



GWENT POLICE

15 – 19 MARCH 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 Gwent Police between 15th and 19th March 2004.
- 1.1.2 Gwent Police was subject to a PNC Compliance Audit using the April 2003 Protocols on the PNC Compliance. Her Majesty's Inspector would like to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Force and also to place on record his thanks to all members of staff who contributed to this report and provided assistance during 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 four BCUs (referred to as 'Division'). These views have been supported by reality checks conducted by HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 Gwent Police cover an area of 600 square miles bounded by Abergavenny in the North, Newport in the South, Chepstow in the East and Caerphilly in the West. The area has a population of approximately 552,400 with 235,500 dwellings. The Gwent policing area is mixed, rural and urban, and the road network carries large volumes of traffic through the M4 link to the East, which now incorporates the Second Severn Crossing.
- 1.2.2 For general policing purposes the Gwent Police area is divided into four divisions, and each division is led by a Divisional Commander. Three of the divisions are territorially based, the fourth holding a corporate operational role from headquarters. Each division has an operational and a CID responsibility supported by crime management and Family Support Units. The Force Criminal Justice Department is based at Newport. Major emergencies and instances of serious crime are co-ordinated through D Division.
- 1.2.3 The Force is headed by the chief officer group, led by the Chief Constable, supported by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC), an Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) and a Director of Finance and Administration. The Force strength comprises approximately 1,350 full-time equivalent police officers, 630 police staff, 140 special constables and 30 police community support officers.
- 1.2.4 At Gwent Police the main updating of PNC names records is carried out by the Phoenix bureau based at headquarters in Cwmbran within the Force Intelligence Bureau. The Phoenix bureau operates Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1830 hours. The staff in the bureau check the custody system each morning to obtain a list of all the people who have been arrested and charged on the previous day, a check is made of PNC to ensure that an arrest summons (A/S) record has been created by

the NSPIS (National Strategy for Police Information Systems) custody system. Any records that have failed to be transferred from the custody system onto the PNC will be created manually by the bureau from the partial details entered on to the custody system. The record is fully updated by the bureau on receipt of a paper source input document (SID) from the police officer.

1.2.5 The Magistrates Courts (MC) send the court results electronically to the Gwent Police Information Systems (IS) department which allows the register to be printed in the Phoenix bureau. Unfortunately, the MC fail to provide the registers within their target of 72 hours from the court date and the path through Gwent IS department is adding a further delay into the production of the results. There appears to be technical reasons why the results do not always print in the bureau, the resolution of these problems are not always given a priority by the IS department, hence the additional delay. The bureau also enters the court results onto the PNC from these printed registers for three of the divisions, the other division's court results being entered onto the PNC through the NSPIS Case Preparation system.

1.2.6 The PNC Bureau (PNCB) is based within the disclosure unit at force headquarters. It is responsible for entering Wanted/Missing (W/M) reports, vehicle and property reports; the keywording of modus operandi (MO) which is required to enhance QUEST (Queries Using Extended Search Techniques) searches, accepting, circulating and sending PNC broadcasts. The bureau is staffed Monday – Friday 0700 hours till midnight. Out of hours cover for the entering of W/M reports, vehicle reports, is available through the force control room and the call handling centre.

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 grading structure as detailed below;

- **Green** - Comprehensive evidence of good performance and effective processes. Good-to-strong positive result trends over three years.
- **Yellow** – Evidence of average/above average performance and effective activity covering many areas, but not comprehensive. Positive result trends, performance not on target but heading in the right direction.
- **Orange** - Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others. No better than fair – typically below average - result trends. Performance not on target and not improving sufficiently.
- **Red** - No or limited evidence of effective activity. Either no results available or key aspects of performance are comparatively poor – bottom quartile, where this can be quantified - and/or deteriorating markedly.

- 1.3.3 The first stage of the inspection involved the force providing HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors with documentation to support their adherence to the protocols. This was followed up by a visit to the force with HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors conducting interviews with key staff. The visit to the force also incorporated the final stage of the inspection which was based upon reality checks. The reality checks included; reviewing PNC data against source documentation (arrest data and warrants) and checks against user access groups and training records.
- 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

