

**Inspection of
Western BCU
North Wales Police
March 2005**

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HMIC Wales and Central England Region**

1. The inspection of the Western BCU, North Wales Police was carried out on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary by a staff officer for BCU inspections, Chief Superintendent Marcus Beale, between 7 and 11 March 2005. He was assisted during this inspection by Chief Superintendent Peter Moyes, Nottinghamshire Police, and Superintendent Trevor Morris, South Wales Police.

Force and BCU Overview

2. North Wales Police is responsible for policing a large geographical area, which is home to approximately 668,303 people. The Force covers large rural regions, some busy towns, two cities and the Snowdonia National Park. There is also the ferry port on Anglesey, a number of significant tourist areas, and the industrial regions of the eastern side, which are experiencing some recent growth.
3. The Force is divided into three basic command units (BCUs), each headed by a chief superintendent who is responsible for the overall policing and management of the area. Each BCU is split into a number of sectors - each headed by an inspector. These sectors are responsible for local policing in the community.
4. The Western BCU is responsible for policing the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd, including the Snowdonia National Park and Holyhead port. The Western BCU covers 807,546 acres with a population of 182,900 people, of which 1900 are from a visible ethnic minority. Travelling considerable distances to remote areas in response to emergency calls, as well as for routine policing, poses quite a challenge for this BCU. In addition, there are over 3.5 million visitors attracted to the area every year and 4 million passengers who pass through to use the port of Holyhead. Tourism and agriculture provide the main employment within the area, alongside some industry, such as Anglesey Aluminium. Generally wages are low, compared to the average for Wales, and unemployment relatively high at approximately 5%. Consequently there are 13 Communities First areas to be found across the BCU. Bangor has a well know university that attracts 11,000 students to the town.
5. To police its area the Western BCU has 369 police officers, 45 police staff, 18 PCSOs and 34 specials. It has a devolved budget of £14.2m for 2004-05. The Western BCU is led by a chief superintendent and senior management team consisting of an operations superintendent and chief inspector, a detective chief inspector, a HR manager and a business manager. Local policing is delivered through six sectors, each led by an inspector.

Performance

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

6. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the local authority, police, health, fire service supported by other key agencies and voluntary groups of the Western BCU area have joined together to form Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). For the Western BCU there are two CSPs, the Gwynedd Community Safety Partnership and the Ynys Mon Community Safety Partnership. These partnerships are just coming to the end of their 2002-05 strategies, based on a local audit conducted in late 2001, to reduce crime and disorder within their areas.

7. The 2002-05 Gwynedd Community Safety Partnership strategy set the following priorities:
 - Reducing the crime and disorder levels in town centres
 - To improve the quality of life so that people do not live in fear of crime and disorder
 - Reduce anti-social behaviour in communities
 - Meeting the challenge of preventing young people from offending and re-offending
 - Dealing with the hidden problem of domestic violence
 - To break the connection between the misuse of alcohol/drugs/solvents and crime and disorder
 - To create an environment which prevents the theft of and from vehicles
 - To ensure that home, work and travel are without risk of death and injury

8. Whilst the 2002-05 Ynys Mon Crime and Disorder Strategy set the following priorities:
 - To reduce the level of drug-related crimes on Ynys Mon
 - To reduce the levels of violence in public spaces and to offer appropriate support to victims
 - To reduce levels of domestic violence and to offer appropriate support to victims
 - To secure a safe environment for all users of the public highway on Ynys Mon
 - To reduce young people's involvement in crime as victims and offenders
 - To reduce anti-social behaviour
 - To reduce theft-related crime
 - To reduce incidents of vehicle crime on Ynys Mon

9. The inspection team was supplied with minutes of the various meetings that take place under the auspices of the Gwynedd and Ynys Mon Community Safety Partnerships to progress their various priorities. These clearly show that the Western BCU staff are regular and active participants at these meetings. They also show that there are opportunities to become much more focused on delivery of the priorities committed to in the strategy. From the minutes it is not possible to establish whether the partnership is likely to achieve any of its 2002-05 priorities or not, and nor did interviews or focus groups with Western BCU staff and partners shed any further light on current performance. They did show that there is obvious accountability for the allocating and correct spending of grant money, although it was unclear whether the intended benefits from any initiative materialised as there was no documenting of any results analysis.

10. The inspection team was also given sight of the recently completed audits of crime and disorder within Gwynedd and Ynys Mon, comprehensive documents that when combined with local consultations allow the partnerships to set their new strategies for 2005-08. These audits would have been much richer had they benefited from a broader source base, rather than being so reliant on police crime data. It is understood that some technical challenges remain in extracting some of the data from some partners, but reasons emanating from a lack of understanding or commitment to Section 17 responsibilities or the data sharing protocol are issues the partnership would be wise to address with some urgency. The inspection team would also urge the partnership to compare its performance to its 'most similar CDRP' family, rather

than just other Welsh local authority areas, as these provide a means of comparison with other areas that are very similar to their own. These comparisons show both Gwynedd and Ynys Mon Community Safety Partnerships performing just better than the average for their family – there are no grounds for complacency as other similar areas have secured lower levels of crime.

