



**DORSET POLICE**

**17 – 20 AUGUST 2004**

**POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER**

**COMPLIANCE REPORT**

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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted a Police National Computer (PNC) Compliance Inspection of Dorset Police between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August 2004.
- 1.1.2 Dorset Police was subject to a PNC Compliance Audit using the April 2003 Protocols on PNC Compliance. Her Majesty's Inspector would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Force for its services and also to place on record his thanks to all members of staff who contributed to this report and provided assistance during the inspection. Her Majesty's Inspector would also like to make particular reference to the production of a large inspection pack containing documentary evidence that was made available to HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors prior to the inspection.
- 1.1.3 This report is based on views and comments obtained from Strategic, PNC and customer level management and users at Force Headquarters and at two of the four Basic Command Units, BCUs. These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

### 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Dorset Police is a small county force on the south coast covering an area of approximately 1,000 square miles, including approximately 170 miles of coastline. The majority of the force is rural covering many small towns, villages and hamlets but there are also densely populated areas, namely Bournemouth and Poole. The resident population is approximately 700,000, however, this number significantly increases during the tourist season, one of the main industries within the county.
- 1.2.2 Policing services within Dorset are provided by four BCUs, known locally as Divisions. The current BCUs are Bournemouth, Poole, Western and Eastern.
- 1.2.3 The Force is headed by the senior manager team comprising the Chief Constable, supported by a Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), an Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), with responsibility for Territorial Policing, Operations, HQ CID and Criminal Justice, and an Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) with responsibility for Finance, Information Systems, Transport, Estates and Administration. The Force strength comprises approximately 1,400 full-time equivalent police officers, 800 police staff, 200 special constables and 6 police community support officers.
- 1.2.4 The PNC function falls within the portfolio of Criminal Justice, the responsibility of the ACC. However, day to day management of the function is devolved to the Chief Superintendent as Head of Criminal Justice who also carries out the role of PNC Liaison Officer. The Head of Criminal Justice has overall responsibility for the Criminal Justice Support Unit (CJSU) which incorporates the Phoenix Bureau, the PNC Input Section and the Court and Police Section. The Phoenix Bureau is

responsible for updating Arrest/Summons information and results from the magistrates and crown courts. The PNC input section makes operational updates to the system, including Wanted/Missing updates, ad-hoc intelligence updates and vehicle/property reports. The court and police bail section update bail conditions and manage the creation and subsequent updating of cases where an offender has been arrested and released on police bail. The Criminal Justice Department also has responsibility for staff working in the custody offices throughout the force, where updates are made to the local system and subsequently transferred to the PNC.

- 1.2.5 Arrest/Summons records are created on PNC following an electronic transfer of information from the force's custody system. A skeleton<sup>1</sup> record is created on the PNC and the arresting officer is responsible for completing manual Phoenix Source Document, known as the PSD2 and forwarding it to the Phoenix Bureau to enable full completion of the record.
- 1.2.6 The results section of the Phoenix Bureau apply disposals to the PNC when notified by the magistrates and crown courts. Magistrates court registers are printed direct to the bureau following the installation of a printer connected to the courts' system. Crown court results are received manually. The force records the timeliness of the supply of this information.
- 1.2.7 The Phoenix Bureau based at the Bournemouth divisional headquarters is staffed five days a week, Monday to Friday between 08:00 hours and 17:00 hours. The PNC Input section and the Bail section are staffed 7 days a week between the core hours of 07:00 and 23:00 hours.
- 1.2.8 In addition to Operational Updates, the PNC Input section is also a central point of contact for conducting Vehicle On Line Descriptive Searches (VODS) and Queries Using Enhanced Search Techniques (QUEST).
- 1.2.9 The only remaining updates that are made to PNC are by the PNC Enquiry Unit (PEU) within the Force Communications Centre, known locally as the 'Comcen'. The PEU are responsible for answering radio and telephone enquiries on behalf of the force and also circulating lost/stolen vehicles. The PEU are also responsible for updating PNC with details of found vehicles and those vehicles which have been removed. In the absence of PEU staff, radio dispatchers in the Comcen make enquiries and update responsibility is transferred to the PNC Input section in Bournemouth.

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

### 1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A full inspection was carried out covering the sections of; Leadership; Policy & Strategy; People; Partnerships & Resources; Processes and Results.
- 1.3.2 The inspection was conducted over three stages with a final assessment being provided in line with the current HMIC Baseline Assessment grading structure of;
- **Excellent** Comprehensive evidence of effective activity against all protocol areas.
  - **Good** Evidence of effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive.
  - **Fair** Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others.
  - **Poor** No or limited evidence of effective activity against the 6 protocol areas; or serious concerns in one or more area of activity.
- 1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with comprehensive documentation to support their adherence to the protocols. The documentation was well structured and enabled HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors to make an initial assessment of the force. This was followed by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducting interviews with key staff. The visit to the force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection that was based upon reality checks. The reality checks focused on reviewing PNC arrest/summons data against source documentation, ad-hoc intelligence updates and warrants.
- 1.3.4 Using the evidence gathered during each stage of the inspection, this report has been produced based upon the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) format.

