

**HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Northern Regional Office**

**Follow-up/Monitoring Visit
Durham North BCU
Durham Constabulary**

BCU Inspection Conducted - October 2004

Follow-up Visit Conducted - December 2005



Follow up/monitoring visits to inspected BCUs

Durham North BCU - Durham Constabulary

Date of Inspection	Revisit Team	BCU Commander	Date of final report	Date of monitoring
October 2004	Superintendent Graham Meadows & Chief Superintendent Dave Jones	Chief Superintendent Eric Suddes	December 2004	December 2005

Significant Developments since the Original Inspection (e.g. boundary changes, changes to management team, increase/decrease in strength)

- There have been significant changes to the senior management team (SMT) since the original inspection including the appointment of a new BCU Commander and a new operations manager (superintendent). The area response manager (chief inspector) has moved to the post of area community justice manager whilst the latter is on attachment to a project at headquarters. The role of area response manager is currently being filled by an acting chief inspector.
- Durham North was created in April 2004 with the merger of three smaller BCUs. There has been no significant geographical change since that time.
- Staff numbers have remained relatively constant since the merger, although the number of constables in the first two years of service has reduced from 91 to 77 (as at 31 March 2005).
- The BCU is preparing for significant change during 2006 with the introduction of:
 - a new five block shift pattern in January;
 - neighbourhood policing with a realignment of inspector and sergeant roles and responsibilities; and
 - a number of major IT systems.
- The changes will present a significant challenge to the BCU in managing cultural and training issues whilst alleviating the apprehension and worry of staff and improving their morale, and at the same time ensuring effective service delivery for local communities.

Staff in Operational Roles

The table below shows the breakdown of staff by function group for the financial year 2004/05. Overall the BCU compares favourably with the most similar BCU group, whilst having a higher proportion of police officers in operational roles than the Constabulary average.

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	Durham North BCU	Force Average	MSBCU group Average
% Police Officers Operational	95.88%	88.48%	96.06%
% Police Staff Operational	51.27%	34.61%	49.01%
% Police Officers Operational Support	3.62%	9.22%	3.37%
% Police Staff Operational Support	25.54%	26.79%	19.25%
% Police Officers Organisational Support	0.49%	2.30%	0.57%
% Police Staff Organisational Support	23.19%	38.59%	31.74%

Sickness Data

Sickness data for the financial year 2004/05 indicates that the average hours lost through sickness for both police officers and police staff is better than both the most similar BCU group average and the Constabulary average.

Average hours lost through sickness per staff member	MSBCU group (out of 15 BCUs)		Durham (2 BCUs and central services)	
	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Police officers 2004/05 - 64.03	4 th	65.09	1 st	71.86
Police staff 2004/05 - 58.15	8 th	62.61	2 nd	67.04

Please note: The average number of hours lost to sickness uses the financial year average staffing data for the calculation due to the Home Office not receiving quarterly staffing data.

Performance

Crime Data - Crime Performance Table

The table below shows the crime performance data for the period April 2005 to October 2005 for Durham North BCU:

Performance Indicator	Performance		% Change	MSBCU Group mean	The BCU's ranked position
	Apr to Oct 04	Apr to Oct 05			
Recorded crime per 1000 pop.	43.48	47.06	8.23%	64.18	1
Recorded crime detection rate	27.08%	26.88%	-1.00 p.p.	27.82%	13
Domestic burglary per 1000 households	6.57	4.96	-24.49%	7.69	1
Domestic burglary detection rate	15.28%	22.62%	7.34 p.p.	20.41%	7
Robberies per 1000 population	0.16	0.20	22.64%	0.53	2
Robbery detection rate	30.19%	33.85%	3.66 p.p.	27.54%	4
Vehicle crimes per 1000 pop	4.91	4.71	-4.10%	8.27	1
Vehicle crime detection rate	10.35%	10.13%	-0.22%	15.70%	11
Violent crimes per 1000 population	6.84	9.81	43.43%	14.13	1
Violent crime detection rate	62.36%	49.07%	-13.30 p.p.	50.05%	12

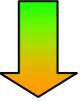
Note: This data is not validated and therefore is only provisional

The BCU has low levels of crime in comparison to the most similar BCU group, placing it first or second in the group for all key crime categories. Although the BCU has low levels of recorded crime, offences of total crime, robbery and violent crime have increased and action needs to be taken to address this. The reduction in the

number of offences of domestic burglary is particularly impressive and is worthy of note.