11. The limited value placed upon partnership working, both by Western BCU staff and key partners was of some concern. Quotes to illustrate this point include “it’s a real challenge to make partnership working effective and accountable”, the “structures are too cumbersome”, “there are too many meetings with no obvious outcome” and, perhaps most damning, “specifically I can’t link what has happened in a partnership meeting to any reduction in crime and disorder”.
12. Overall the inspection team was not convinced that there has been a strong partnership commitment to strategically reduce crime across Gwynedd or Ynys Mon. The partnerships have not energised stakeholders to co-operate, collaborate or to come together in a structured way to disrupt, prevent or deter criminality. Internally, the Western BCU has focused very heavily on detecting crime, with great success, but of itself does not usually lead to sustained reductions in crime. The focus on detections was demonstrated to the inspection team with an instance where a sector was seeking praise for achieving an 88% detection rate for violent crime, yet was unaware that violent crime had risen by 30% over the same period.
13. To contextualise this issue recorded crime has been reduced significantly in the area covered by the BCU. There was no evidence however that partnership activities were contributing to this outcome.
14. There are genuine signs though that partnership working in Gwynedd and Ynys Mon is about to change. The inspection team found that all partners are fully aware of the systemic, structural and cultural flaws that have led to relatively ineffective partnership working in recent years. There is genuine energy amongst partners to change and some plans are emerging about future structures, performance management and accountability mechanisms, which are welcomed. The inspection team would encourage all partners to grasp this opportunity to create co-operative working practices that overtly contribute to crime and disorder reduction, and are keen to hear of progress during subsequent interactions with the BCU and the Force.
15. Even so, the inspection team was impressed by several local initiatives:
 - The “Guidance Notes for Event Organisers” has been developed with the local authority safety committee, and now is also adopted by the fire and ambulance service. This provides clear guidance to event organisers about their responsibilities and, amongst other things, when policing is required and at what cost. This approach has yielded income in excess of £250k during 2004-05.
 - The Western BCU’s public protection team has a seconded probation officer, paid for from BCU funds, to help manage the various ‘dangerous’ offenders within the community.
 - There is a community safety forum at Dolgellau involving the fire service, ambulance, Gwynedd Council, community beat managers (CBMs) and others, which is generating considerable success in addressing very local problems. A

similar approach in Porthmadog is also having a positive effect on addressing local problems and consequently improving the reputation of local policing.

Performance against Operational Targets

16. The Western BCU performance plan for 2004-05 is drawn from the North Wales Police 2004-05 local policing plan, putting the various organisational and operational priorities into the local context. Table 1 below sets out the main Western BCU local policing plan performance indicators for 2004-2005 and their performance achievements 'year to date' (December 2004).
17. Of the 14 local target and priority areas for 2004-05, with three quarters of the performance year complete, the Western BCU is ahead of target in all but two areas. Clearly this level of performance ensures the Western BCU is a major contributor to the North Wales Police overall performance.

Table 1: Western BCU performance against 2004-05 local policing plan targets – year to date (Dec 04)

Target Summary April to December 2004	Western	
	Target	Actual
% arrests of stop/searches by ethnicity - white origin	-	18.2%
% arrests of stop/searches by ethnicity - other origin	-	28.6%
VAP sanctioned detections by ethnicity - white origin	-	27.2%
VAP sanctioned detections by ethnicity - other origin	-	31.4%
All Crime/1000 pop – progress	-	-12.1%
Burglary Dwelling/1000 h'hlds progress	<i>Local</i>	-15%
	<i>National</i>	Maintain
Violent Crime/1000 pop – progress	-	16.5%
Robberies/1000 pop – progress	-0.05	-28.6%
Vehicle Crime/1000 pop – progress	<i>Local</i>	-10%
	<i>National</i>	Maintain
Life threatening crime/1000 pop – progress	-	38.5%
Gun Crime/1000 pop – progress	-	0.0%
All Crime - % det - all detections	0.35	47.9%
All Crime - % det - sanctioned detections	-	29.3%
Burglary Dwelling - % det	0.3	30.9%
Violent Crime - % det	0.75	80.4%
Robberies - % det	-	76.9%
Vehicle Crime - % det	0.15	23.7%
Class A drugs supply	0.1	28.6%
Heroin supply	-	31.8%
Cocaine supply	-	36.4%
Racially aggravated crime - % det	0.6	47.0%
Hate Motivated Incidents/Crimes	-	28.6%
RTC/100 million vehicle km	-	-
RTC/1000 pop	-0.06	-7.1%
Child RTC/1000 pop	-0.04	-33.8%
Motorcycle/1000 pop	-	-15.4%
999 calls in 10 seconds		
Non 999 calls in 30 seconds		
Immediate response in 20 minutes		
Sickness hours lost - per police officer	60.6	73.7
Sickness hours lost - per police staff	55.5	43.4

Time taken to enter source documentation onto PNC	90% in 24hrs	93.1%
Time between court result and entry onto PNC		

Source – North Wales Police

18. It is clear from this table that the Western BCU is making a significant and valuable contribution to the overall performance of North Wales Police, with particularly good performance for reducing burglary dwelling (32%), vehicle crime (29%) and robberies (32%), with only violent crime being of concern with a 16% rise. The Western BCU's performance in detecting violent crimes (80%), burglary (31%), vehicle crime (23%) and robbery (80%) is exceptional, as is their overall detection rate of 48% - the best in England and Wales. It is also pleasing to see injury road traffic collisions reducing. This performance is exceptional, performance that is the product of good leadership and strong systems (discussed later within this report), and performance that all the staff of the Western BCU should be proud of. The only performance area of concern, which will be discussed in detail later within this report, in police officer sickness absence – it is comparatively high which is relatively unusually for such a high-performing BCU.
19. It is also valuable to set a BCU's performance in context with its own performance the previous year. Tables 2 and 3 below shows the changes in recorded crime levels and detection rates from April 2004 to January 2005 when compared to the previous year.

Table 2: Western BCU year on year crime reduction performance

<i>Crime Type</i>	<i>Number of offences</i>	<i>Offence per 1000 pop/h 'hold</i>	<i>BCU family average</i>	<i>Rank in BCU family</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Total Crime	10,528	56.92	66.99	1 out of 15	-13.10%
Domestic Burglary	274	3.54	6.26	1 out of 15	-36.13%
Robbery	15	0.08	0.22	2 out of 15	-25%
Vehicle Crime	861	4.65	6.95	1 out of 15	-29.83%
Violent Crime	2764	14.94	15.01	5 out of 15	+15.07%

Source – HMIC performance matrix

20. Table 2 repeats the themes drawn out of table 1, although it is worth highlighting that 'all crime' fell by 13% during this period, which translates into nearly 1600 less people suffering the trauma of being the victim of a crime. These reductions are built upon a 36% fall in burglary of people's homes, and a 29% reduction in vehicle crime – in both cases the Western BCU is recording the lowest levels of this type of crime within its 'most similar' BCU family. This is tremendous performance, and all involved should be congratulated