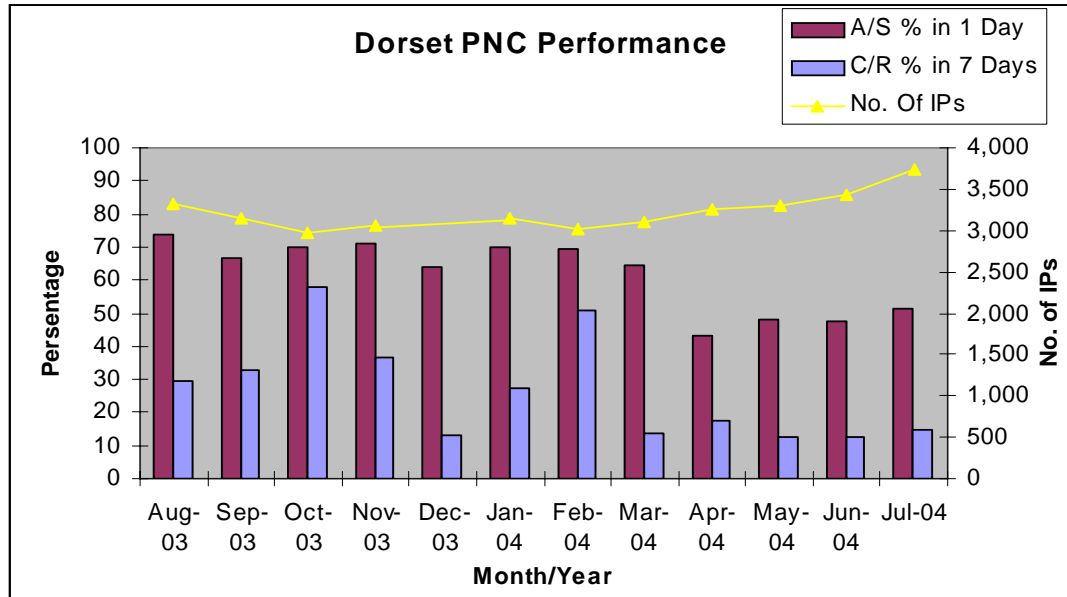
## 1.4 Current Performance

- 1.4.1 On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2000, ACPO Council accepted the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling;
- Accuracy
  - Timeliness
  - Completeness
  - Relevancy
- 1.4.2 The strategy is owned by ACPO but is also reliant on other partners taking responsibility for key actions within the strategy. The partners include; Centrex; HMIC; Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and individual forces.
- 1.4.3 With regards to individual forces, a number of performance indicators (PIs) specifically for PNC data standards were set. Each force has a responsibility to achieve the targets set by the PIs in order to improve their position for each of the aspects mentioned above. The key PIs of the strategy are as follows: -
- i. Arrest/Summons – 90% of cases to be entered within 24 hours (where forces are using skeleton records as initial entry, full update must be achieved within 5 days)
  - ii. Bail Conditions – Entry of Police Bail within 24 hours
  - iii. Court Case Results – 100% to be entered within 72 hours of coming into police possession. (Courts have their own target of three days for the delivery of data to the police, therefore, the police are measured against an overall target of 7 days, to take account of weekends and bank holidays)
- 1.4.4 Dorset Police are one of few forces that have commenced updating arrest/summons records for cases where an offender has been released on S. 37(7) police bail. This has resulted in a decline in overall performance concerning the timeliness of arrest/summons reports. In the twelve months to July 2004, performance has dropped from 73.8% in August 2003 to 51.5% in July 2004. However, the number of days to enter the quickest 90% has improved slightly from 19 days in August 2003 to 14 days in July 2004, reaching a peak of 3 days in November 2003. The current position is worse than the national average of 9 days. However, the force has provided information showing that the percentage of cases transferred electronically is 83.3%, slightly above the national average of 80.6%. It is clear from this information that the input of S.37(7) is affecting the overall performance of the force and HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors have acknowledged this during the inspection. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors have advised the force that the current process of S.37(7) should be reviewed in order to reduce the impact on the performance of the force. Nevertheless, despite the impact on performance, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors commend the force for the commitment shown in embracing the need for this type of information to be recorded.
- 1.4.5 Performance with regard to the input of Court Results is currently poor in relation to the national average. In August 2003, the force was achieving the input of 29.6% of

cases within 7 days. This improved to 50.7% in February 2004 but has since declined to 14.9% in July 2004. This is significantly lower than the national average of 46.9%. In terms of the number of days to enter the quickest 90% of disposals, the force is achieving performance in excess of the national average. In August 2003, it was taking 13 days to enter 90% of cases, this has fluctuated slightly over the last twelve months with the latest performance showing that it is taking 18 days to enter the quickest 90%. During the inspection, the force provided HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with information concerning the timeliness of the supply of information from the courts. This data is recorded manually by the force and shows that on average, it takes the courts 13 days to provide 100% of cases. This has an immediate impact on the force's ability to meet the current seven day target.

- 1.4.6 Despite performance remaining outside of the target, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors have given credit for the commitment displayed by the force in embracing the need and subsequent benefits of recording cases subject of police bail. The introduction of this process and the unusual high turnover of staff have contributed to a below average performance in recent months. In July 2004, the force was only achieving 51.5% of cases being created within 24 hours. However, in depth examination of these statistics reveals that had police bail been omitted, 83.3% of cases would have been created in the target time, higher than the national average. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are confident that process changes in relation to police bail recommended within this report and the resolution of staffing issues will provide the force with an opportunity to improve and sustain performance.
- 1.4.7 In the cases of updating arrest/summons information and the update of court results, the force has suffered an unusual high turnover of staff in recent months. Whilst some vacancies have been filled, productivity is not at optimum performance due to some staff still in the process of receiving their training. Staff numbers overall are relatively low and therefore, the impact arising from the loss of staff has been significant. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are confident that once full strength is achieved and the new staff are fully trained, the force will move towards an improved performance profile.
- 1.4.8 In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs), Dorset Police's overall outstanding number of IPs have increased from 3,316 in August 2003 to 3,737 in July 2004, an increase of 12.7%. This increase coincides with the introduction of the recording of cases subject to S.37(7) bail, which will result in an overall increase in the number of Impending Cases. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were assured that a process exists to manage this number and are confident that the overall number will eventually plateau in due course.

1.4.9 A graph illustrating Dorset Police's performance in the 12 months to July 2004 is shown below:



Note: No data is available for the number of Impending Prosecutions for December2003. PITO are unable to supply information for this month.



## 1.5 Conclusions

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

**Good** – Evidence of effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive.

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

- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary considers the structure surrounding the management of PNC to be sound and effective. The effectiveness of the various groups from strategic level under the chair of the ACC, to user level is providing the force with the relevant focus to ensure good performance across most of the protocol areas.
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary is also satisfied that by using the strategic action plan under the leadership of a chief officer and the PNC Strategy Board, the force has clear, defined objectives in relation to PNC.
- The force has a comprehensive catalogue of policies specifically relating to the PNC. The policies are stored on the local network and are easily accessible to all staff via an established system, known as PPG (Policy and Procedural Guidance).
- A good level of awareness of functionality exists throughout the force. Staff at all levels are aware of the investigative capabilities of the system and who has responsibility for providing the various services relating to the PNC.
- A good auditing regime exists within the force with audits being planned and reviewed on an annual basis. Development of the audit plan is also in accordance with the ACPO Data Protection and Audit Manual.
- Whilst there is strong evidence of good practice throughout the force, the force also faces some challenges, notably, the provision of training within CJSU and overall force training. In addition, there are concerns surrounding the availability of PNC from the Comcen.
- In providing this grading, despite overall performance being poor compared to the national average, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors have given credit to the force for the commitment shown in updating cases subject of police bail (see para 1.4.6)

- 1.5.3 The findings of this report should be read in conjunction with the previous reports and recommendations relating to PNC. The previous reports are;
- Police Research Group Report – ‘Phoenix Data Quality’, *published 1998*.
  - HMIC Thematic Inspection Report – ‘On The Record’, *published 2000*
  - HMIC Report – PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 1<sup>st</sup> Report, *published 2001*
  - HMIC Report – ‘PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 2<sup>nd</sup> Report’, *published 2002*
- 1.5.4 A summary of good practice points, along with recommendations for improvement can be seen in Appendix A of this report.