Performance in respect of detections is less promising. Whilst the detection rates for domestic burglary and robbery are improving, the detection rates for total crime, vehicle crime and violent crime are lower than the group average and are deteriorating. This is also apparent for the 12 month rates and action needs to be taken.

Below is a summary of Durham North's performance when compared with the most similar BCU group averages and previous year's performance¹ for the time period April 2005 to October 2005:

<p>Good - Getting Better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic burglary per 1000 households • % Domestic burglary detected • % Robbery detected • Vehicle crime per 1000 population 	<p>Good - Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total crime per 1000 population • Robbery per 1000 population • Violent crime per 1000 population 
<p>Poor - Getting Better</p> 	<p>Poor - Getting Worse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Total crime detected • % Vehicle crime detected • % Violent crime detected 

¹ Good - Getting Better = Performing better than BCU family average and better than previous year.
 Good - Getting Worse = Performing better than BCU family average but worse than previous year.
 Poor - Getting Better = Performing worse than BCU family average but better than previous year.
 Poor - Getting Worse = Performing worse than BCU family average and worse than previous year.

Inspection Recommendations

Recommendation 1	
<p><i>That the shift patterns and deployment of all operational teams on the BCU are revised, with a view to achieving closer alignment to demand profiles, more effectively integrated teams and a better work/life balance for personnel.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Force has reviewed the area of shift patterns and officer deployment, and is to introduce a revised Constabulary-wide shift pattern for all operational officers in January 2006. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a new shift pattern should result in a number of benefits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligning staffing to demand; • enhancing the work/life balance of staff with an increase in the number of rest days taken, achieved by officers working longer hours per tour of duty; • the short time periods (quick turn around) between changes of duty will be avoided. • The new command and control system introduced in December 2005 should allow closer scrutiny of incident management within the BCU. • The transition to the new shift system is causing concern amongst some staff, in particular the concerns relate to the lack of a published duty roster. • A number of factors appeared to be impacting on the morale of police officers including the implementation of the new IT based duty management system (DMS); increased cascade training of legislation, i.e. the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCPA); and the reconfiguration of inspector and sergeant duties. • The SMT needs to satisfy itself if this manifestation - often associated with significant change - is widespread and, if so, take action to reassure staff and challenge perceptions that often lack foundation.

Recommendation 2	
<p><i>That all post holders within the department are actively represented at the tactical tasking and co-ordination group and that individuals within the units are considered and utilised in a systematic manner by operational personnel as part of the crime reduction effort on the BCU.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendance at the tasking and co-ordinating group (TCG) has been reviewed and the SMT is satisfied that all relevant parties attend in order to best impact on crime reduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance of the BCU and its ranked position in the most similar BCU group is testament to the focus on crime reduction. In particular, the further reductions seen in the already low levels of domestic burglary and vehicle crime offences are evidence of a strong focus on this area. • There is a clarity within the TCG in relation to the BCU priorities, which are not just words on a page but actually drive activity. • Partners attend the tasking and co-ordinating group in addition to key senior staff from the BCU. The meeting is chaired and driven by the superintendent (operations).

Recommendation 3	
<p><i>That a specific action plan be drawn up which maximises the potential offered by both the Special Constabulary and the PCSOs, including a defined leadership structure and a suite of performance indicators which accurately capture the contribution made by such members.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constabulary has initiated a working group through the community safety department at headquarters to identify how best to utilise police community support officers (PCSOs), special constables and other members of the 'extended police family' within Durham Constabulary. • Within the BCU, PCSOs are supervised by community inspectors as part of the newly created neighbourhood teams. • PCSOs are included within the computerised performance based quality management framework. • A Special Constabulary liaison officer has been appointed, who is currently addressing all issues of concern and co-ordinating activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU is awaiting the recommendations of a Constabulary working group looking at this area of activity. • The role of PCSOs and special constables is intrinsic to the success of neighbourhood policing, and it is pleasing to note that members of staff have been placed under the command of the community inspectors and that there are clear performance measures in place. • The Special Constabulary liaison officer will act as a focal point for any concerns that these staff members have. This is seen as a positive step forward.