Table 3: Western BCU's year on year crime investigation performance

<i>Crime Type</i>	<i>Total Detections</i>	<i>Detection Rate (%)</i>	<i>BCU Family Average</i>	<i>Rank in BCU Family</i>	<i>% pt Change in detection rate</i>
Total Crime	5108	48.52%	31.82%	1 out of 15	+11.98% pts
Domestic Burglary	95	34.67%	19.51%	2 out of 15	+7.63% pts
Robbery	11	73.33%	30.74%	1 out of 15	+13.33% pts
Vehicle Crime	202	23.46%	13.12%	1 out of 15	+10.83% pts
Violent Crime	2235	80.86%	59.45%	1 out of 15	+8.96% pts

Source – HMIC performance matrix

21. A similar, and very positive, picture emerges when considering the detection rates for key crimes achieved by the Western BCU. Performance is improving and with levels that are the best within its 'most similar' BCU family. Other data, not included in table 3, also shows that during 2004 the Western BCU had the highest detection rate of any BCU in England and Wales, an achievement the BCU should take great pride in.
22. In tables 2 and 3 there has been reference to comparative performance with other BCUs and in particular its 'most similar' BCU family (MSBCU). These MSBCU families have been created to allow useful and fair comparison of performance indicators. They are grouped together into families based, in general, on similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Table 4 below provides an analysis of Western BCU performance against its MSBCU family and national average for the last full year of available data. In addition to crime issues this table also considers other performance issues. The only additional issue that emerges from this table is the levels of sickness absence, which is substantially higher than both MSBCU family averages and national averages. This issue will be discussed further later in the report.

Table 4: Western BCU performance 2003-04, compared to MSBCU family and national data

Best Value Performance Indicator Western BCU, North Wales Police	BCU Performance 2003/04	BCU family average 2003/04	England and Wales average 2003/04
Complaints per 1000 officers	N/A	143.58	192.24
% of police strength from minority ethnic communities	0.52 %	0.71 %	3.28 %
Work days lost sick/police officer	11.32	9.94	9.39
Work days lost sick/police staff	11.01	10.46	10.84
Recorded crimes per 1000 population	77.28	81.94	113.08
Recorded crime % detected	38.45 %	30.67 %	23.49 %
Domestic burglaries per 1000 households	6.12	8.88	18.20

Domestic burglaries % detected	30.38 %	20.49 %	15.01 %
Violent crimes per 1000 population	15.47	16.38	21.13
Violent crimes % detected	75.08 %	58.83 %	46.76 %
Robberies per 1000 population	0.12	0.30	1.93
Robberies % detected	52.17 %	29.90 %	18.37 %
Vehicle crimes per 1000 population	7.66	9.61	16.94
Vehicle crimes % detected	14.19 %	11.00 %	8.97 %
Traffic collisions death/serious injury per 1000 population	0.53	0.56	0.46
Racially aggravated crimes % detected	46.34 %	44.06 %	33.50 %

Origin — HMIC matrix of performance 2003/04

23. In summary, the current overall performance of the Western BCU is excellent and still improving, whether compared to its own performance, its MSBCU family or the national picture. This performance is not the product of chance or other good fortune, but the result of many operational and managerial interventions that are highlighted elsewhere within this report. The Western BCU should be proud of the progress it has made, but remain determined to sustain this and indeed achieve more.

Accountability Mechanisms and Performance Management

24. The inspection team found clear evidence to show that the Western BCU is robustly held to account for its performance by the Force, with the chief superintendent being directly responsible to the deputy chief constable. In addition the chief superintendent and superintendent attend regular force meetings where performance is discussed in some detail.
25. This overt and tangible focus on performance by the Force is enthusiastically carried forward into the Western BCU by the chief superintendent and his senior management team. The clear, uncomplicated and personal leadership provided by the chief superintendent to the performance agenda ensures there are good performance management structures, timely data and a real energy throughout the BCU to improve performance. This positive example has been emulated by most of his senior and middle managers, ensuring that the “performance matters” message is understood across the BCU, particularly the focus on detecting crimes.
26. The BCU has a robust meeting structure that allows the business to be done, whether managerial or operational, in a transparent and logical way. The meetings take place

when they should do, are well attended by the right people, and are professionally recorded. The actions required, and by whom, are very explicit and these are always followed up.

27. A key meeting for driving performance is the daily tasking and co-ordinating meeting, chaired by the superintendent operations. Here the BCU's senior management team consider the latest crime performance information, the resources available to them and determine the best tactical policing options to maximise their opportunities to detect crime that has occurred and disrupt further criminality. This is an agile and effective meeting that genuinely sets the policing priorities for the next 24 hours.
28. Another important process that drives performance on the Western BCU is the WPR – weekly performance review – where the superintendent operations has a detailed one to one meeting with a sector inspector. This meeting uses the policing performance assessment framework (PPAF) to structure the debate, ensuring there is balance between crime reduction, detections, anti-social behaviour, and resource usage and so on. These meetings are equally well valued by the senior managers and the sector inspectors, primarily because it is a forum where local problems can and are tackled together. This same approach is then used by the sectors to discuss the performance of the shifts with their sergeants. The inspection team was pleased to hear that this approach is now being extended to include all uniformed inspectors.
29. The CID currently operates a slightly different accountability process. The detective chief inspector has monthly meetings with the detective inspectors, during which performance matters are discussed. Quarterly these meetings also include the detective sergeants and annually there is a CID office meeting where all staff are invited. This approach is less formal and rigorous than that enjoyed by their uniformed colleagues. Generally there is absence of performance information for the CID. That said the inspection team was immensely impressed by the quality and reach of the supervision of all investigations undertaken by staff. Even minor matters always received active scrutiny from a sergeant, whilst more serious or complicated cases would receive the personal attention of an inspector. The inspection team also welcomes the introduction of WPRs into the CID arena, for example the family protection unit and the intelligence unit have recently benefited from the process, and encourages the BCU commander to persist with this approach.
30. The Western BCU has a robust, intrusive and comprehensive performance processes and frameworks, and a culture that has fully embraced it. Performance is constantly monitored and managed at individual, team, sector and BCU level, with agile and appropriate interventions to address poor performance and other performance blockages. However this performance management strength at times can create some behaviour that is undesirable. For example, there were a number of accounts given where staff explained how information was not shared between colleagues because they did not want to lose the arrest and performance advantage to another officer.
31. Overall the performance management on the Western BCU is excellent and in no small part explains the very strong performance achieved by this BCU. It also leads the inspection team to be confident that the BCU has the mechanisms to deliver the policing service it wants to – these performance management frameworks are capable