## 2. Detailed Findings and Recommendations

### 2.1 Leadership

- 2.1.1 Dorset police has established a solid framework for the leadership across all policing areas. The framework consists of boards that are chaired by a chief officer, supported by groups in which membership is made up of relevant stakeholders. This framework is in existence for the PNC. The ACC chairs the PNC Strategy Board (PSB) as portfolio holder of the PNC issues. Feedback received during interviews and focus groups provided evidence that the role of the ACC in this capacity was an active one and that PNC had received the appropriate level of commitment within the force.
- 2.1.2 Until recently, the PSB was a joint board with the Information Security Board, however, a split has occurred and the PSB is a board in its own right. The PSB meets on a regular basis and has clear defined objectives set in the terms of reference. The PSB manages the process by way of a strategic action plan that is reviewed and updated as a standing agenda item. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also satisfied that membership of the PSB is well structured and appropriate to deliver the benefits to the force.
- 2.1.3 Another indication of the commitment shown by the force to delivering PNC issues is the inclusion of PNC Performance within the *Dorset Police Key Projects Risk Assessment*. This assessment is monitored by the Force Executive Board, chaired by the Chief Constable (CC) on a monthly basis. Other projects that are subject to this assessment include, Call Handling, Public Confidence and the Police Reform Agenda. Anecdotal evidence was also provided that the CC often contacts the PNC Liaison Officer personally to obtain information concerning current PNC performance.
- 2.1.4 In March 2004, Dorset Police, through the PSB, implemented a PNC Corporate Governance Policy that covers various topics relating to the management and use of the PNC. The topics include, the Governance Structure, Security, Information Sharing, Training, Weeding and General Rules pertaining to the day to day use of the system.
- 2.1.5 The Governance Structure revolves around the existence three groups, the PSB, the PNC User Group (PUG) that is aimed at practitioners within the force, and the Phoenix Data Quality Group (PDQG) which monitors and reviews performance. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors considered the structure as good practice, however, they also discovered that, in particular, awareness of the PUG was low within BCUs. During interviews and focus groups, staff from informed HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that had they been aware of the group, certain issues would have been raised, for example, the availability of PNC Checks (see paragraph 2.5.5). The PUG includes representation from operational officers from BCUs but the roles of these individuals is not generally known amongst other staff, therefore, lines of communication between staff and the group are not as effective as they could be.

**Recommendation 1**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force raises the awareness of the PNC User Group amongst operational staff. Individual representatives must have responsibility to feedback to staff within their respective BCU and enable two way communication of issues between the PNC users and the group.**

- 2.1.6 With regard to overall force performance against the targets of the ACPO Compliance Strategy for PNC, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that performance is monitored and recorded regularly. The force has a dedicated post of *Data Standards Officer (DSO)* who is responsible for collating and producing statistical information on a monthly basis. The information from the DSO is provided to the force Quality and Development Unit who produce the *Quarterly Force Performance Pack* that covers a number of performance issues within the force. The information provided by the DSO concerns timeliness and quality of submissions of information at force and BCU level. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider this to be good practice. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also encouraged to discover that all managers were aware of the information and it's origins.
- 2.1.7 The DSO is also responsible for a system to chase any outstanding Phoenix Source Documents (PSD). If an officer fails to submit a PSD in the appropriate time, a memo is sent to the Section Commander at the BCU in order that the officer is prompted to submit the completed PSD within 7 days. Failure to respond within the given time results in an escalation procedure via the Divisional Support Manager at the BCU. The DSO records information concerning the PSDs that have had to be chased and a list of officers who have been subject of this process is supplied to divisional commanders. During interviews and focus groups, all officers were aware of the need to submit timely information relevant to PNC and were also that failure to submit would result in the DSO chasing the information. However, all officers interviewed had not received anything personal to them concerning the quality of the forms, the 'naming and shaming' always referred to timeliness issues. The lack of information concerning individual officers means that they are not being held accountable for the quality of the information being submitted. This could also hinder the identification of training needs or quality of data issues that need to be addressed.

**Recommendation 2**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the current suite of performance information supplied to divisional commanders be expanded to include qualitative performance by individual officers. This will ensure that officers are being held accountable for both quality and timeliness of the information they are providing. Any expansion of the information must also include a process for corrective action by the officer.**

## **2.2 Policy and Strategy**

2.2.1 With regard to policy and strategy, the inspection focused on a number of areas that warrant review. These can be described under four broad headings: PNC Strategy, PNC Policy; Security and Data Protection. Each of these themes is discussed in further detail below.

### **2.2.2 PNC Strategy**

2.2.2.1 In HMIC's Second Report on the Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness (the recommendations of which are provided in Appendix E of this report), it was recommended that a PNC Strategy should be an integral part of the Force's Information Management Strategy. Dorset Police do not currently have a documented strategy, however, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were confident that the strength of the PSB and the structure of the groups within Dorset is providing the force with a clear and defined direction in terms of the PNC.

2.2.2.2 The PSB operates on the basis of a dynamic action plan that is updated as progress is being made against specific actions. The plan is based upon recommendations made in previous thematic inspection reports and includes details of specific actions that are required in order to meet the recommendations. It also identifies a lead person, any progress made and a target date for completion. In addition, new issues that may affect the plan, for example, the Schengen Information System, are added to the plan in order that the force can develop new actions to enable it to prepare and respond effectively. Therefore, it is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the development of a documented PNC strategy will be more of a bureaucratic exercise rather than serve a useful purpose. The existing action plan, under the direction of the PSB, is meeting the current needs of the force in terms of strategic direction.

### **2.2.3 PNC Policy**

2.2.3.1 The force has a well established system for the provision of policy documents and procedural information. The system, which resides on the force's integrated computer system, is known as the +PPG (Policy and Procedural Guidelines) system, derived from the type of information stored and the transaction used to access it. The +PPG is known by all staff in the force as the central source of information to assist in providing an appropriate level of service and meeting performance targets. Reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors confirmed that the system is easily accessible, user friendly and that it contained a comprehensive catalogue of PNC policies and procedures.