Recommendation 4	
<p><i>That, in company with key representatives of the community, a project is commissioned by the BCU Commander into partnership structures and operating procedures on Durham North with a view to streamlining and standardising them wherever possible. This should include specific outcomes on data sharing and intelligence-led activity and the development of a performance management framework to enable all parties to be held to account.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) arrangements for the three partnerships across the BCU follow a standard meeting and group structure. • Data sharing and intelligence-led activity are co-ordinated within this structure. • The BCU Commander has had a series of meetings with chief executives to explore how best to further rationalise the partnership meeting structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a long term recommendation and work is ongoing to progress matters by working closely with the local authorities, agencies and elected representatives. • The development of effective data sharing and intelligence-led activity will be advanced with the introduction of neighbourhood policing, when the inspectors with responsibility for the neighbourhoods develop working relationships with local officials in those areas. • The development of a joint performance management framework for all parties will take time to develop, but HMIC is satisfied that the BCU Commander is taking this matter forward and has a clear appreciation of the value of partnership working and the importance of good working relationships with partners at all levels.

Recommendation 5	
<p><i>That a comprehensive training needs analysis is produced by the BCU before 1 January 2005, prioritising the requirements of both teams and individuals against the corporate needs of the Force. Such an analysis should form an ongoing part of the BCU's policing plans in the future.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training needs analysis has been undertaken and submitted to headquarters. • There is ongoing development work being undertaken by the Constabulary in this area. • Supervisors are tasked with ascertaining the training needs of their staff and a prioritised list focused on area priorities is submitted. • Performance development reviews (PDRs) are used as a key means of identifying relevant training. • The SMT has allocated significant funding from the overtime budget in order to facilitate training opportunities for staff whilst maintaining effective operational staffing levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police staff were positive about the SMT, believing they are approachable, aware of relevant issues and proactive in taking the BCU forward. • Police staff were happy that their training needs are being addressed. • Police officers currently feel frustrated at the considerable amount of training being undertaken in respect of legislation, i.e. SOCPA and the installation of new IT systems. Operational officers are sometimes unable to attend scheduled training due to staff shortages on core policing duties. • Staff acknowledge that the current 'log jam' of training is the result of Constabulary-wide projects introducing new IT systems that are coming 'on line' at the same time, including command and control and the duty management system. This coupled with essential legislative training, including SOCPA, is putting a considerable burden on the BCU. • The BCU has two dedicated training officers both of whom are seconded to headquarters at the present time. This is resulting in supervisory officers within the BCU being given the task of cascading training to staff. It is inevitable that this is taking supervisors away from front line policing and will ultimately impact on performance. The Constabulary needs to consider returning the training officers as soon as possible to help the BCU overcome the surge in essential training.

Recommendation 6	
<p><i>That a performance management regime is developed on Durham North, incorporating structured accountability meetings for sergeants and constables and standardised performance indicators for teams which are reflective of the contributions made by operational personnel on the BCU.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A performance management framework is in place with standardised indicators. • There are scheduled accountability meetings which are monthly for the SMT and quarterly for local area staff. Officers are held to account for performance at these meetings. • Performance data is produced by a performance management unit consisting of one sergeant and two constables. Data is available on the local intranet. • Morning meetings to review activity are held in three locations within the BCU at 0830 each weekday morning, with a co-ordinated meeting held via a telephone conferencing facility at 0900. A member of the SMT chairs the 0900 meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data is now informing the accountability processes within the BCU and officers and staff are being held to account. • The performance data is team based and helps in identifying trends and patterns across the BCU. • The inspection team was impressed with the commitment of the staff within the performance unit, who are keen to develop the performance management function and to make the data more timely. • At the instigation of the SMT, the performance unit is embarking on a process of target setting for teams within the BCU which, it is felt, will help to improve overall performance. • The performance management unit checks National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) compliance which has improved significantly (it is believed this may account in part for the 43% increase in violent crimes per 1000 population and the 13% reduction in violent crime detections). • In an effort to ensure that supervisors at inspector and sergeant level make the most effective use of the data, the performance unit is to relaunch the performance framework with an emphasis being on performance improvement, rather than a blame culture.