of being adapted to incorporate more qualitative data, the citizen focus agenda and the advent of the neighbourhood policing model.

Reassurance and Visibility

32. It was most pleasing to hear the chief superintendent acknowledge and then talk so enthusiastically about rising to the challenges of the citizen focus agenda and introducing the neighbourhood policing model across the Western BCU. This BCU is facing the common challenge of successfully reducing recorded crime, yet striving to translate this performance into genuine reductions in the fear of crime and greater confidence in the police. However, in recent years the BCU has targeted its energies on increased performance. In addressing this opportunity the BCU commander can build upon the excellent crime reduction and detection successes, and some good local activity, such as the Dyna Ddigon initiative that tackles anti-social behaviour. The chief superintendent can also move forward this agenda confident of the full support of local police authority members.
33. The Western BCU is divided into six sectors, the sectors being sub-divided into beats. These beats are aligned to local authority wards, an approach that is widely supported. It was clear from focus groups and from meetings with partners that many are doing excellent work, serving their local communities. Equally there was some frustration about the ease with which they are abstracted and the lack of urgency shown when a community beat manager vacancy occurs. Many BCUs have local policies and protocols, which help shape local expectations, that address these issues and demonstrate the BCUs' genuine commitment to community based policing.
34. The community beat managers have recently been supplemented with police community support officers (PCSOs). At the time of the inspection the PCSOs were extremely new and still settling in. It was pleasing to hear that they had been made very welcome by police colleagues and the community alike. However a few key processes need addressing urgently to ensure their contribution is focused and recognised. The PCSOs need properly connecting with the local tasking process as the inspection team found very limited evidence of formal tasking of the PCSOs, whether it be from the beat manager, the sergeant or the control room. They are often patrolling on their own many miles away from their nearest colleague, performing their duty and subsequently retiring from that duty with no contact at all from a supervisor or the control room – there are obvious health and safety risks here that need addressing. The BCU and they are currently uncertain as to how their performance will be managed.
35. With one excellent exception the PCSOs are not submitting any intelligence reports, and generally appear a little unsure of their powers and role. The excellent exception was when intelligence submitted by a PCSO was of sufficient quality to obtain a drugs warrant that was subsequently successfully executed. However there remains an urgent need to closely monitor their contribution, to mentor and drive forward their development to ensure they make a valued and understood contribution.
36. The Western BCU acknowledges that it has made limited use of the Special Constabulary in addressing its policing challenges. The inspection team was pleased

to hear that the BCU is currently preparing a new strategy that will seek to align the Special Constabulary more closely to the beat management role – an approach that the inspection team has seen successfully deployed in other rural domains. However is was still disappointing to discover that there was very limited senior management involvement with the Special Constabulary, that they have no connection to the management meetings or the tasking processes and that their deployment and duties (the occasional event excepted) are determined when a special constable chooses to attend for duty. The special constables did not feel particularly valued, with good work rarely being recognised. These factors may explain why the BCU only has 15 active special constables, a rather low number for the communities served by the Western BCU.

37. On a more positive note there were clearly active and positive links between community beat mangers and neighbourhood wardens. There is regular contact, frequent and full sharing of information and joint operation delivery when required.
38. The Western BCU is fully supporting the Force’s initiative to address anti-social behaviour – Dyna Ddigon, which loosely translates as “That’s enough”. Dyna Ddigon areas, with partners, tackle anti-social behaviour in a structured way that increases the weight of the intervention should the perpetrators fail to respond to low-level initial interventions. The Western BCU has seven of the Force’s nineteen Dyna Ddigon areas, the vast majority showing substantial declines in crime and anti-social behaviour.
39. Overall the inspection team formed the opinion that by harnessing the opportunities presented through the extended police family (the Special Constabulary, the PCSOs and more consistent approaches to beat management) the BCU could reassure the communities it serves that they are safer from crime and disorder as well as producing excellent performance results. Further, the inspection team considered the approaches in these key areas to be far less mature than many other similar BCUs. Consequently it is recommended that the BCU commander undertakes a comprehensive review of the operational, managerial and performance arrangements that are intended to ensure that the Western BCU maximises the contribution of the extended police family and the citizen focus agenda. The conclusions of this review must be implemented with some urgency.

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that the BCU commander undertakes a comprehensive review of the operational, managerial and performance arrangements that are intended to ensure that the Western BCU maximises the contribution of the extended police family and the citizen focus agenda. The conclusions of this review must be implemented with some urgency.