2.2.3.2 As previously mentioned in paragraph 2.1.4, the Force has recently introduced a PNC Corporate Governance Policy. This policy covers all issues relating to the management (governance) and day to day use of the PNC. In addition, the force also has the PNC Applications Policy. This policy which was last revised in March 2004 provides necessary information and guidelines on the use of each application on the PNC, namely Vehicles, Property and Names. It also provides information on other functionality that PNC offers, for example, Warrants, Transaction Enquiries, Originator Line and the investigative capabilities provided by VODS and QUEST. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also pleased to note that timeliness of PSD submission was also included within this policy. Both the PNC Corporate Governance Policy and the PNC Applications Policy are available on the +PPG system.

## 2.2.4 Security

2.2.4.1 The Information Security Board, a group chaired by the DCC, manages information Security within Dorset Police at strategic level. The board meets on a quarterly basis and has ownership of the Information Security Policy (ISP), known as the Forcewide Network Security Policy. The ISP is developed in accordance with ISO17799 and the ACPO Community Security Policy.

2.2.4.2 The ISP is a general security document covering all systems used by Dorset Police and therefore includes PNC. Whilst PNC is not specifically mentioned in the policy, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are confident that PNC Security is being managed through this document and the inclusion of security within the PNC Governance Policy.

2.2.4.3 User access to PNC is currently managed by two people within the force, the Phoenix Bureau Supervisor and an Information Systems Administrator. Currently, there are two methods of accessing PNC within the force, Browser Access<sup>2</sup> and Standard Interface<sup>3</sup> (STIF). Each format of accessing PNC requires user access to be set up separately. Access via the browser is managed by the supervisor in the Phoenix Bureau whilst access via the STIF is managed by the information systems administrator, who manages access to all local force systems.

2.2.4.4 In both cases, the training department compile a list of successful trainees and send the list via e-mail to the appropriate person, depending on how PNC is going to be accessed by the user. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were made aware that this process is due to change when the force moves to full browser access late in 2004 and the STIF will no longer be used. When this occurs, management of user access will become the sole responsibility of the supervisor in the Phoenix Bureau.

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<sup>2</sup> Access provided to PNC via an emulation of a directly connected terminal using Internet Explorer.

<sup>3</sup> Access provided to PNC via an interface between the force's local system.

### Recommendation 3

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in anticipation of the transfer to full browser access to PNC, the force amalgamates all user access records and carries out a review of current users IDs to ensure that all are relevant and set to the appropriate level of access. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary also recommends that annual reviews of user IDs be carried out in the future.**

2.2.4.5 For users who have left the force or changed roles, where a change is required to the PNC Access levels, staff responsible for managing user access rely on the information contained within General Orders. General orders are published weekly and include new policy guidance but also include a list of staff who have left the force or changed roles. The list of staff is reviewed against current user information to ensure that any appropriate changes are made to the level of access to PNC. This process is also used by the information system administrator for all other systems in use in the force.

#### 2.2.5 Data Protection

2.2.5.1 Data Protection is generally considered an area of strength within Dorset Police. Data Protection Audits are subject of a five year plan that is reviewed at least once a year to produce an annual schedule. PNC is a prominent feature of the annual schedule with certain applications, for example Wanted/Missing, Stolen Vehicles, and Impending Prosecutions being routinely audited on an annual. The plan is produced using the risk assessment process as per the ACPO Data Protection and Audit Manual (DPAM). In addition, audit reports are produced in accordance with the DPAM including the classification errors. A review of previous audit reports by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors confirmed that good practice has been adopted when classifying errors.

2.2.5.2 However, whilst reviewing previous audit reports, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors learned that not all audit reports contain recommendations to ensure that errors and omissions do not recur in the future. In the main, if recommendations have been made in the past, subsequent reports only contain a conclusion. Furthermore, whilst the distribution of the reports is comprehensive, there is currently no ownership of the reports and no mechanism to ensure that recommendations are followed up. This weakness was highlighted by a stolen vehicle report in which errors had occurred, yet the symptoms of these errors had been identified a year earlier and despite recommendations being made, no solution had been implemented to reduce the risk of errors in the future. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the all recommendations from data protection audits relating to PNC, should be owned and progressed via the PNC action plan, overseen by the PSB.

**Recommendation 4**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that all data protections audits in which weaknesses are identified should contain recommendations for corrective action. The recommendations should then form part of the Strategic Action Plan owned by the PNC Strategy Board to ensure that relevant action is taken.**

- 2.2.5.3 The Data Protection Unit (DPU) are also responsible for carrying out transaction monitoring of numerous applications across the force, including PNC. The process involves a DPU auditor reviewing transactions conducted on the PNC. If a transaction has a suitable reference, for example an incident number, further enquiries are made by the DPU auditor on other force system to confirm the validity of the transaction. In cases where no reference is available, a memorandum is sent to the officer requesting asking for confirmation of the reasons for the check being carried out.
- 2.2.5.4 In general, three memoranda are sent each day, to comply with the minimum requirement of the ACPO DPAM. However, in view of the DPU auditor conducting their own enquiries into some transactions, the force is actually doing more than the minimum requirement. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that these additional enquiries should also be recorded to provide evidence of compliance.
- 2.2.5.5 Despite the process of transaction monitoring being carried out regularly, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed during focus groups that the receipt of transaction monitoring forms amongst operational staff was infrequent. Most staff did not see the process as a deterrent due to the perceived frequency of checks. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also discovered that although the process is regular, the selection of transactions is not completely random and in some cases, certain operational teams, for example, Road Policing Unit or groups of terminals are targeted. This approach could result in certain officers, or areas, not being subject to checks for lengthy periods of time.

**Recommendation 5**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that all transaction monitoring enquiries are recorded as evidence of compliance, regardless of whether a memorandum has been produced or not. In addition, PNC transactions subject to checks, should be selected on a more random basis to provide a fairer approach to the process.**

- 2.2.5.6 Finally in relation to Data Protection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found good practice on the level of Data Protection and Information Security training. All new staff receive DP/IS training and are required to sign up to the force ISP. In addition, DP/IS training is included as part of IT training courses run by the Force, providing an additional medium to deliver the importance of the issues.



## 2.3 People

### 2.3.1 PNC Awareness

2.3.1.1 The level of awareness of functionality that PNC offers is good across all ranks throughout the force. During interviews and focus groups, all staff demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of the capabilities of the system.

2.3.1.2 Marketing and publicity is the responsibility of the PUG and the requirement for effective marketing is included in the 'Terms of Reference' of the group. In addition, the force has employed the services of PITO and now plans bi-annual presentations to promote the effective use of the PNC. The recent publication 'A Guide to Using the PNC Services' has also been distributed to all members of staff.

