programme of referrals has recently been agreed with the force welfare officer.

Areas for improvement

During the inspection, a high-risk sex offender featured at force level 2 TCG with an application for a surveillance team to be tasked. The delay in the request reaching level 2 was too long. The force has reviewed procedures and a new process has been implemented to fast-track such applications.

Although the force was able to example work undertaken in relation to the management of potentially dangerous persons falling outside MAPPA criteria, a structured process should be introduced for the identification and management of such individuals.

With the number of developments in place surrounding the introduction of the new measures in the PPU, the force needs to ensure a programme of regular inspection and audit is in place to follow on from the improvement action plan.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	FAIR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

National contextual factors

Each year, thousands of people are reported to police as missing. Many have done so voluntarily and are safe from harm, whether or not they return home. But a number are vulnerable, because of age or health concerns, and the police service has developed well-honed systems to respond swiftly and effectively to such cases. For obvious reasons, missing children arouse particular concern, and many forces deploy 'Child Rescue Alert' to engage the media in publicising such cases. Key good practice in this framework are early recognition of critical incident potential, effective supervision of enquiries, the use of NIM problem profiles and other intelligence techniques to analyse repeat locations (eg, children's homes), and the use of an IT-based investigation tracking system such as COMPACT.

Contextual factors

Policy ownership for missing persons sits with the DCC within his portfolio of protective services. Service delivery is the responsibility of the ACC.

Detailed policy exists for the investigation of missing persons. A significant development for the force has been the procurement of the Community Policing and Case Tracking (COMPACT) missing person database in 2006 to replace a paper-based system.

The introduction of COMPACT allows for easy access to management information and the live review of cases. The force needs to ensure supervisors are fully conversant with such features so they can ensure investigations are dealt with in accordance with force procedures.

There are encouraging signs regarding working with partners on dealing with young persons who have been reported missing from the care of a Local Authority. A working group has been formed and as a result any Looked After Children missing for more than 24 hours are subject to a multi-agency strategy meeting.

The force is currently deciding on what part the recently formed PPU will play in providing support to divisions on high-risk cases. An opportunity exists at the same time to introduce formal analysis of cases by the PPU; this will assist in preventative work as well as minimise risk to repeat missing persons.

Strengths

The DCC has portfolio responsibility for missing persons with the ACC responsible for service delivery. The DCC takes an active role in the monitoring of high-risk cases and has on a number of occasions personally reviewed investigations.

Audit and quality control are built into the force's own inspection process with the most recent audit having been carried out in April 2007. A number of recommendations were made and are being monitored.

In November 2006, the force introduced a standalone IT missing persons system, COMPACT, to replace its paper-based system. This system is also in use by a number of other forces within the country.

The force reviewed its missing persons procedure in December 2006 to incorporate changes in processes following the introduction of COMPACT. Procedure is consistent with ACPO guidance and covers action to be taken by CHC staff through to responsibilities of investigating officers, supervisors and senior officers (including BCU crime managers). Access to the procedure can be made via the force intranet.

COMPACT provides a number of features to aid investigating officers, including an electronic reminder of when reviews are overdue, a range of tactical options for investigating officers and a number of search criteria to check for frequent missing persons (see Areas for improvement).

High and medium-risk missing persons feature as part of NIM daily management meetings on divisions with high-risk investigations examined by a member of the divisional leadership team in accordance with policy.

Work in progress

Following the formation of the PPU, the force is currently deciding on what level of support the new unit will provide to divisions in respect of specialist investigation of missing persons.

The missing person procedure is being updated to explicitly define the role of the SIO and chief officer lead.

Areas for improvement

Although the force has the COMPACT IT system for the management of missing persons, it is not integrated with other force systems. The use of management information from COMPACT on missing persons is limited.

Although the force was able to example some multi-agency work in individual cases, only limited proactive work takes place and the force does not regularly carry out analytical work around trends or repeat missing persons.

Neither joint objectives nor targets have been set with other agencies, although as highlighted above there is some multi-agency work taking place.

The COMPACT system is not being fully utilised by investigating officers. Although there are clearly defined criteria for the review of missing persons from a number of records examined, it was not clear as to which officers had ownership of the enquiries and reviews had not been carried out in accordance with force policy.

Each BCU has a dedicated missing persons co-ordinator but there is a lack of consistency in their roles. At County BCU, the post is held by a substantive sergeant and at Luton by a police constable; the co-ordinators are used to oversee the missing person process and provide a certain amount of quality control. The two posts also differ in that at Luton the co-ordinator carries out many of the enquiries himself.

Recommendations

Neighbourhood Policing

Recommendation 1
That the force action the engagement strategy as a matter of priority.

Recommendation 2
That the force ensures the benefits of effective communication, marketing and publicity are fully realised.

Recommendation 3
That the force ensures that mechanisms are put in place to provide a more consistent approach to the continued development of Neighbourhood Policing across the force area.

Recommendation 4
That the force introduces robust procedures for the monitoring of abstractions.

Performance management

Recommendation 5
That the force ensures that an appropriate level of training on performance management is provided for all managers and supervisors.

Recommendation 6
That the force identifies and publishes a performance management framework through to team level and one that is consistent throughout the force.

Recommendation 7
That the force ensures the PDR process is a meaningful activity with effective dip-sampling of PDRs to include a qualitative assessment.

Protecting vulnerable people

Domestic violence

Recommendation 8

That the force ensures all staff receive appropriate training prior to implementation of the additional DV recording facility on the force command and control system (CMS2 '04').

Recommendation 9
That the force introduces diagnostic indicators as well as a sustainable solution to clearing DV1 backlog and risk assessments prior to the introduction of the '04' facility on CMS2.

Recommendation 10
That the force reviews the number of police officers and police staff assigned to DV units.

Recommendation 11

That the force ensures it has officers with the capacity, necessary skills and experience to carry out investigations into DV related crime.

Public protection

Recommendation 12
That the force uses the ongoing quality assurance on ViSOR records to identify their level of preparedness for the introduction of the ViSOR national standards.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC   assistant chief constable

ACPO   Association of Chief Police Officers

APA   Association of Police Authorities

APP   annual policing plan

APACS   Assessments of Policing and Community Safety

B

BCU   basic command unit

BME   Black and Minority Ethnic

C

CAADA   co-ordinated action against domestic abuse

CAIU   child abuse investigation unit

CATS   case administration tracking system

CCU   community cohesion unit

CDRP   Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

CHC   call-handling and communications

CIA   community impact assessment

COMPACT   Community Policing and Case Tracking

D

DCC   deputy chief constable

DV   domestic violence

H

HMIC   Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HR	human resources

I

ILNA	inspector-led neighbourhood area
IS&T	information systems and technology

K

KIN	key individual network

L

LAA	local area agreement
LCJB	local criminal justice board
LSCB	local safeguarding children board

M

MAPPA	multi-agency public protection arrangements
MARAC	multi-agency risk assessment conference
MIT	major incident team

N

NIM	National Intelligence Model
NMIS	National Management of Information System

P

PA	Police Authority
PCSO	police community support officer
PCT	primary care trust
PDR	performance development review
PHU	prisoner handling unit

PNC	Police National Computer
PPU	public protection unit
PVP	protecting vulnerable people

R

| RSO | registered sex offender |

S

SGC	specific grading criteria
SIO	senior investigating officer
SNT	safer neighbourhood team
SPI	statutory performance indicator

T

| TCG | tasking and co-ordination group |
| TTCG | tactical tasking and co-ordination group |

V

| VCMM | volume crime management model |
| ViSOR | Violent and Sex Offenders Register |