Intelligence- led Policing

40. The Western BCU, like all BCUs across the England and Wales, has to be compliant with the National Intelligence Model (NIM), which is a framework of processes and tools by which operational priorities are determined and tactically addressed. The BCU has shown great commitment to fully and properly implementing the NIM so that it does genuinely drive operational policing in a structured and informed way.
41. The strategic assessment (which every six months provides a wide-ranging analysis of the main aspects of policing and draws out the key operational threats and opportunities for the BCU) is a comprehensive document that helps the BCU commander, with his management team, determine the strategic operational priorities for the BCU at the strategic tasking and co-ordinating group. This meeting could be enhanced if it also included the business manager, who would subsequently facilitate the moving of resources to the new priorities. It was encouraging to see that the strategic assessment was broader than just crime matters, considering in some detail anti-social behaviour. The subsequent control strategies, that outline how these chosen priorities will be addressed, are also well constructed and relevant.
42. Fortnightly, the BCU holds a tactical tasking and co-ordinating group (TTCG) meeting through which the BCU reviews progress against the control strategies and determines the policing priorities for the next few weeks. The tactical assessment is the key product that informs this meeting, from detailed and structured analysis of the data and recommends tactical options on how to address the emerging issues. The inspection team attended a T&CG meeting and found the tactical assessment was well produced and presented. The meeting was positively chaired, appropriately attended, and set the operational policing agenda for the coming weeks for the BCU. The inspection team would encourage the BCU commander to consider involving partners from the CSP in this meeting as their insight into a particular issue may lead to a more effective outcome than a purely police driven response.
43. The TTCG is also the forum through which problem and target profiles are commissioned, and later received and actioned. This approach ensures the analysts are investing their skills and expertise in the current operational priorities, which is not always the case when these profiles are commissioned outside this formal structure.
44. The Western BCU also holds a daily tasking and co-ordinating meeting to review the previous 24 hours activity and set the key priorities for the next 24 hours. Through this meeting senior officers provide overt, robust grip and focus on the identified priorities and performance. This meeting does make active interventions to determine how issues will be resourced, for example deciding to what crimes crime scene investigators will be allocated to that day. The inspection team is of the opinion that this meeting would be richer if the local interpretation of crime patterns was available through the involvement of the sector inspectors (probably via a conference call).
45. In order to make all the NIM managerial structures deliver more effective policing it is essential that officers are briefed accordingly. The Western BCU operates a large number of shifts systems across its sectors and departments, which means many staff are routinely self briefing. The inspection team found that the quality of this self

briefing to be variable, with only limited evidence that NIM taskings were being received and actioned. The inspection team also attended a number of sergeant-led briefings, where again the links to NIM taskings were not clear. Consequently many officers are being driven by a combination of reactive policing and the performance agenda. The BCU commander is urged to review the briefing processes across the Western BCU and subsequently implement an approach that ensures briefings properly deliver the NIM determined operational priorities consistently.

46. The inspection team found that most sectors and departments were contributing intelligence submissions to the intelligence unit. However, it was also found that this was far from universal with some staff providing almost no intelligence. There were also some concerns expressed about the quality of some submissions, leading to the intelligence unit only entering those submissions with some clear value. Intelligence is often at its most valuable when it is first received and so there was some concern that there was a two week backlog in entering intelligence logs onto the system at the time of the inspection. The BCU commander is encouraged to ensure that intelligence submissions are also subject to some qualitative performance management and that intelligence that is submitted is properly input into the intelligence system in a timely fashion.
47. Overall the Western BCU has made great strides in implementing the National Intelligence Model, although at this time it would be premature to describe their policing as intelligence led. This would require greater emphasis on more comprehensive and quality intelligence gathering and quicker intelligence inputting and analysis. Crucially the quality of briefings, whether from a sergeant or through self briefing, needs to be substantially improved.

Crime Investigation and Recording Practices

48. The Western BCU consistently delivers very high quality investigations for volume crime, which has translated into the extremely impressive detection rates. Whilst these have been outlined above, it is worth reiterating the impressive performance again here. Overall the Western BCU is detecting 48.5% of all recorded crime, the best performance in England and Wales. They are detecting 73% of robberies, 23.5% of vehicle crime and 81% of violent crimes which are all the best outcomes within Western's MSBCU family. With dwelling burglary they are second best within their MSBCU family with an impressive 34.7% detection rate. The Western BCU is justifiably proud of this performance and resolute in maintaining its current standing.
49. Delivery of this impressive performance has been achieved through a number of key and relatively straightforward steps. Firstly, there is very strong and consistent leadership throughout the BCU that detections matter, and that they are achieved by properly investigating the crime. Secondly, the BCU has invested managerial time in clearly defining what is required of their staff when investigating priority crimes. The investigation team found that these working protocols to be well written and, more importantly, applied by officers. They were particularly impressed that the burglary working protocol included the opportunity for a crime scene investigator to be the first attender, ensuring forensic evidence is recovered at the earliest opportunity and that the victim is not left waiting for a policing service unnecessarily. Thirdly there is

strong intrusive supervision of investigations by sergeants and inspectors. This equally applies to uniformed staff as it does within the CID. This constant scrutiny and attention to detail ensures that investigations are thorough and that detection opportunities are not missed. Fourthly, there is a very effective crime management unit, with quality staff who ensure the administration behind the crime is accurate, aligned to the National Crime Recording Standards, and again that opportunities to detect the crimes have not been missed. The BCU is congratulated on this simple and effective approach, which combines with its robust performance regime to repeatedly deliver quality investigations with positive outcomes.

50. The inspection team were also impressed with the 'ident' team. This small team is dedicated to and responsible for progressing all fingerprint and DNA 'hits' received by the BCU. Since the introduction of this team it has reduced the time taken to action the forensic hit from nearly 50 days down to the current 7 days. Clearly it is intervening with prolific offenders quickly and skilfully, and before they can commit numerous crimes. Another initiative, developed by the detective sergeants, that was proving effective was the structured and consistent approach to disclosure of evidence to defence solicitors.
51. The BCU is frequently audited to ensure it is fully compliant with the National Crime Recording Standards. The Western BCU has repeatedly demonstrated that it is recording crime properly and acting ethically.