2.3.1.3 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to acknowledge the high level of awareness amongst staff during the inspection, however, a couple of issues are worthy of note. Whilst staff knew of the capabilities of the system, some staff were unaware of who to contact to make use of the facilities. The PNC Enquiry Unit within the ComCen is the first point of contact, but in the absence of an operator, a number of staff were not aware that the PNC Input section at Bournemouth would also provide assistance.

2.3.1.4 In addition, during 2003, the force introduced a pocket sized book for all officers titled 'Investigator's Guide'. This publication, produced as an aid memoir for officers when they are dealing with crime investigations, was provided to all officers but HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were disappointed to note that the PNC is only mentioned in relation to missing persons. Using VODS, QUEST and Transaction Enquiries, PNC can offer investigative possibilities but these applications are not covered within the guide. Vehicles are often used as the main form of escape from the scene of crime and witness information can invariably provide enough information for an initial enquiry, therefore, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that such facilities should form part of the guide.

### Recommendation 6

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that all relevant staff are made aware of the availability of PNC functions and who to contact for PNC checks to be carried out. In addition, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that any revision of the 'Investigator's Guide' should include reference to the investigative capabilities of PNC.**

### 2.3.2 Training

2.3.2.1 With regards to PNC training, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors looked at the delivery of training by the force training school and the provision of update training for staff concerned in the maintenance of PNC records at the Phoenix Bureau. As a result of these reviews, PNC Training is an area of concern within Dorset Police and in order to provide clarity of the situation, each aspect has been considered separately within this report.

- 2.3.2.2 The force training school provides all PNC enquiry training for the force on a modular basis. Courses are well structured and students are required to pass a formal assessment at the conclusion of a course before access is granted to PNC. However, the current level of demand for PNC courses outweigh the resources that are available, there is therefore, a backlog of courses to deliver.
- 2.3.2.3 Staff must complete a training request document, known as the PPP5 which forms part of the Personal & Professional Portfolio (PPP), the force appraisal system. The form, requesting a PNC Course is submitted to the training department who subsequently put it to a Training Board who decide whether training should be delivered for a particular student and what priority it should receive. The submission of the PPP5 for PNC courses is open to any member of staff. This approach is causing potential administrative burdens as staff who may not be eligible for PNC training may still be applying for courses. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the force should align the availability of PNC training to individual roles. This alignment should also include a decision concerning operational officers and their need for PNC access.
- 2.3.2.4 The force has recently implemented Airwave and a decision is yet to be made concerning the potential for PNC access via the Airwave service. If the decision is taken to provide this functionality, all officers will require PNC training, in order that officers are interpreting the data correctly. This may place additional burdens on the training school. However, if the force decides against taking this option, they must consider a robust service for officers requiring PNC information and provide adequate resources to enable a high quality service (See paragraph 2.5.5).
- 2.3.2.5 These factors are important decisions for the force to consider when deciding future PNC training requirement. Nevertheless, there remains a current problem concerning the demand for training and the ability to deliver the requirement.

#### **Recommendation 7**

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

- **Review the current eligibility for staff requesting PNC training. The review should concentrate on providing courses to staff in posts in which the job description includes access to the PNC or where there is an essential operational need.**
- **Consider the future impact upon training and the resources that will be required if the decision is made to provide PNC access via the Airwave communications system.**

- 2.3.2.6 On a positive note regarding PNC training provided by the force training school, each student is assessed for competence at the conclusion of each course. A student must pass the assessment, attaining a mark of at least 75% before access is granted to the system. If a student fails the assessment, the areas of weakness are identified and coaching is provided to the student. Once the trainer is confident that any weaknesses have been overcome, the student is re-assessed.

- 2.3.2.7 In addition to enquiry courses, the force training school also offers a PNC refresher course. The use of this course can ensure that the skill levels of PNC operators are maintained and that they are kept up to date with new functionality. However, the course is only delivered when somebody applies to attend. The course is not delivered routinely to staff once a specific period of time has elapsed since they received their training. The result of this is that the course is rarely delivered, removing any potential benefits that the course could provide.
- 2.3.2.8 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that refresher training should form part of regular training need analysis to ensure that skill levels are maintained. However, in order to reduce abstraction rates amongst staff, the force may wish to adopt the practice of other forces whereby staff are requested to sit the assessment that is offered at the end of a course. The use of the assessment ensures that only staff who have not maintained their skills require a refresher course to retain their access to the system.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force introduce a process of regular assessment of PNC Users. Users who do not meet the current standard should have their need for PNC access evaluated and provided with refresher training before access is renewed.**

- 2.3.2.9 Training for staff in the Phoenix Bureau is provided by a two stage process. Initially, new staff must successfully complete an enquiry course with the force training school. Following completion of the enquiry course, experienced operators within the bureau provide update training. These experienced operators are not accredited PNC trainers and do not provide training against structured lesson plans with specific aims and objectives. This approach has numerous implications for the force.

- 2.3.2.10 The current use of non-accredited trainers to provide PNC training is contrary to the principles of the Code of Connection and also the guidelines provided by the PNC Manual;

*It is essential that all personnel having contact with PNC facilities must be trained to the correct standard by trainers who have themselves been fully accredited by Centrex.<sup>4</sup>*

In addition to the Code of Connection and the PNC Manual, section 7.5 of a previous thematic inspection report published by HMIC in 2000, "On the Record" dealt specifically with PNC Training. The findings of that report highlighted various levels of training across all forces that had taken part in the thematic inspection. The outcome of the findings in 2000 was recommendation 13 of the report;

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

The provision of training provided to update staff within Dorset is in contravention of the code and therefore, must cease immediately. All update training must be provided by PNC trainers, accredited by Centrex.

- 2.3.2.11 Furthermore, the use of experienced operators means that valuable productivity is being lost whilst an operators time is being spent training other people. This loss of productivity has a significant impact on a small force like Dorset in comparison to larger forces. The use of experienced operators as opposed to PNC trainers also results in inconsistent practices amongst staff. During a period of time when HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were conducting reality checks against documentation in the bureau, they witnessed a discussion between staff ascertaining the correct procedure for applying something to PNC.
- 2.3.2.12 The Phoenix Bureau has grown over recent years, from 5 staff to over 35 staff, all with update capability to PNC. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the bureau now justifies a dedicated trainer, combined with another function, for example quality control. A form of re-structure or realignment of responsibilities could allow existing personnel to be utilised to become accredited trainers and provide a standard approach to update training within the force.

