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Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness

Second Report on the Inspection by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Police National Computer
Data Quality and Timeliness

Second Report

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Preface

The integrity of information stored on the Police National Computer (PNC) is absolutely vital to its effectiveness in supporting the Police Service of England and Wales to tackle crime and criminal behaviour. At a time when information and intelligence have become invaluable in targeting prolific offenders it is to the shame of the Service that such a valuable tool as PNC has been sorely neglected, to the detriment of data integrity.

In 1998, a Police Research Group (PRG) paper identified worrying shortfalls in PNC data quality and timeliness. By the time HMIC published the 'On the Record' report, in July 2000, these shortfalls were still wholly unresolved. HMIC made strong recommendations for improvements to strategy and business practices within police forces but by early 2001, when this inspection was launched, there were few signs that the Service had responded to either the PRG or HMIC reports.

In addition to the operational argument for improving PNC the imminent establishment of the Criminal Records Bureau was a major factor. The CRB was to be an agency with responsibility throughout England and Wales for carrying out pre-employment checks most notably on recruits to sensitive jobs and those involving vulnerable people. Inaccurate or omitted data in such cases could have serious consequences, for example allowing a paedophile to work as a carer or school employee. Each Chief Constable bears individual liability for ensuring that the situation is resolved quickly.

HMIC was commissioned by the Home Secretary to carry out an extensive review and inspection of all forces in England and Wales, to identify the problems and achieve a significant improvement across the board in their PNC performance. The inspection lasted from March 2001 to April 2002 and represented a comprehensive examination of all aspects of forces' policies and practices on the updating of PNC.

This report builds upon and complements the HMIC report¹ completed at the end of last year, which set out the findings and recommendations from the first half of this inspection. This report covers the whole inspection, but with a minimum of replication of information from the phase 1 report.

Together, the two reports clearly identify the problems to be overcome and set out the considerable good practice that has emerged during the inspection. They also identify the key need for consistent and sustained Chief Officer support and commitment to the integrity and effective use of PNC. It is absolutely vital that the recommendations are implemented in full if the Service is to avoid the dual spectre of legal action and operational ineffectiveness.

Sir Keith Povey QPM BA (Law)
HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary
August 2002

¹ "Police National Computer Data Quality and Timeliness" - HMIC - December 2001

Acknowledgments

Mr Peter Todd MSC, Assistant Inspector of Constabulary led the inspection on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir David O'Dowd CBE, QPM until December 2001 and subsequently Sir Keith Povey QPM BA (Law). Each wish to place on record their thanks for the cooperation of chief officers of all forces who assisted the inspection, and in particular those who provided seconded staff for the inspection teams.

Particular thanks are also due to members of the inspection Reference Group, including representatives of staff associations, Association of Police Authorities (APA) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). All provided timely and helpful advice and an important conduit to their respective organisations. Mr Ian Readhead LLB, Deputy Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary represented ACPO and took on the often difficult task of providing direct contact with poorly performing forces and eliciting seconded staff for inspection.

Acknowledgement is also given to the invaluable advice and expertise provided by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and Mr David Gilbertson QPM BSc MBIM, who acted as consultant to phase one.