Use of Forensic, DNA and Scientific Techniques

52. A forensic audit was introduced by HMIC as part of a Force or BCU inspection from January 2002 to ensure a standard approach to the evaluation of scientific support services, the effective use of resources and to identify good practice. The methodology for the inspection of Western BCU was to examine the management and recording of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) samples, fingerprints, and the procedure for the monitoring and dealing with crime scene identifications, as well as to identify any links to the intelligence system and crime analysis.
53. When an arrested person arrives at a custody suite the arresting officer should complete a customer reception form which includes details of what samples are to be taken. However this form was not consistently completed and sometimes lacked important detail. For example where they had identified that the individual had a confirmed DNA sample the PNC printout would not be attached. The intended value of this approach is to inform the custody officer whether a DNA sample is required from this suspect or not. If the PNC indicates that DNA is already confirmed as taken a sample is not taken and if DNA is not confirmed a sample is obtained. An audit of 50 custody records was undertaken of persons charged, reported or that had the offence TIC but had not had DNA taken. These were checked against PNC to ensure that DNA samples had previously been obtained, therefore negating the need for a further sample. Two of these records were unable to meet the required standard, performance that should not cause undue concern, but does suggest that the BCU commander should persist with his own internal audits to ensure the Western BCU is fully contributing to the DNA database.

54. Crime scene investigators (CSI) are managed from force headquarters, but are fully engaged into the BCU's NIM and operational processes. There is senior CSI attendance at the BCU's TTCG, allowing CSI knowledge of crime methods to be incorporated into the BCU's deliberations and for the CSIs to understand the full operational picture. A CSI will also attend the daily TTCG which allows the CSI scarce capability to be determined and allocated where they can make the greatest contribution for that day. This approach is proving valuable and ensuring the CSIs are making a positive and consistent contribution to performance. The inspection team found that there was good informal information and intelligence exchange between CSIs and investigating officers. However this could be improved if this was formalised through intelligence submissions that would then make their knowledge available to all officers.
55. Forensic recoveries are sent to headquarters daily for analysis and processing. The Western BCU was satisfied with the speed with which any positive results were returned to them. These are received, as has previously been described, by the 'idents' team.

Managing Demand

56. The Western BCU has a 'crewing' policy that helps determine when it is appropriate for officers to patrol alone and when they should be accompanied by a colleague. Clearly single crewing allows the BCU greater visibility across this geographically-spread BCU, quicker initial response and an ability to deal with more incidents, whilst double crewing can allow safer and more robust interventions during violent incidents. The Western BCU's policy appears to strike an appropriate balance for this BCU and is accepted and applied by its officers. There is now an opportunity to revisit this policy to include police community support officers and special constables.
57. The Western BCU is congratulated in meeting its target times for attending immediate response incidents. 2004-05 year to date performance shows 93% of these incidents have been responded to within the "90% within 20 minutes" target.
58. Unusually the Western BCU has numerous shift patterns operating, with some staff working 12 hour shifts, others 10 hour and others working to traditional 8 hour patterns. This situation appears to have evolved rather than be the product of a deliberate, considered managerial process. The current patterns are not consciously linked to the BCU's demand profile or local need (to align with the citizen focus agenda). In addition the shift patterns creates the need for numerous officers to have to self brief when they come on duty, an issue that has been previously discussed. The BCU commander is encouraged to assess the current shift pattern in light of the emerging citizen focus agenda and the need to properly brief his staff.

Leadership

Senior Management Team

59. The Western BCU's senior management team is led by a chief superintendent. He is supported by a superintendent, who is responsible for the policing operations with a chief inspector and a detective chief inspector, a business manager and a human resources manager. The inspection team was delighted to find a senior management team that was well led, coherent and focused on performance delivery. The senior management team has had a relatively stable membership and are appropriately skilled and experienced to fulfil their roles.
60. The Western BCU covers a huge geographic area, with many staff working many miles away from the BCU's headquarters. This wide dispersal of staff means the SMT have to work tirelessly to ensure that their messages are effectively communicated. This they do through the intranet, posters, staff forums, email, visits to police stations and cascade through structured meetings.
61. The BCU has a particularly comprehensive meeting structure that effectively incorporates business management, operations management, performance management, as well as staff consultation and health and safety. These are all properly minuted and these are then made available to staff. Equally there are local meetings that allow issues to be discussed and communicated at the sector stations. The only negative comments arose from the perceived over reliance on email – a sergeant described regularly trying to manage about 50 emails per day, whilst senior colleagues quoted even higher numbers.
62. This senior management team work hard to maintain a visible presence across the BCU. This is recognised by their staff, who generally see them as being accessible, fair and willing listen to the views of junior staff. The BCU commander was subject to particular praise, being described as “an excellent communicator”, “really interested in his people”, “a dedicated, hard working professional...who has made a real difference to this BCU”. These examples are typical of the comments made by stakeholders, partners and his junior staff alike about the BCU commander to the inspection team, and are a product of his strong and consistent leadership of this BCU.
63. Equally, this senior management team make a considerable commitment to attending public meetings across the BCU. These meetings are valued by the SMT, keeping them in touch with local issues and inform their decision making. Occasionally there are force issues that dominate these meetings at the expense of local matters, to the frustration of both senior police staff and others who are trying to facilitate the meetings.
64. The Western BCU has a respected and valued approach to rewarding and recognising good work. Equally staff reported that those that did not meet appropriate standards were addressed by their line managers. Good work is recognised through memos, emails, letters of appreciation and generally through the PDR process. A recent welcome innovation has seen the introduction of an awards ceremony, where some 70 or 80 people were invited together to pay tribute to those staff that had made really significant contributions.

65. Overall this BCU is very well led, with robust management process that are delivering excellent results and good morale. The BCU commander and his SMT should be proud of their part in making this happen.