Recommendation 7	
<p><i>That the BCU Commander, in conjunction with headquarters based specialist departments, satisfies himself that the composition and deployment of the proactive unit is appropriate for tackling the priorities published for Durham North and that intelligence-led support is available to tackle level two criminality when required.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the proactive capability within Durham Constabulary has recently been undertaken by the headquarters CID, and recommendations in that report have been adopted Constabulary-wide. • The BCU Commander has given clear direction regarding the tasking of the proactive team and its involvement in neighbourhood policing. • Level 2 issues are addressed at Constabulary level supported by the BCU when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proactive unit is clearly focused on the area priorities, notably persistent and prolific offenders. This is a significant change in direction for the unit away from drug related investigations, and the SMT is to be applauded for its commitment to drive activity in support of BCU priorities in this way. • There are good links between the proactive unit, intelligence cell and field intelligence officers (FIOs). The majority of the unit's work is National Intelligence Model (NIM) driven through the use of packages and profiles from the intelligence cell. • The proactive unit is made up entirely of detective officers. Opportunities may exist for attachments or postings of uniform staff to the unit both for personal development and as an effective deployment of skilled resources. • Whilst staff within the BCU appear to know of the existence of the proactive team, there is little understanding of what the unit is doing. Opportunities exist to market the unit more effectively to staff across the BCU, thereby demonstrating the unit's commitment to the BCU priorities and its support to neighbourhood policing. • The proactive unit suffers from a lack of training in basic foot surveillance. HMIC is concerned that this could detract from the ability to tackle criminality and could ultimately jeopardise criminal trials.

Recommendation 8	
<p><i>That an overhaul is undertaken in the way intelligence is handled and disseminated around the BCU. This should include revision of the working practices of the FIOs and incorporation of the principles of the national briefing model. The SMT should ensure systems and practices are able to stand up to rigorous inspection of compliance.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence packages are produced to a Constabulary-wide model and disseminated via the TCG. • Briefings are undertaken utilising the intelligence products. • SMT members dip sample and receive feedback on the relevance and quality of intelligence, including briefings. • Information is directly inputted on to the MEMEX system at source, and transmitted electronically to the intelligence cell for assessment and grading. • The BCU has acknowledged that briefing packages are not available at weekends and is taking steps to ensure 'hot intelligence' is made available to staff. • FIOs now attend morning meetings from which they are tasked appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the FIO has now bedded down within the BCU, with staff now understanding that the role of FIOs within the intelligence system is not one previously associated with collators or local intelligence officers (LIOs). They are accessible by mobile phone. • Researchers from the intelligence cell are now attending briefings. This is a positive move and will enhance both communication and understanding. • In the neighbourhood policing model, inspectors need to start taking ownership of those local issues that cannot be immediately progressed via the intelligence cell, but which nevertheless are causing concern to local residents. • The SMT has acknowledged the problem of delays inputting intelligence/information on to the MEMEX system due to the lack of suitable terminals. Plans are in place to rectify this position and ensure appropriate terminals are more readily available throughout the BCU. The tangible result should be a greater quantity of intelligence submitted on a timely basis. • The number of FIOs has only recently returned to the full establishment. Operational staff may now view more tangible benefits.