### Recommendation 9

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force considers the introduction of PNC Trainer dedicated to the Criminal Justice Support Unit. Where a full time post of trainer is not viable, the force may wish to consider combining the role with an existing role within the unit, for example, data quality.**

<sup>4</sup> Extract from Section 5 (Training) of Volume 1 of the PNC Manual, version 4.01, March 2004.

## 2.4 Partnerships and Resources

- 2.4.1 The Phoenix Bureau has developed good working relationships with the courts in the Dorset Police area.. This has resulted in the overall time to receive court results reducing with 69% of court registers being received into the bureau within 3 days of the court hearing. Court registers are printed direct to the Phoenix Bureau, following the installation of a printer by the courts, further evidence of the relationships that have been built. This improved process is a direct result of dialogue between the Force and courts in order to increase the timeliness of court results. If issues surrounding timeliness arise, the Force uses the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) as a vehicle to highlight their concerns.
- 2.4.2 Whilst the relationship between the Force and courts has developed, there has been no formal dialogue between the force and Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs). The Force is planning to invite all NPPAs to a seminar to highlight the need for timely data, but at the time of the inspection, no plans had been confirmed. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider the seminar good practice and will provide the Force with an opportunity to develop relationships and introduce Service Level Agreements (SLA) with NPPAs.

### Recommendation 10

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force continue with plans to invite Non-Police Prosecuting Agencies into the Force to highlight the need for effective processes in receiving timely data for input to PNC. The seminar will provide a forum to discuss the issues and also provide an opportunity to develop Service Level Agreements between the Force and these external agencies.**

- 2.4.3 Whilst there are no SLAs between the Force and NPPAs concerning the supply of information for input to PNC, the force has considered the need for protocols with partner agencies concerning the sharing of information to assist in crime reduction. A joint protocol exists between the force and the various Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and also a joint protocol on warrants with the other criminal justice partners. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider this to be good practice.
- 2.4.4 Another area that HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed under this protocol heading was the effectiveness of the Force when attending regional and national PNC meetings. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note that the force plays an active role in the regional PNC Liaison Officers Conference and the national PNC Practitioners Group. The Phoenix Bureau supervisor attends the groups on behalf of the force and is therefore suitably placed to become aware of any issues that may impact upon the force.

## 2.5 Processes

- 2.5.1 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors reviewed the following processes within Dorset Police; Creation of Arrest/Summons Reports, Data Quality, Ad Hoc Intelligence Updates, Availability of PNC Checks, Impending Prosecutions and the Originator Line.
- 2.5.2 Creation of Arrest/Summons Reports
- 2.5.2.1 Arrest/Summons reports are created in Dorset Police in one of two ways, depending on how a prisoner has been processed. The Force is one only a handful of forces that have commenced the creation of arrest/summons reports for offenders who have been released on S.37(7) bail. When this occurs, the Force currently has a manual process for updating PNC. For all other offenders whose details are to be added to PNC, an automatic transfer of information takes place from the custody system to the PNC.
- 2.5.2.2 With regard to the electronic transfer of information, staff in the custody suite make the necessary updates to the local custody system. Once the custody record is closed, information or records applicable to the PNC are sent automatically, using algorithms, from the custody system without any intervention from the custody staff. The transmission creates a skeleton record on the PNC and the process involved reduces the risk of records not being created on the PNC.
- 2.5.2.3 Whilst an offender in being processed in the custody suite, the arresting officer or officer in the case is responsible for completing the Phoenix Source Document, known as the PSD2, and forwarding it to the Phoenix Bureau at Bournemouth. The ACPO target for the subsequent completion of a record following the creation of a skeleton record is 5 days. During reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors, they were encouraged to note that almost all forms were submitted and updated in line with this target. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were also encouraged to learn during focus groups that officers were aware of the need to submit the PSD2 in a timely manner.
- 2.5.2.4 In terms of the manual process for the creation of cases subject to S.37(7) bail, the force is experiencing an immediate impact on their performance in the way that cases are added to the PNC. The target remains 90% within 24 hours, however, Dorset Police currently use a process whereby the custody records are checked each day to identify new S.37(7) bail cases from the previous 24 hours. This results in a scenario where the target will never be reached. Once the cases are added to the PNC, each one is entered into a diary system to ensure relevant follow up and update on a date in the future. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider this aspect to be good practice.

- 2.5.2.5 Whilst the Force should be commended for the commitment shown to enable the recording of such cases, the process employed had a significant impact on their overall performance. The Force is happy to operate a manual process but it is the opinion of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the current use of the interface from the custody could be employed in combination with the manual system.
- 2.5.2.6 If cases subject to S 37(7) bail were created on the PNC via the interface, the impact on overall performance will be negligible. The manual process of checking cases on a daily basis and creating diary entries could still be utilised to manage the cases when offenders report back to the custody suite. In making this observation, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are aware that the force are currently evaluating NSPIS products and therefore, the cost of any potential development work would have to be balanced against the short term benefits they will produce.

#### **Recommendation 11**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force explore the potential benefits of using the interface to notify S.37(7) bail cases to PNC within the target time of 24 hours. The introduction of any electronic transfer should continue to be supported by the existing manual process to ensure effective management and follow up of cases.**

#### 2.5.3 Data Quality

- 2.5.3.1 There is a strong focus on Data quality within the Force, which is managed through the Phoenix Data Quality Group (PDQG). The group, chaired by the PNC Liaison Officer meets on a quarterly basis and discusses quality issues across all aspects of PNC nominal update, for example, arrest/charge, warrants, court result and police bail. The force also employs a Data Standards Officer (DSO) who is responsible for carrying out quality control of the work input by staff in the Phoenix Bureau. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors consider this to be good practice.
- 2.5.3.2 However, during the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that the level of quality control work being carried out was not achieving the expected levels of PDQG, due to time and resource issues. The result is that the majority of work passing through the bureau is not checked for accuracy. Currently, only the work of new members of staff is quality assured until a suitable standard is reached. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are of the opinion that the level of quality control should increase to provide assurance that data owned by the Force is accurate and that that performance of staff is maintained at a high standard.
- 2.5.3.3 In addition, there is no formal recording of the types of errors being made by staff. The DSO provides informal feedback and guidance to staff if required. No use of the PPP system is used to monitor performance or set objectives if staff are continually producing sub-standard work.