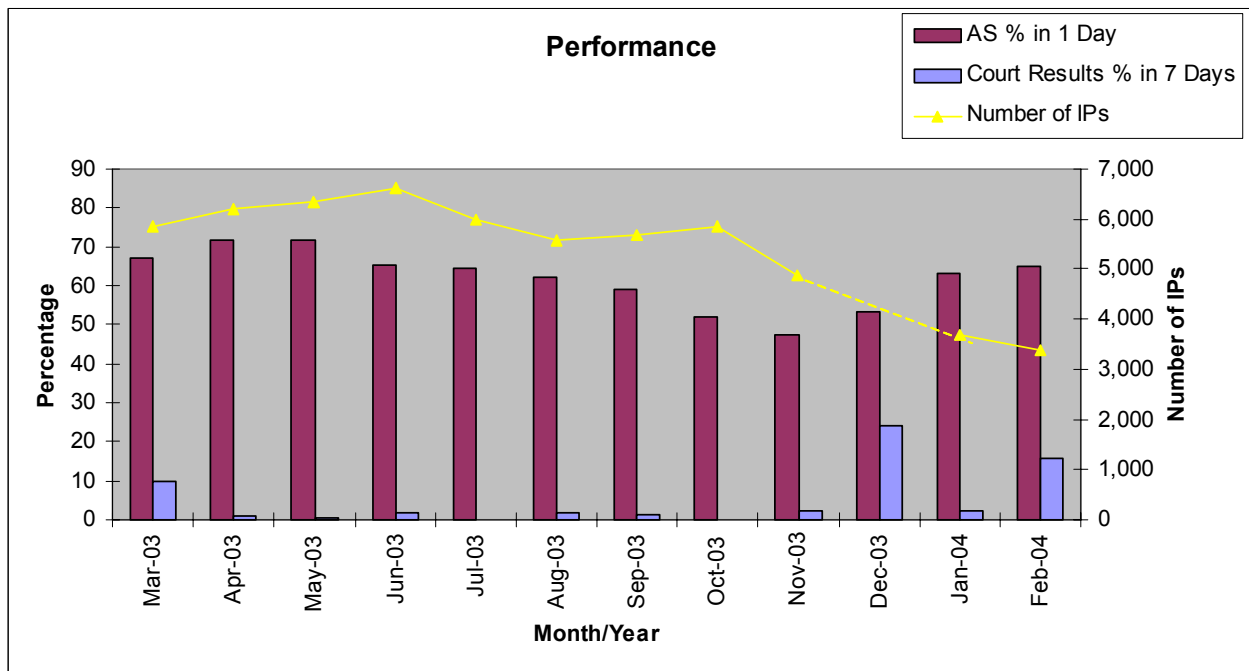
- 1.4.1 On 27th April 2000, ACPO Council accepted the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. The strategy is based upon the following four aspects of data handling;
- Accuracy
 - Timeliness
 - Completeness
 - Relevancy
- 1.4.2 The strategy is owned by ACPO but is also reliant on other partners taking responsibility 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 skeleton¹ 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 Gwent Police have installed the NSPIS (National Strategy for Police Information Systems), Custody system in all of their custody units. The system downloads a partial record to the PNC once the person details are cleared from the custody system. The record transferred to the PNC from the NSPIS custody system contains more data fields than the PITO definition of a skeleton record, but it is not a full

¹ 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

record. Subsequently, the remaining fields have to be up dated by the Phoenix Bureau on receipt of the paper SID, which should be faxed through by the completing officer.

- 1.4.5 In February 2004 Gwent Police are entering 65% of A/S reports within the 24 hour target. However, In February 2003 this figure was 71.5%. A similar trend is also shown in the days to enter the quickest 90% of AS reports with the figure being 46 days in February 2004 and 32 days in February 2003. It was reported to the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor that approximately 20% of A/S records fail to transfer from the NSPIS custody system to the PNC. Therefore, if the Force were able to overcome this error rate they would be much closer to the ACPO national target.
- 1.4.6 Performance with regard to the input of court results is an area of concern within Gwent Police. In the previous 18 months there have been six months when the Force has entered less than 1% of court results within the 7 day target. In fact the Force has only entered over 10% of court results in three of those 18 months. However, the last three months have seen some improvement in those statistics with the force entering 15.9% of court results within 7 days in February 2004. Historically, Gwent's figure for the days to enter 90% of court results has been in the region of 200 days, with a peak being reached in January 2004 of 524 days. However, a reduction to 29 days was achieved in February 2004, which now compares favourably with the English and Welsh average for February 2004 of 73 days. This trend has continued with the publication of the PITO March 2004 statistics.
- 1.4.7 In terms of Impending Prosecutions (IPs), the overall outstanding number of IPs for Gwent Police have reduced from 5,854 in February 2003 to the current 3,395 showing a decrease of 42% over a 12 month period. A large part of the earlier HMIC PNC inspections in 2001 and 2002 were focused on the reduction of Impending Prosecutions to ensure that records remaining on the PNC for more than 12 months were there for legitimate reasons – for example, the offender had absconded and an arrest warrant had been issued. In December 2003 Gwent Police cleared a long standing backlog of court results. As part of the exercise they were able to check all of the IPs greater than a year old. There is now a system in place within the Phoenix bureau to make this a monthly task so that IPs more than 12 months old are checked to ensure that they are still legitimately outstanding.

1.4.8 A graph illustrating Gwent’s performance in the 12 months to February 2004 is shown below:



Note: The Y-Axis showing the percentage of A/S reports & Court Results input within given time periods shows a maximum of 90% to clearly show the performance of the Force in relation to the target set by the performance indicators of the ACPO Compliance Strategy.
 The dotted line between Nov 03 and Jan 04 for the Number of IPs has been included to show the trend during the period, as PITO have been unable to provide IP statistics for Dec 03.

1.5 Conclusions

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

Orange - Evidence of effective activity covering some areas, but concerns in others. No better than fair – typically below average - result trends. Performance not on target and not improving sufficiently.

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 is concerned that the force is not benefiting from the installation of the NSPIS custody system, and the input of arrest summons (A/S) reports is worse than it was 12 months ago. It has been reported that approximately 20% of newly created A/S reports are not transferring to the PNC. These A/S records are having to be entered manually by the Force which is impacting diversely on their ability to achieve the national ACPO target.
- There remains some concern that Gwent Police is one of the worst performing Forces in England and Wales for inputting court results. It is acknowledged that

Gwent have cleared a long standing backlog of court results, which will have had a tremendous effect on their performance during that period of remedial work. The signs of improvement in this area are very much in their infancy, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary remains to be convinced that this recovery is sustainable.