Self-review and Learning

66. The BCU's training and development plan has been built upon the training requirements set by the Force, the key issues identified by the managers and the individual requirements identified for officers through the PDR processes. These needs and demands are drawn together into the training and development plan that is put before the SMT for agreement. This plan is subject to regular monitoring and performance management. Data on the training abstraction, attendance and low level evaluation is collated and monitored.
67. Generally officers were content with the availability and quality of the training provided.
68. The Western BCU also has a tutor unit that is responsible for receiving and tutoring probationary police officers. Whilst the inspection team did not inspect this aspect of the BCU in detail there are several issues that the BCU commander may wish to take forward. The tutor unit head was uncertain about how his unit connected to the wider BCU managerial arrangements, except through the TTCG. Also, and unusually for this BCU, there were no clear performance management arrangements to ensure the tutor unit was fully contributing to the BCU's priorities.
69. The Police Federation and Unison both commented positively on the internal consultation arrangements for the Western BCU. Unison, who currently do not have a local representative, were particularly complimentary about the additional steps the BCU takes to ensure they are still involved and consulted. The BCU has formal and regular consultative meetings. Minutes of these meetings show that they are regular, well attended and discuss important issues, with a good balance between addressing current problems and trying to avoid future problems. Representatives were also content with the level of informal access to the BCU commander, so that issues could be addressed as they emerged rather than having to wait for the consultative meeting.
70. Beyond the staff associations the SMT also regularly consult with their staff through local forums, where they attend stations, meeting staff and hearing their views. In addition important policies and plans are emailed to all staff, inviting comment, before they are introduced.
71. Overall the staff associations and the staff directly, expressed the view that the Western BCU is genuinely consultative and conciliatory when appropriate.
72. The inspection team was impressed by the strong leadership and commitment to health and safety matters on the Western BCU. It was clear that the business manager has a passion and interest in good health and safety management. He leads this process through well structured and attended quarterly meetings. The agenda for these meetings is driven by a comprehensive plan that has been constructed following

targeted risk assessments, as well as incidents and current issues. It was also encouraging to find that responsibilities amongst senior staff was so clearly understood, for example with the chief inspector being responsible for operational health and safety matters.

73. That said there are still opportunities to improve. These areas have been identified by the SMT and are being addressed in a logical way. An area that the BCU commander should consider managing is the health and safety implications of a custody officer supervising a prisoner unsupported. Overall, though, the inspection team can understand why Unison described their health and safety management as “excellent”.

Human Resources and Diversity Issues

74. The personnel manager is the lead for human resources matters on the BCU and is directly accountable to the BCU commander. At the time of the inspection a chief inspector was just taking over these responsibilities, with the personnel manager taking maternity leave.
75. Whilst most staff members have a current PDR (staff appraisal) it was not a procedure that was generally valued. They accept the need for a PDR, but find it rather cumbersome, bureaucratic and adding little to performance. Senior managers recognise these short-comings and are taking steps to connect the PDR process to the BCU’s plans and performance targets. Each staff member should have two PDR objectives that are explicitly linked to the BCU’s plans and performance targets, but this was found to be rarely the case. This approach has been effective elsewhere and the BCU is encouraged to persist.
76. As has been previously described this BCU has an excellent performance management approach, with individual accountability through the PDR being the only obvious omission. The BCU commander is urged to take the necessary steps to ensure that the PDR process is valued and contributes to performance improvement on the Western BCU.
77. The inspection team found that each personnel requirement, whether it being posting a transferee, a staff move, securing an officer for temporary period as acting sergeant, or creating a team to address a problem was dealt with in isolation. This requires numerous phone calls or emails to deliver the simplest of moves. Generally the inspection team was unable to find a process that underpinned these requirements. This is not only inefficient for the personnel team, it means managers are only aware of their problem from their perspective and so do not understand the wider requirements of the BCU. This is not a unique problem, but many successful BCUs are now moving towards a ‘resource management group’ (RMG) approach to bring together all personnel issues such as training, sickness, complaints, PDR and resource management (such as postings and transfers) under one all-encompassing structure. The group is directed by the SMT but spearheaded by a regular RMG meeting consisting of key middle managers and chaired by the personnel manager. This approach was welcomed by key BCU staff during the inspection.

78. The force and BCU have appropriate ‘family friendly’ policies in place, although the inspection team found a relatively low level of understanding amongst staff. The BCU commander is encouraged to market their existence and value to the BCU.
79. The inspection team was pleased to hear that all community beat managers have a local diversity plan, tailored to their beat’s needs. They found an SMT that was genuinely committed to the diversity agenda, and individual officers with a passion for ensuring a fair and appropriate policing service is delivered to all. That said there are opportunities to ensure all staff continue to improve their understanding of these issues.

Attendance Management and Sickness Management

80. Table 5, below, shows the sickness absence data for the Western BCU and its comparative performance with its MSBCU family. This shows police officer sickness rising to 11.3 days per officer per year, compared to a MSBCU average of 9.9 days. Unlike most crime data, where they are a top performing BCU, these levels place the Western BCU 10th worst out of 14. Force data also shows they are having higher police officer sickness than other BCUs in North Wales Police.
81. These levels of sickness caused the inspection some concern: as raw numbers they are increasing and high; the levels contrast sharply with other top performing BCUs; it contradicts the generally good staff morale observed; and the BCU management team was unable to explain why they were so high. There is a clear requirement for the SMT to understand and then address these high levels of sickness.
82. Police support staff sickness, whilst improving, is still high by comparison with its MSBCU family. Analysis of police staff sickness should be included within the necessary work required to address police officer sickness.

Table 5: Western BCU sickness absence data 2002/03 and 2003/04

<i>Staff Type</i>	<i>Days lost per officer 02/03</i>	<i>Days lost per officer 03/04</i>	<i>MSBCU average 2003/04</i>	<i>Rank in MSBCU family 03/04</i>	<i>% Change of days lost per officer 02/03 to 03/04</i>
Police Officers	10.73	11.32	9.94	10 out of 14	+5.5%
Police Staff	16.81	11.01	10.46	10 out of 14	-34.5%

Source - HMIC matrix of performance 2003/04

83. Overall the Western BCU’s HR management, including sickness management, is relatively weak. Through improvements in sickness management and attendance greater policing service capacity can be generated and through more effective HR management of PDR, staff moves and the like, then more managerial effort can be invested in delivering better operational outcomes. It is therefore recommended that the BCU commander creates new managerial structures and operational frameworks for the Western BCU’s human resources management. In addition there should be a particular emphasis placed on understanding the current high levels of sickness so that the causes can be addressed.