Recommendation 9	
<p><i>That the BCU carries out a wholesale revision of its National Intelligence Model systems and processes, with an objective of implementing a streamlined and accountable system based on national best practice. This should include comprehensive education to all staff of SMT expectations and the processes associated with the NIM.</i></p>	
Action taken by BCU	Measurable Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU has revised its NIM processes and systems. • Priorities are clearly identified and staff are aware of what they are through a simple clear communication style. • Staffing within the intelligence cell is appropriate and includes analysts and a senior analyst under the direction of a detective inspector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCU priorities are clearly driving activity and providing the appropriate focus. • The BCU has adopted NIM principles and the TCG is effective in including partner agencies who can impact on the BCU priorities. • There is evidence of effective morning briefings/team briefings taking place within the BCU. • The SMT is to be applauded for determining BCU priorities in line with the NIM, and in the removal of domestic burglary as an area of priority. This is appropriate for Durham North BCU. • The SMT has ensured the NIM processes are fit for purpose for the BCU without becoming a bureaucratic burden.

Monitoring Assessment and Follow-up Action

Have all recommendations been accepted and acted upon?	YES
Has the remedial action/implementation plan led to demonstrable improvement?	YES
Has performance in relation to national/local targets improved? If not, are the reasons for deterioration understood and being addressed?	YES See below *
Have any problems arisen since the first monitoring visit that are likely to affect performance and merit further scrutiny by HMIC?	NO
Other than notification of monitoring outcome to regional office (lead staff officer), is any further action required by HMIC inspection team - e.g. contact with PSU?	NO

* Performance - Recorded crime has increased slightly but this is undoubtedly due to the significant rise in recorded violent crime that has seen a 43% increase from 6.84 crimes per 1000 population to 9.81 crimes per 1000 population (*figures compare Apr to Oct 2004 to Apr to Oct 2005*). Despite this increase the BCU is still the best performing BCU in the most similar group for this category. The rigorous approach to NCRS is undoubtedly a contributory factor to both this increase and the reduction in the violent crime detection rate from 62.36% to 49.07% (*figures compare Apr to Oct 2004 to Apr to Oct 2005*). There has also been an increase in robberies for the same period, but again this is less than half the MSBCU mean, placing Durham North as the 2nd best performing BCU in the group. Detection rates for violent crime, and all recorded crime do need some attention, but the SMT is aware and is addressing the issue.

Other Issues

The original inspection report highlighted a lack of financial devolvement within the BCU. There was an expectation that this would be addressed with the implementation of a new Constabulary-wide financial management system in April 2005. This has not materialised.

The devolvement of budgets can provide greater flexibility to the SMT to manage the day to day service delivery of services, and focus resources on the BCU priorities. True empowerment requires the means to deliver and there is some concern that the BCU's progress could be restricted if the SMT is not given the freedom, within agreed rules, to manage its own budget.

A number of examples of the inability of the SMT to manage resources were given during the revisit. These included: the BCU having to seek permission from headquarters to backfill a post created due to maternity leave, a minor personnel issue that in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness could have been addressed on the BCU; and the inability to provide suitable foot surveillance training for officers in support of operational effectiveness. The latter issue may hamper the BCU's ability to tackle Level 1 crime issues within the new neighbourhood policing model, and could potentially threaten criminal prosecutions if surveillance is undertaken by untrained officers, which is later challenged in court.

CONCLUSION

Durham Constabulary has undergone a period of significant change in recent times including the restructuring of the BCUs. This period of uncertainty is to continue into 2006 with the introduction of a number of changes relating to staff across the Constabulary, including those within the Durham North BCU. These changes include the introduction of a new shift system for operational officers, the development of IT support, and increased levels of training. A number of staff feel vulnerable and there remains a need to manage staff expectations and improve morale.

The BCU is to be complimented for the steps taken since the merger from the old BCU structure and the high levels of performance delivered during a period of change. Throughout this period, performance has remained strong when compared to the most similar BCU group. A number of the recommendations made during the inspection in October 2004 remain 'work in progress' and it will take some time to deliver tangible results. HMIC is satisfied, however, that all the recommendations have been acted upon and that the BCU will continue to make progress under the leadership of the SMT.

Superintendent Graham Meadows
Chief Superintendent Dave Jones