- One of the outcomes to the force of clearing the backlog of court results has been its ability to reduce its impending prosecutions by 43% over a 12 month period. Gwent Police are commended for this achievement.
- There has been no independent auditing conducted of PNC activity within the Force for some time (at least 2 years).
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has found weaknesses in all six sections of the protocols.
- Her Majesty's Inspector is concerned that the Force has not made any progress towards some of the recommendations made in previous national HMIC reports into the PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, as outlined in Appendices B to E. Issues identified within this report as areas for improvement coincide with recommendations in previous reports where no progress has been made.

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, 1st Report, *published 2001*
- HMIC Report – 'PNC Data Quality and Timeliness, 2nd 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 The pre-read material as requested by the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor showed that Gwent Police had held PNC Steering Group (PSG) meetings in October and November 2003 and another was held during the week of the visit. No meeting had been organised for over two years prior to October 2003. The October minutes also indicated that the DCC proposed only to chair the PSG on a short term basis.
- 2.1.2 A number of earlier reports by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, including the thematic report 'On the Record' highlighted the crucial role of ACPO involvement on PNC Steering Groups. This was, in fact, one of the few areas of consistency in forces who were seen as performing well in earlier inspections and its importance cannot really be over emphasised.
- 2.1.3 Whilst recognising the conflicting demands placed on Chief Officers and the constraints on their time, their role in driving PNC is vital to the Force's overall performance in this area.
- 2.1.4 It was encouraging to learn that the A/S Performance Indicators are broken down on a divisional level and circulated to the members of the PSG and the Divisional Commanders. However, these statistics are presented in a format which does not facilitate the easy interpretation of trends or comparisons of performance between the four divisions.
- 2.1.5 It was reported to the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor during discussions that senior management were not aware of the national picture as regards PNC, and in particular how Gwent Police are performing against the nationally set ACPO targets. Every police force is sent the nationally produced statistics on a monthly basis by PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation). Whilst it is recognised that in the past these statistics were not easily interpreted, they have recently been enhanced and are now provided in an easy to read chart format. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are aware of police forces who abstract the relevant detail and display it in a format where comparisons can be made over a time period and with other police forces of a similar size.

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- (a) The PNC Steering Group be revitalised with representation from relevant stakeholders within the Force enabling the Force to devise long term strategic objectives for its use of the PNC and provide a forum to discuss and action any performance issues to ensure that the Force is obtaining maximum benefit from the system. In order to improve and subsequently maintain the profile of PNC, the Steering Group should be chaired by an ACPO rank to ensure issues are addressed and carried through to completion**
- (b) The force distributes the PITO PNC statistics to the relevant stakeholders and include them with the locally prepared divisional PNC statistics displaying them in a format that will enable trends to be identified and comparisons made.**

2.2 Policy and Strategy

2.2.1 With regard to policy and strategy, the inspection covered a number of areas that warrant a review. These can be described under four broad headings: PNC Strategy; Custody Policy, Communication, and Security and Data Protection Audits. 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 a force's information management strategy. However, currently at Gwent Police there is no PNC strategy document.

2.2.2.2 A formalised strategy document, covering topics such as the operational use of the PNC, training, and security would provide a framework for continued improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of PNC usage. It would also allow the Force to give 'ownership' of issues to individuals or departments, and generate a more proactive approach to PNC. Importantly, it would help to ensure that the Force is getting a maximum return on its investment in the system and that officers' gain most benefit from the information which is stored on it.

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Gwent Police urgently considers a formally documented strategy for PNC, either a PNC Strategy in its own right or incorporated into a local Information Management Strategy (See Recommendation 2 – Appendix E). The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.

2.2.3 Custody Policy

- 2.2.3.1 The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor was disappointed to find that although there is an Information and Procedures document, the review date is 1st April 2002. A number of the procedures referred to within the document have changed as a result of the NSPIS Custody and Case Preparation systems which have recently been established within the Force. In particular, it was highlighted during the focus groups that police officers were not aware of the issues surrounding the linking of a custody record to an existing PNC record. If a PNC record is not linked to the custody record the prior to the data transfer, the transfer process will automatically create a duplicate PNC record, the Phoenix Bureau then has to merge the two PNC records.
- 2.2.3.2 The lack of a custody policy diminishes the ability of the Force to implement accountability in respect of the submission of the SID. From discussions in the focus groups it was evident that police officers and police staff were not aware that there were serious issues concerning the timely submission of the SID. A number reported that they were not aware that the form should be faxed to the Phoenix bureau in order to speed its delivery.
- 2.2.3.3 The force does have a document on the intranet which details the completion of a SID, but it was apparent from discussions that police officer's were not aware of its existence and therefore unlikely to refer to it.

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that a force policy detailing the custody process including the completion of the SID and the paper SID is published and enforced to ensure consistency of process. The policy must include the responsibilities of officers and police staff at all levels, including custody suites, arresting officers and the Phoenix Bureau.