- 2.5.3.4 However, despite these findings, during reality checks of PNC data against source documents, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discovered no significant errors. A selection of documents were analysed with only minor typographical errors being found.
- 2.5.4 Ad-Hoc Intelligence Updates<sup>5</sup>
- 2.5.4.1 Ad-Hoc Intelligence updates is another area of strength for the force. An effective process exists in which local intelligence analysts, when reviewing and rating intelligence submitted by officers, will identify data applicable to PNC. Once information has been identified, the information is sent electronically to the PNC Input Unit at Bournemouth for update to PNC. Following the update to PNC, the source information, a hard copy of the electronic communication, is stored locally for auditing purposes.
- 2.5.4.2 HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducted reality checks against this information and source documents and found no errors on any aspect the process. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were pleased to note the good practice in this area.
- 2.5.5 Availability of PNC Checks
- 2.5.5.1 During the course of the inspection, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors discussed with operational staff the ease at which PNC checks can be carried out. Anecdotal evidence was provided for numerous examples where officers had struggled to obtain PNC Information over the radio or via a telephone line. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors were informed that officers are usually met with the response that a PNC operator is not available or that radio dispatchers do not have sufficient skills to provide the information.
- 2.5.5.2 The PNC Enquiry Desk within the Comcen is the first point of contact for operational officers to obtain PNC information. One person per shift should cover the desk and provide a service via a dedicated talkgroup on the Airwave communication system, as well as providing telephone support. However, whenever staff shortages occur within the Comcen, it was reported to HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the PNC Enquiry Desk positions are first to be sacrificed in order to resolve the staff issues on dispatcher positions. Under normal circumstances, PNC traffic could be re-directed via the dispatchers to enable a PNC service to be maintained. However, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors also learned that dispatchers are not routinely trained in all aspects of PNC. Dispatchers receive training to enquiry level on the vehicle application of PNC but do not receive any training on the nominal index.

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<sup>5</sup> Information applicable for update to PNC that originates from a source other than the creation of an arrest/summons report



- 2.5.5.3 The result of the situation is that invariably, operational officers cannot obtain the information they require when conducting their duties. The net effect is that officers are sometimes reluctant to request checks knowing that may get the response that an operator is not available. This is placing officers at risk when they are conducting stop checks of people or vehicles as the PNC can provide useful information to the officer, for example warning signals about a person, or known circumstances of crime pertaining to the vehicle. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the availability of PNC information should be a continual service available to all officers all of the time.

#### **Recommendation 12**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force urgently review the resources assigned to PNC within the ComCen to ensure that operational officers receive the appropriate level of service.**

#### 2.5.6 Impending Prosecutions

- 2.5.6.1 On a monthly basis, Dorset Police receive a list of Impending Cases from PITO that have just become over a year old. The list allows the force to identify the cases that require further review and to ensure that all cases are legitimately outstanding. The use of the list is considered good practice and a useful resource to assist in the management of the number of impending prosecutions owned by the force.
- 2.5.6.2 Under normal circumstances, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors would welcome a reduction in the overall number of cases as evidence that cases are being managed appropriately. However, in view that the force has adopted a process to record cases subject of s.37(7) bail, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors acknowledge that a rise is inevitable which is reflected in the overall results. Nevertheless, despite the number increasing over the last twelve months, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors expect the overall number should eventually level out before commencing a steady reduction once more.
- 2.5.6.3 Whilst the process surrounding the management of cases is sound, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are concerned that the Phoenix Bureau supervisor has responsibility for the process. The Phoenix Bureau supervisor has line management responsibility for approximately 35 staff as well as functional management responsibility for PNC. It is the view of HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors that the review of impending prosecutions should be delegated to Phoenix Bureau staff.

#### **Recommendation 13**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the responsibility for the review of outstanding Impending Prosecutions be delegated to Phoenix Bureau Staff as part of their day to day processes within the unit, allowing the Phoenix Bureau Supervisor to concentrate on line management responsibilities.**

## 2.5.7 Originator Line

2.5.7.1 The originator line on PNC is a free text field of 72 characters that should be used to record the reason for carrying out a transaction. It is good practice to include a reference to a force record in this field and also the collar number (or equivalent) of the person requesting the PNC check. The field should also be supported by an appropriate reason code derived a pre-set list. The use of the field, requirements for particular types of information and the reason codes are laid down in Volume 1 of the PNC User Manual.

2.5.7.2 Dorset Police have included the correct use of the originator field and reason codes within the PNC Applications policy that is available to all staff. However, during interviews and focus groups, some PNC trained staff were not aware of the requirements for the completion of the field and the potential investigative use the information had when it is read on a transaction enquiry. Furthermore, a reality check of a random sample of approximately 100 transaction carried out by the force revealed a 36% error rate on the originator field, including some errors relating to incorrect reason codes. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors believe that although the figure of 36% is high, reinforcement of the policy amongst PNC trained staff should help to reduce this figure.

### **Recommendation 14**

**Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reissues or reinforces the policy on the correct use of the originator line and the reason codes. The process should include the requirements of certain information and an explanation of the investigative capabilities of the information to assist operational policing.**

## 2.6 Results

2.6.1 In the 12 months to July 2004, Dorset Police have experienced varied performance in relation to the timeliness of arrest/summons reports being input onto the PNC. In August 2003, the force was achieving 73.8% of cases being updated within 24 hours. Performance has then ranged from this figure to a low of 43.2% in April 2004, with a steady increase to 51.5% in July 2004. The Force has experienced an unusual high staff turnover in the last twelve months and also introduced a process for recording cases subject to S.37(7). These two factors have had a significant impact on the performance in relation to the creation of arrest/summons records. However, new staff have been employed and once they are fully trained, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are hopeful that overall performance will improve. In terms of the number of days to enter the quickest 90% of cases, performance has ranged from 3 days in August 2003 to 14 days in June 2004, however improvements were made during July 2004 when the figure was reduced to 6 days.

- 2.6.2 With regard to the performance concerning the input of Court Results, the Force has again suffered from inconsistent performance as a result of the high turnover of staff in the Phoenix Bureau. In August 2003, the Force was achieving 29.6% of results within 24 hours, rising to 57.7% in October 2003. The latest data, July 2004 shows that only 14.9% of results were applied to PNC within 7 days of the court date. The recent decline in performance can be partly attributed to the current training techniques used for new staff in which existing staff provide the training, resulting in an overall loss of productivity. The number of days to enter the quickest 90% of court results has also been sporadic. In August 2003, it was taking 13 days to enter 90% of results, rising to 27 days in May 2004 but reducing again to 18 days in July 2004.
- 2.6.3 The number of Impending Prosecutions has increased from 3,316 to 3,737, an increase of 12.7%. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are not concerned by this increase because an increase was inevitable once the Force started to record cases subject to S.37(7) bail. However, once the process is embedded within the organisation, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors would expect to see the overall number of cases level out before gradually starting to reduce again.
- 2.6.4 A graph illustrating these performance figures can be seen in Section 1 of this Report at paragraph 1.4.7.
- 2.6.5 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary has no further recommendation to make in relation to PNC within Dorset Police.