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the BCU commander creates new managerial structures and operational frameworks for the Western BCU's human resources management. Particular emphasis should be placed on understanding the current high levels of sickness so that the causes can be addressed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The inspection team would wish to thank the SMT for the warm welcome and provision of facilities to carry out the inspection. All staff and members of other agencies met by the inspection team reacted very positively to the process and are thanked for their co-operation. In particular, the inspection team was able to spend considerable time with a broad spectrum of representatives from outside agencies and they are thanked for giving up their time and the BCU commander thanked for making the arrangements. The inspection team would also like to make particular mention of the liaison officers assigned by the BCU who did an excellent job of drawing together the necessary documentation, helping to prepare the programme and were very flexible and adaptable for the inspection visit. They are a credit to the BCU and Force in the role they took on for HMIC.

The Western BCU, North Wales Police is delivering excellent crime results. Its recent record shows it has improved its performance, whether comparing its performance against previous years, the North Wales Policing plan targets or against its MSBCU family. Its performance is exceptional whether considering crime reduction or detection rates. The following are just a few of many performance highlights:

- All crime down 13%
- Levels of all crime are the best within the Western's MSBCUs family
- The best detection rate for any BCU in England and Wales during 2004 at 48.5%

This outstanding performance is the product of strong, consistent and credible leadership, skilfully led by the BCU commander and enthusiastically supported by his SMT colleagues. They have set a clear vision of what the BCU is aiming to deliver, the standards expected from staff, and the managerial processes necessary to consistently provide strong performance. Most importantly their staff share this vision and approach, and are determined to achieve more. The BCU commander, his SMT and all his staff are congratulated on the excellent performance they have produced. They should be very proud of what they have achieved, but not completely satisfied for there are still opportunities to improve.

From their platform of strong performance the BCU should be able to reach out and embrace the citizen focus agenda, and in doing so they should seek greater involvement of the two community safety partnerships. There are opportunities to improve the quality of NIM processes to ensure the BCU is truly intelligence led, and through more efficient HR management it should be able to increase the focus on operational policing. In particular, the sickness issues within the BCU need to be addressed, and provide opportunities to increase operating capacity.

Consequently the inspection team is confident that the Western BCU will continue to improve its performance and the quality of its policing service.

Summary of Good Practice

The inspection team was particularly impressed with Western BCU's weekly performance reviews. During these the superintendent operations has a detailed one to one meeting with a sector inspector. This meeting uses the policing performance assessment framework (PPAF) to structure the debate, ensuring there is balance between crime reduction, detections, anti-

social behaviour, and resource usage and so on. These meetings are equally well valued by the senior managers and the sector inspectors, primarily because it is a forum where local problems can and are tackled together. This same approach is then used by the sectors to discuss the performance of the shifts with their sergeants.

The inspection team was very impressed by the quality and consistency of its crime enquiries resulting in a very high detection rate. It achieves this through a number of key and relatively straightforward steps. Firstly, there is very strong and consistent leadership throughout the BCU that detections matter, and that they are achieved by properly investigating the crime. Secondly, the BCU has invested managerial time in clearly defining what is required of their staff when investigating priority crimes. The inspection team found that these working protocols to be well written and, more importantly, applied by officers. They were particularly impressed that the burglary working protocol included the opportunity for a crime scenes investigator to be the first attender, ensuring forensic evidence is recovered at the earliest opportunity and that the victim is not left waiting for a policing service unnecessarily. Thirdly there is strong intrusive supervision of investigations by sergeants and inspectors. This equally applies to uniformed staff as it does within the CID. This constant scrutiny and attention to detail ensures that investigations are thorough and that detection opportunities are not missed. Fourthly, there is a very effective crime management unit, with quality staff who ensure the administration behind the crime is accurate, aligned to the National Crime Recording Standards, and again that opportunities to detect the crimes have not been missed. The BCU is congratulated on this simple and effective approach, which combines with its robust performance regime to repeatedly deliver quality investigations with positive outcomes.

Issues for Management Consideration

The inspection team would encourage the BCU commander to consider involving partners from the CSP in the TTCG as their insight into a particular issue may lead to a more effective outcome than a purely police driven response (Paragraph 42).

The BCU commander is urged to review the briefing processes across the Western BCU and subsequently implement an approach that ensures briefings properly deliver the NIM determined operational priorities consistently (Paragraph 45).

The BCU commander is encouraged to ensure that intelligence submissions are subject to some qualitative performance management and that intelligence that is submitted is properly input into the intelligence system in a timely fashion (Paragraph 46).

The BCU commander should consider conducting his own internal audits of custody records to ensure the Western BCU is taking DNA samples when it can, so that the BCU fully contributes to the national DNA database (Paragraph 53).

The BCU commander is encouraged to assess the current shift pattern in light of the emerging citizen focus agenda and the need to properly brief his staff (Paragraph 58).

Whilst the inspection team did not inspect the tutor unit in detail there are several issues that the BCU commander may wish to take forward. The tutor unit head was uncertain about how his unit connected to the wider BCU managerial arrangements, except through the TTCG.

Also, and unusually for this BCU, there was no clear performance management arrangements to ensure the Tutor Unit was fully contributing to the BCU's priorities (Paragraph 68).

A health and safety issue that the BCU commander should consider managing is the health and safety implications of a custody officer supervising a prisoner unsupported (Paragraph 73).

The BCU commander is urged to take the necessary steps to ensure that the PDR process is valued and contributes to performance improvement on the Western BCU (Paragraph 76).

The BCU commander is encouraged to market the existence and value of the family friendly personnel policies to the BCU staff (Paragraph 78).

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- the BCU commander undertakes a comprehensive review of the operational, managerial and performance arrangements that are intended to ensure that the Western BCU maximises the contribution of the extended police family and the citizen focus agenda. The conclusions of this review must be implemented with some urgency.
(Paragraph 39)
- the BCU commander creates new managerial structures and operational frameworks for the Western BCU's human resources management. In addition there should be a particular emphasis placed on understanding the current high levels of sickness so that the causes can be addressed.
(Paragraph 83)