2.2.4 Communication

2.2.4.1 Gwent Police has established a sub group to the PSG to deal with issues around PNC of a professional interest. The members of the sub group include representatives from data protection, information security, training, call handling and Force Intelligence Bureau. HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors are aware of a number of forces throughout England and Wales where similar sub groups are employed to implement the strategic decisions from the PSG along with assisting with the dissemination of any changes made to the PNC and to communicate PSG decisions and pass items to the PSG for discussion at the appropriate level.

2.2.4.2 Unfortunately, during discussions at the focus groups it was apparent that little was known about the existence of this PNC sub group. In order for the Force to make maximum use of the group it needs to encourage the dissemination of information to divisional level and that it is advertised so that personnel throughout the force make optimum use of the facility.

2.2.5 Security

2.2.5.1 Whilst there were areas of good practice in relation to overall IT security at Gwent Police, PNC security was viewed as an area of concern by the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor. The key factors contributing to the weakness of security within the Force were the allocation of responsibility and the absence of formal processes for granting and removing access to the system.

2.2.5.2 Gwent Police has in place a robust IT security policy which incorporates PNC and is regularly reviewed. All probationary police officers are given a half day input on data protection and information security. Unfortunately, there is no such training for police staff. The induction pack includes documents on data protection and information security, but there is no formal dissemination of the information, it is reliant on the individual supervisor cascading the information.

2.2.5.3 During the inspection it was noted that the granting and removal of PNC access rests with one person, the PNC Trainer. Furthermore, there is no independent auditing of the actions taken by this person. Whilst HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors do not question the integrity of the PNC Trainer, this absence of independent monitoring exposes the Force to an increased risk of inappropriate or unauthorised access being granted to the PNC.

2.2.5.4 Moreover, there is no formal process in place for the removal of or for changes to be made to PNC access. The PNC Trainer relies on the weekly general orders to obtain the information regarding staffing changes. It is therefore possible that there are active PNC user accounts for people who have either left the Force or should have their access removed for other reasons, such as those on maternity leave or who are off due to long term sickness.

- 2.2.5.5 Another facility that Gwent Police are able to use to ensure that PNC user IDs are still current is the #SU transaction code which lists User IDs that have not been used for a time period specified by the administrator, e.g. 6 months. This facility had only been accessed twice in September 2003 and twice in December 2003 and at no other time in the previous 16 months. The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor is aware that the PNC Trainer only carries out this function on an ad hoc basis as it is claimed time restrictions prevent a more regular examination. A regular evaluation of the PNC User IDs is needed to support the effective management of PNC usage, it will ensure that staff have the appropriate access to the system and could be used to identify where refresher training is required.

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- (a) The Force reviews the training of data protection and information security for police staff with a view to formalising the process**
- (b) Independent monitoring of the actions in relation to granting and removing PNC access be implemented.**
- (c) The Force introduce a process to ensure that the person responsible for granting and removing PNC access is aware of all changes to personnel which may result in changes to their access levels in a timely manner.**
- (d) The Force introduce a policy to ensure that unused PNC User IDs are regularly reviewed and removed if no longer appropriate.**

- 2.2.5.6 Transaction monitoring is a function carried out by the Data Protection Office. Three transactions per day are validated by sending a standard form to the enquirer or PNC operator concerned requesting an explanation for the transaction being performed. The form must be signed off by the person's line manager prior to being returned to the Data Protection Office. Responses are reviewed by the Data Protection Officer who either files the check or may conduct further investigation.

- 2.2.5.7 However, the HMIC Compliance Auditor was concerned to learn that there had been no transaction monitoring carried out in Gwent Police for the past six months, apparently due to the facility being withdrawn through the local IT system. A reality check on the local system revealed that it did provide the information needed to follow up a transaction check, and it provided the information needed to ascertain the enquirer or updater through the NSPIS custody system. The transaction monitoring of PNC was to recommence during the week of the audit, but it was pointed out that this monitoring could have been carried out during the previous six month period using the Transaction Enquiry (#TE) facility on PNC. The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor was informed that the Data Protection Officer would be carrying out a retrospective transaction audit over the six months, although it would a smaller sample than the three per day.

2.2.6 Data Protection Audits

- 2.2.6.1 Data Protection audits are the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at Gwent Police. The DPO adopts good practice, as outlined in the ACPO Data Protection Manual, by producing an annual risk based strategic audit plan which has the PNC as its main focus. However, the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor questions the value of such a process as the DPO stated that no audit activity has taken place for two years due to a claimed lack of resources. In the current situation it is unlikely that that the Data Protection team will be able to instigate the 2004 plan.

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently review the situation within the Data Protection Unit to enable formal Data Protection Audits to be conducted against the PNC data. The PNC Code of Connectivity mandates the requirement for PNC Audits in accordance with Section 2 of the ACPO Manual for Data Protection Management.