## Appendix A

### A Summary of Good Practice within Dorset Police

- The force has a good structure of groups managing the PNC from Strategic to Practitioner level and the existence of a group solely dealing with PNC Data Quality..
- Data Protection Audits are subject of a five year plan, which is reviewed annually and based upon a risk assessment conducted in accordance with the ACPO Data Protection and Audit Manual.
- A Performance Information Pack is produced on a monthly basis by the Data Standards Officer and distributed to relevant senior managers throughout the force.
- There is an extensive programme of Information Security and Data Protection Training.
- The force has introduced a PNC Governance Policy.
- There are signed joint protocols with partner agencies concerning the sharing of information, including PNC information.
- A diary system is used to ensure that cases subject to S.47(3) bail are reviewed and updated at appropriate periods.
- The work of staff in the Phoenix Bureau is subject to quality assurance by the data standards officer.
- Ad-Hoc intelligence is recorded and updated on the PNC.

## **Summary of Recommendations for Dorset Police**

### **Recommendation 1**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force raises the awareness of the PNC User Group amongst operational staff. Individual representatives must have responsibility to feed information back to staff within their respective BCU and enable two way communication of issues between the PNC users and the group.

(Paragraph 2.1.5)

### **Recommendation 2**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the current suite of performance information supplied to divisional commanders be expanded to include qualitative performance by individual officers. This will ensure that officers are being held accountable for both quality and timeliness of the information they are providing. Any expansion of the information must also include a process for corrective action by the officer.

(Paragraph 2.1.7)

### **Recommendation 3**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that in anticipation of the transfer to full browser access to PNC, the force amalgamates all user access records and carries out a review of current users IDs to ensure that all are relevant and set to the appropriate level of access. Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary also recommends that annual reviews are user IDs be carried out in the future.

(Paragraph 2.2.4.4)

### **Recommendation 4**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that all data protections audits in which weaknesses are identified should contain recommendations for corrective action. The recommendations should then form part of the Strategic Action Plan owned by the PNC Strategy Board to ensure that relevant action is taken.

(Paragraph 2.2.5.2)

### **Recommendation 5**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that all transaction monitoring enquiries are recorded as evidence of compliance, regardless of whether a memorandum has been produced or not. In addition, PNC transactions subject to checks, should be selected on a more random basis to provide a fairer approach to the process.

(Paragraph 2.2.5.5)

**Recommendation 6**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force ensures that all relevant staff are made aware of the availability of PNC functions and who to contact for PNC checks to be carried out. In addition, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that any revision of the 'Investigator's Guide' should include reference to the investigative capabilities of PNC.

(Paragraph 2.3.1.4)

**Recommendation 7**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force;

- Review the current eligibility for staff requesting PNC training. The review should concentrate on providing courses to staff in posts in which the job description includes access to the PNC or where there is an essential operational need.
- Consider the future impact upon training and the resources that will be required if the decision is made to provide PNC access via the Airwave communications system.

(Paragraph 2.3.2.5)

**Recommendation 8**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force introduce a process of regular assessment of PNC Users. Users who do not meet the current standard should have their need for PNC access evaluated and provided with refresher training before access is renewed.

(Paragraph 2.3.2.8)

**Recommendation 9**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force considers the introduction of PNC Trainer dedicated to the Criminal Justice Support Unit. Where a full time post of trainer is not viable, the force may wish to consider combining the role with an existing role within the unit, for example, data quality.

(Paragraph 2.3.2.12)

**Recommendation 10**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force continue with plans to invite Non-Police Prosecuting Agencies into the force to highlight the need for effective processes in receiving timely data for input to PNC. The seminar will provide a forum to discuss the issues and also provide an opportunity to develop Service Level Agreements between the force and external agencies.

(Paragraph 2.4.2)

**Recommendation 11**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force explore the potential benefits of using the interface to notify S.37(7) bail cases to PNC within the target time of 24 hours. The introduction of any electronic transfer should continue to be supported by the existing manual process to ensure effective management and follow up of cases.

(Paragraph 2.5.2.6)

**Recommendation 12**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force urgently review the resources assigned to PNC within the ComCen to ensure that operational officers receive the appropriate level of service.

(Paragraph 2.5.5.3)

**Recommendation 13**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the responsibility for the review of outstanding Impending Prosecutions be delegated to Phoenix Bureau Staff as part of their day to day processes within the unit, allowing the Phoenix Bureau Supervisor to concentrate on line management responsibilities.

(Paragraph 2.5.6.3)

**Recommendation 14**

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force reissues or reinforces the policy on the correct use of the originator line and the reason codes. The process should include the requirements of certain information and an explanation of the investigative capabilities of the information to assist operational policing.

(Paragraph 2.5.7.2)

## Appendix B

### **Thematic Inspection Report on Police Crime Recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System Data Quality - 'On The Record'**

#### **Recommendation 9** (Chapter 5 page 86)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that Forces ensure that each Phoenix inputting department develops an audit trail to register the return of substandard PSDs, via line supervisors, to originating officers. The system developed should include a mechanism to



ensure the prompt return of PSDs. Forces should also incorporate locally based audit trails, monitoring the passage of returned PSDs between line supervisors and originating officers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix C

### PRG Report “Phoenix Data Quality” Recommendations

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

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

## Appendix D

### Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 1<sup>st</sup> Report

#### Recommendation One (Paragraph 5.2)

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

#### Recommendation Two (Paragraph 5.11)

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

#### Recommendation Three (Paragraph 5.19)

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

#### Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.29)

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

#### Recommendation Five (Paragraph 5.31)

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

#### Recommendation Six (Paragraph 5.34)

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

**Recommendation Seven (Paragraph 6.10)**

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

**Recommendation Eight (Paragraph 6.12)**

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

**Recommendation Nine (Paragraph 6.14)**

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

**Recommendation Ten (Paragraph 6.16)**

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

## Appendix E

### Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness – 2<sup>nd</sup> Report

#### Recommendation 1

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

#### Recommendation 2

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

#### Recommendation 3

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

#### Recommendation 4

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

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

#### Recommendation 5

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