2.3 People

2.3.1 PNC Awareness/Marketing

- 2.3.1.1 During the course of the inspection it became apparent that the levels of knowledge and understanding of the functionality of the PNC varied throughout the Force at all levels. In particular, meetings and focus groups showed that while the PNC basic enquiry facilities and VODS (Vehicle On-line Descriptive Search) were generally well known, other areas were less understood and officers' knowledge of the QUEST functionality varied. It is therefore likely that maximum benefit is not being gained from the PNC and, indeed, certain information is being lost.
- 2.3.1.2 Officers reported that information relating to enhancements to PNC in the past two years – such as the introduction of the insurance details and driving licence information - was communicated to them only when a check was being carried out either over the telephone or over the radio. There was no additional information given to them on these enhancements to the PNC, or of any restrictions on their use.
- 2.3.1.3 An effective PNC marketing policy administered through the PNC sub group would enable the focus of efforts and help ensure that the Force is gaining maximum return on it's investment in the system and that officers gain most benefit from the information which is stored on it. The marketing of PNC needs to be viewed as an ongoing process where marketing strategies are employed, such as posters and the PITO roadshow, to encourage interest and awareness in the PNC on a rolling programme basis
- 2.3.1.4 During Focus Groups and interviews, many staff reported difficulty when attempting to obtain PNC checks over the telephone. There are risks that relevant information is not exchanged between the officer and PNC operator, for example, the police officer

would not be aware of the existence of a Wanted/Missing report, if a PNC check was not carried out in the appropriate circumstances. Staff reported that operational staff were not provided with access to PNC, access was generally held centrally. It is therefore likely that maximum benefit is not being gained from the PNC.

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- (a) Adopts a structured approach to marketing, by way of a formal marketing or communication strategy, ensuring that awareness amongst operational staff is raised to a suitable level.**
- (b) Satisfy its self that there are adequate resources available to provide the all the information from the PNC (including QUEST and VODS searches). It maybe possible to achieve this by broadening the access to PNC across more staff within the organisation.**

2.3.2 Training

- 2.3.2.1 The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor was sent a copy of the Gwent Police generic Training Strategy. The strategy is still in draft format. The training department is required to produce an annual plan, however, this is the cause of some tensions between other departments throughout the force as it does mean that training provision is somewhat inflexible. The training department find that setting the plan is difficult as they are not updated by the HR department on the personnel changes in the units throughout the year. Evidence was provided during the inspection that there was no process to prioritise operational staff where access to the PNC was required as part of the job role. In a small force, such as Gwent, where they may not have the corporate resilience of the larger forces, the timing of training courses and the allocation of places needs to be more in tune with operational needs so that job roles are targeted rather than individual personnel requests.
- 2.3.2.2 Gwent Police Training Department has developed a PNC training website which could contribute to the marketing of PNC if more police officers and police staff had access to the intranet.
- 2.3.2.3 Gwent Police only employ Centrex accredited PNC trainers which is recognised as good practice. Furthermore, the competence of all staff attending PNC training courses is assessed before they are given access to the system.
- 2.3.2.4 It was reported during the focus groups and interviews that the availability of PNC training has been limited in the past 12 months. Gwent Police has now invested in the employment of an additional part-time accredited PNC trainer. This should increase the ability of the force to deliver PNC training, for the duration of the contract, but the Force needs to establish a longer term solution to it's shortage of

PNC trainers. The Force may also wish to consider instigating an agreement to utilise other forces for the delivery of PNC training.

2.3.2.5 The force provides an input of PNC to their Probationer Constables, however the presentation is not given by a qualified PNC Trainer. There is a risk that the trainer delivering the input may not have an up to date knowledge of the PNC, or be able to deal with some questions that may arise. It is particularly important to provide expertise to ensure that new officers are fully aware of the facilities provided by the PNC and responsibilities they have to ensure it is used properly.

2.3.2.3 At the end of each course, a questionnaire is provided to students to enable them to give feedback on the quality of training received. However, there is no longer term evaluation with students being asked to provide feedback once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice. It is therefore possible that opportunities are being missed by the PNC Trainers to improve their training delivery and design.

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- (a) Reviews the PNC training plan quarterly so that adjustments can be made in line with the operational requirements.**
- (b) Considers who delivers the PNC training to the Police Probationers so that it is received with the maximum impact.**
- (c) introduce a post-training questionnaire for students once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice.**

2.3.3 Quality Assurance

2.3.3.1 During the inspection HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors learnt that the Phoenix bureau supervisor quality assures 100% of the PNC input of inexperienced staff and 10% of the skilled PNC updaters. The results of the quality checks are recorded on a spreadsheet so the evidence is documented should it be needed for the appraisal system. A reality check of 20 randomly selected A/S revealed only one error (5%) by the bureau staff but three errors (15%) from the police officers – two of which were incorrect offence details.

2.3.3.2 It was reported to the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor that the paper Source Input Document (SID) produced by the NSPIS custody system is not 'user friendly'. The police officers do not find it easy to complete as a result of the layout of the form – some of the data boxes are not self explanatory; the form will be returned by the Phoenix bureau if the details are unclear. The Phoenix bureau themselves are not able to navigate through the form efficiently as the information sequence does not follow the screen sequence on the PNC. The form constantly has to be turned back

and forwards to obtain the details in the correct order. Whilst it is recognised that the SID is a nationally developed form, the Force are urged to progress this issue through the national user group.

2.3.3.3 The Phoenix bureau staff are having to quality assure information submitted by the arresting officer whereas the outdated Information and Procedural Guide puts the onus on the officer's supervisor. Without a robust procedural guide and support from the senior management team it is difficult to enforce accountability.

2.3.3.4 The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor sees the quality checking being carried by the Phoenix bureau as good practice.

2.3.4 The Phoenix Bureau

2.3.4.1 During discussions in interviews and discussion groups it was learnt that a number of the staff in the Phoenix Bureau move onto internally advertised post within Gwent Police as they are able to achieve a higher grade. It is obviously very costly for the force to train a person in the updating of the PNC, the training course is over 15 days on top of which there will be the experiential training time when the new recruit is getting up to speed on the processes and terminology needed to update the PNC accurately. Therefore, a review of the grading structure within the Phoenix bureau to ensure that the training periods are recognised and rewarded by the job evaluation process may reduce these retraining costs to the Force and increase the long term efficiency of the bureau.

2.3.4.2 In addition, all the Phoenix bureau operators used to work on directly connected PNC terminals which provided a stable connection. A number of these have now been removed and have been replaced by a standard interface connection that is regularly losing its connection to the PNC. For people who work on a system all day this is very frustrating and uneconomical as there is little for them to do if they do not have access to a PNC terminal. As mentioned before with the printing of the court results, correcting the fault does not appear to be a priority with the IS department. There is scope to improve the information flow between the IS Department and the Bureau when faults are rectified.

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review:

- (a) The police staff grading structure within the Phoenix bureau to ensure that the Force minimises its retraining costs and increases the efficiency of the bureau**
- (b) The PNC links via the standard interface to ensure that a high level of service is provided to users.**

2.4 Partnerships and Resources

2.4.1 The relationship Gwent Police has with their local magistrates and crown courts appears to be fragile. The Phoenix Bureau has documented the delay in receiving

court results from both the magistrates and the crown courts. The average number of days taken for the magistrates courts register to arrive at Gwent Police between June 2003 and February 2004 is 10. It is a similar position with the court registers from the crown courts.

- 2.4.2 The HMIC Compliance Auditor is aware of a number of forces throughout England and Wales who have taken a variety of steps to negotiate with their local magistrates and crown courts for the timely transfer of court results. This has generally been achieved by developing relations with the courts through the Local Criminal Justice Boards. In addition, recommendation 6 (a) of the HMIC PNC Data Quality and Timeliness 1st Report, produced in 2001, actively encouraged Forces to develop good relations with the relevant stakeholders within this area, see appendix D of this report.

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force improves its liaison with the local Magistrates and Crown Courts. This should ensure that the Court personnel are aware of the expectations of the Police with regard to inputting of court results onto the PNC and improve the speed of the results being sent.

- 2.4.3 The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor suggests that the Force develops its relationships with Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPA) to assist in achieving the target of 90% for Arrest/Summons reports being entered within one day. Currently, the Force often first hears of a prosecution by an NPPA when the court results are received by the Phoenix bureau. This affects the A/S figures for the Force. Nationally, NPPA prosecutions account for less than one in ten of all prosecutions and whilst this forms a small percentage of the total in Gwent Police, inputting them at the correct stage of the process would assist the Force in achieving the 90% target.

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that options be explored to improve the relationship with Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs), to ensure that NPPAs are aware of the expectations of the Police with regard to data relevant for input to PNC.

2.5 Processes

- 2.5.1 In terms of processes, HMIC PNC Compliance Auditors found a number of issues at Gwent Police which caused some concern. These relate to the submission of the

SID; the submission of ad hoc information; the warrant process; and the input of bail under Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003).

2.5.2 Submission of the PNC Source Input Document

2.5.2.1 The feedback from the focus groups was that officers are generally not aware of their responsibility to submit the SID within 24 hours. The NSPIS custody system creates the A/S record for those who are dealt with through the custody units but police officers need to ensure that the forms are completed and faxed to the Phoenix bureau within 24 hours where the person is summonsed for a recordable offence and not processed through the custody unit. The lack of an up to date custody policy as discussed in paragraph 2.2.3.2 and recommendation 3 reduces the likelihood of enforcing accountability in this respect. In addition, the lack of knowledge concerning the benefits of updating and subsequently using the information stored within the PNC will not encourage police officers to provide quality data in a timely manner. The Force is therefore encouraged to market the benefits of the PNC in line with recommendation 8.

2.5.3 Submission of Ad Hoc Intelligence onto PNC

2.5.3.1 In relation to ad hoc² intelligence updates, for example, a change of address or the use of another name, there did not appear to be a process for updating the information onto the PNC. Police officers within Gwent Police update the local intelligence system via the intranet with those details, but there is no procedure to consider similarly updating the PNC if appropriate.

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force introduces a procedure to update the PNC with ad hoc information in order to improve the quality of information on the system. Implementation of a formal procedure should be accompanied by sufficient marketing of the process.

2.5.4 The Warrant Process

2.5.4.1 The administration of warrants within Gwent Police is by the Warrants Department based at Maindee Police Station. However, although the Warrants Department hold the paperwork and carry out a PNC check on the named person they do not update the PNC with the wanted/missing report. To update the PNC the warrant department sends a 'message switch' to the PNCB with all the relevant details. To cancel the warrant the police officer has to inform both the Warrants Department who will cancel it off the administration of justice system, and also create and send a 'message switch' to the PNCB who will cancel it off the PNC.

2.5.4.2 The HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor was provided with anecdotal evidence that the message switch to the PNCB cancelling the warrant is not always sent, yet the

² Information applicable for update to PNC that originates from a source other than the creation of an arrest/summons report

Warrants Department are provided with the information. The additional training needed to update and cancel the warrant on the PNC is minimal given that the personnel are already PNC enquiry trained. It would be more efficient operationally for the Force to deal with the administration from one department.

Recommendation 12

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews the warrant process with the objective of streamlining the procedure to ensure that warrants are entered and cancelled on the PNC.

2.5.5 Bail Input Under Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003)

2.5.5.1 Gwent Police do not currently record cases that are subject to Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003). This act provide the police with the power to take fingerprints and non-intimate DNA samples from persons detained at a police station for a recordable offence. It is therefore possible that offenders are being brought into custody who are already subject to Sections 9 and 10 bail. Consequently, the arresting officer is unaware of this information, and the custody sergeant has to make bail decisions without this vital information. The Force is also losing the opportunity to take full advantage of these powers to maximise the potential advances in forensic science in the detection of crime. If the taking of such samples is done at an early stage of the custody process, this will remove any perceived problems relating to bail. Part of the procedures will need to address the creation of a PNC record to obtain an Arrest Summons number to allow the fingerprints and DNA to be entered onto the respective national databases. This includes the creation of PNC records for persons released on bail.

Recommendation 13

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force produces a policy and procedures in order that they are able to record persons subject to Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) onto the PNC.

2.6 Results

2.6.1 It is of concern to note that Gwent Police is inputting 65% of A/S reports within 24 hours in February 2004, whereas a year ago that figure was 71.5%. The Force has introduced the NSPIS custody system that should have improved their figures once the initial teething problems had been overcome. It has been reported to the HMIC PNC Compliance Auditor that approximately 20% of the A/S records created by the NSPIS custody system fail to transfer to the PNC and have to be created manually. The Force is aware of the problem but need to solve what is reported as a technical problem to ensure that they are able to achieve the ACPO target of 90% of A/S reports being entered within 24 hours. The Force may gain further lessons from other forces who have experienced similar technical problems.

- 2.6.2 Performance with regard to the input of court results has been poor over the previous 12 months in Gwent Police. There has been an improvement in the percentage of court results entered within 7 days over the past four months with the figure reaching 15.9% for February 2004. The Phoenix bureau have had to deal with a substantial backlog of court results over the previous 6 months, they are now in a position to enter the court results as they are received by the bureau. However, the Information Systems Department within Gwent Police are adding to the delay by failing to print the results in the bureau as soon as they are electronically transferred to the force by the magistrates courts. It is disappointing that again a technical solution has not been sought which could improve the Force's ability to achieve the ACPO target.

Recommendation 14

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently pursues technical solutions so that:

- (a) All records that are created by the NSPIS custody system are transferred to the PNC.**
 - (b) The magistrate court results are printed in the Phoenix bureau as soon as they are electronically transferred from the courts.**
- 2.6.3 The number of Impending Prosecutions (IPs) has been reduced by 42% over the last 12 months from 5,854 to 3,395. The Force is commended for achieving this reduction. Gwent Police employed 5 temporary members of police staff to enter the A/S reports over a 6 month period releasing their experienced Phoenix Bureau staff to concentrate on entering court results. As a result of that work the IPs have also been reduced and all IPs of over a year old have been reviewed to ensure that they are legitimately outstanding. The Force is now in a position to undertake that process of reviewing the outstanding IPs on a monthly basis.
- 2.6.4 A graph illustrating these figures can be seen in Section 1 of this Report at paragraph 1.4.8.
- 2.6.5 The inputting of keywords is an area of concern. This process is carried out within the PNCB, where there has been a police staff member off on long term sickness. Once the staffing levels return to normal, the Force will need to employ measures to ensure that all outstanding offences are keyworded.
- 2.6.6 The evidence from the focus groups is that VODS is known as an investigative search facility but less is known about the capabilities of QUEST. The PITO PNC usage statistics for Gwent Police support this statement. The average number of QUEST searches carried out by Gwent Police over the previous 12 months is 28 per month, whereas Wiltshire Constabulary (who are in the same PNC family of forces as Gwent) carried out an average of 74 per month. Police officers could be

more easily encouraged to provide accurate and timely information through their submission of the SID if they were able to see returns arising from their information.

- 2.6.7 Another area of concern is that of the input of court bail either conditional or unconditional. Court bail within the Gwent Police area is not being entered onto the PNC. There are a number of operational policing advantages for both Gwent Police and the other forces throughout the United Kingdom for this information to be input onto PNC within that 24 hour target.

Recommendation 15

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force complies with the provisions of the National PNC Manual and previous HMIC reports to input Bail Conditions onto the PNC.

- 2.6.8 The recommendations outlined so far in this report aim to improve the quality of the data being input and to assist Gwent Police to achieve the targets of 90% Arrest/ Summons within 24 hours and 100% of court results being entered within 72 hours of receipt from the courts. They should also provide the force with opportunities to maximise the use of the PNC and increase the levels of awareness of officers regarding the investigative capabilities of the system.

Appendix A

A Summary of Good Practice within Gwent Police:

- Gwent Police has a robust IT security policy that incorporates the PNC, which is regularly reviewed. (Paragraph 2.2.5.2)
- Transaction monitoring checks are signed off by the person's line manager prior to being returned to the Data Protection Office. (Paragraph 2.2.5.6)
- Gwent Police only employ Centrex accredited PNC trainers to deliver the courses. The competence of all staff attending PNC training courses is assessed before they are given access to the system. (Paragraph 2.3.2.3)
- Quality assurance of PNC updates within the Phoenix bureau is carried out. (Paragraph 2.3.3.4)
- Impending Prosecutions of over a year old are monitored on a monthly basis. (Paragraph 2.6.3)

Summary of Recommendations for Gwent Police

Recommendation 1

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- (a) The PNC Steering Group be revitalised with representation from relevant stakeholders within the Force enabling the Force to devise long term strategic objectives for its use of the PNC and provide a forum to discuss and action any performance issues to ensure that the Force is obtaining maximum benefit from the system. In order to improve and subsequently maintain the profile of PNC, the Steering Group should be chaired by an ACPO rank to ensure issues are addressed and carried through to completion
- (b) The force distributes the PITO PNC statistics to the relevant stakeholders and include them with the locally prepared divisional PNC statistics displaying them in a format that will enable trends to be identified and comparisons made.

(Paragraph 2.1.5)

Recommendation 2

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that Gwent Police urgently considers a formally documented strategy for PNC, either a PNC Strategy in it's own right or incorporated into a local Information Management Strategy (See Recommendation 2 – Appendix E). The document should be supported by an action plan covering the recommendations of this report and all previous reports where no progress has been made. The action plan should contain specific objectives, to be attained within certain timescales and ownership of issues to be attributable to individuals.

(Paragraph 2.2.2.2)

Recommendation 3

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that a force policy detailing the custody process including the completion of the SID and the paper SID is published and enforced to ensure consistency of process. The policy must include the responsibilities of officers and police staff at all levels, including custody suites, arresting officers and the Phoenix Bureau.

(Paragraph 2.2.3.3)

Recommendation 4

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that:

- (a) The Force reviews the training of data protection and information security for police staff with a view to formalising the process
- (c) Independent monitoring of the actions in relation to granting and removing PNC access be implemented.
- (d) The Force introduce a process to ensure that the person responsible for granting and removing PNC access is aware of all changes to personnel which may result in changes to their access levels in a timely manner.
- (e) The Force introduce a policy to ensure that unused PNC User IDs are regularly reviewed and removed if no longer appropriate.

(Paragraph 2.2.5.5)

Recommendation 5

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently review the situation within the Data Protection Unit to enable formal Data Protection Audits to be conducted against the PNC data. The PNC Code of Connectivity mandates the requirement for PNC Audits in accordance with Section 2 of the ACPO Manual for Data Protection Management.

(Paragraph 2.2.6.1)

Recommendation 6

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- (a) Adopts a structured approach to marketing, by way of a formal marketing or communication strategy ensuring that awareness amongst operational staff is raised to a suitable level
- (b) Satisfies its self that there are adequate resources available to provide all the information from PNC (including QUEST and VODS searches). This maybe possible to achieve by broadening the access to PNC across more staff within the organisation.

(Paragraph 2.3.1.4)

Recommendation 7

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force:

- (a) Reviews the PNC training plan quarterly so that adjustments can be made in line with operational requirements
- (b) Considers who delivers the PNC training to the Police Probationers so that it is received with the maximum impact

- (c) Introduce a post-training questionnaire for students once they have had the opportunity to put their training into practice. (Paragraph 2.3.2.3)

Recommendation 8

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force review:

- (a) The police staff grading structure within the Phoenix bureau to ensure that the Force minimises its retraining cost and increases the efficiency of the bureau
- (b) The PNC links via the standard interface to ensure that a high level of service is provided to users.

(Paragraph 2.3.4.2)

Recommendation 9

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the force improves its liaison with the local Magistrates and Crown Courts. This should ensure that the Court personnel are aware of the expectations of the Police with regard to inputting of court results onto the PNC and improve the speed of the results being sent.

(Paragraph 2.4.2)

Recommendation 10

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that options be explored to improve the relationship with Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs), to ensure that NPPAs are aware of the expectations of the Police with regard to data relevant for input to PNC.

(Paragraph 2.4.3)

Recommendation 11

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force introduces a procedure to update the PNC with ad hoc information in order to improve the quality of information on the system. Implementation of a formal procedure should be accompanied by sufficient marketing of the process.

(Paragraph 2.5.3.1)

Recommendation 12

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force reviews the warrant process with the objective of streamlining the procedure to ensure that warrants are entered and cancelled on the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.5.4.2)

Recommendation 13

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force produces a policy and procedures in order that they are able to record persons subject to Sections 9 and 10 of the Criminal Justice Act (2003) onto the PNC.

(Paragraph 2.5.5.1)

Recommendation 14

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force urgently pursues technical solutions so that:

- (a) All records that are created by the NSPIS custody system are transferred to the PNC
- (b) The magistrate court results are printed in the Phoenix bureau as soon as they are electronically transferred from the courts.

(Paragraph 2.6.2)

Recommendation 15

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recommends that the Force complies with the provisions of the National PNC Manual and previous HMIC reports to input Bail Conditions onto the PNC.

(Paragrahp 2.6.7)

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 – 1st 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 – 2nd 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.