Lastly, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector would wish to warmly acknowledge the hard work, support and commitment of the inspection teams, ably led in both phases by Superintendent David Senior BA (Hons).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The Police Service is currently engaged in a major programme of reform. Fundamental to its success is the availability of accurate and timely information to support the core intelligence-led approach to tackling crime and criminality.
2. PNC is currently the only truly national police computer system and should be the single most important information source for police and other criminal justice partners. This report identifies fundamental weaknesses, not in the computer system itself but in the business processes surrounding its use. The PNC system can only deliver its full, and considerable, potential if there is nationwide adherence to a common strategy and strict compliance with data quality and timeliness standards. This report identifies considerable deviation from the standards required.
3. In March 2001, when HMIC began this inspection, not one of the 48 forces subject of scrutiny was achieving the two main standards demanded within the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy. Against a target of 24 hours for input of Arrest/Summons details, each force was on average taking up to 55 days to input 90% of such results. With regard to inputting court results, there were around 450,000 cases awaiting results of which over 220,000 cases were over 9 months old. A significant number dated from pre-1995, when PNC input first became the responsibility of police forces and whilst for a small proportion such delay would subsequently prove to be valid, the vast majority represented cases where the results were known but had simply not been input to PNC.
4. These problems of quality and timeliness were neither new nor unknown prior to the inspection. Since 1996, successive reports from PITO, the Police Research Group and HMIC had highlighted major concerns but these had passed without discernible improvements being achieved. The impending establishment of the national Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), became operational in Spring 2002, sharply refocused concerns and in particular attracted the attention of the Information Commissioner (previously the Data Protection Registrar) and the Home Affairs Committee.
5. In the face of increasing concerns, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to carry out a review and inspection of PNC data quality and timeliness shortfalls.

The Report Structure

6. Section One of the report sets out the background to the inspection in more detail, in particular focusing on the early concerns in official reports, the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy targets and the issues concerning the CRB establishment.

7. Section Two explains the methodology of the inspection process and identifies the two main targets which formed the core of the evaluation of force performance, namely;
 - the initial input of Arrest/Summons details within 24 hours, and
 - resulting or validating of all 'Impending Cases' pre-dating July 2000 .
8. Section Three provides a brief summary of the activity and findings of phase one of the inspection, covering the period from March to October 2001. Section Four gives a similarly brief summary of phase two, before the detailed findings of the inspection as a whole are set out in section five, set against the areas addressed within the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy.
9. Sections Six and Seven identify some additional specific issues relating to PNC, including specialised facilities and the impact of non-police prosecuting agencies. Section Eight sets out conclusions and recommendations (which are subsequently listed in section Nine, for ease of reference).

Forces' Performance

10. Throughout the inspection, the evaluation of forces concentrated on the two most significant areas for data quality and timeliness. The ACPO target was retained throughout as the benchmark for Arrest/Summons, despite some concerns as to its validity. For case result clearance, during phase 1, each force was given individual targets equating to reducing backlogs by 4% in each of the 25 fortnightly periods. This changed to a more sophisticated 'profiled' approach during phase two, whereby HMIC concentrated on forces exhibiting variations from acceptable percentages of outstanding cases.

Arrest/Summons

11. Phase one saw very sporadic and inconsistent progress by the majority of forces against the Arrest/Summons target with only a handful meeting the 24-hour deadline consistently. There was some evidence of general improvement of timeliness but, on average, the time taken to complete 90% of cases was only reduced from 55 days in March 2001 to 37 days in October. There was significant concern expressed at the validity of the 24-hour target prior to the delivery of an integrated national IT solution.
12. During phase two, HMIC applied further pressure and put particular effort into disseminating good practice to the poorer performers. The overall average time taken to input 90% of cases reduced still further to 11 days² and improvements were logged in 41 of the 48 forces reviewed. Perhaps more encouragingly, the percentage of Arrest/Summons records input within the 24-hour target had risen from 38% to 69% during the inspection.

² Statistics adjusted to remove extreme random variations in 3 forces

Case Results

13. Phase one produced mostly promising progress against the case result targets. The total for cases (pre- July 2000) fell from 217,000 in March 2001 to 98,000 in October 2001. 12 forces had achieved or exceeded their interim targets, 23 had achieved reductions but needed to accelerate their efforts and just 5 forces caused significant concern to the HMIC inspection teams.
14. HMIC engaged in significant work with these forces during October 2001, in particular focusing on the Chief Officers, and achieved a noticeable improvement, providing tangible evidence of their ability to achieve final targets.
15. By April 2002, the original backlog of 217,000 'old' case results had reduced to 25,000 and the majority of these had been confirmed as being validly outstanding.
16. The introduction of a 'profile' approach to evaluating statistical performance during phase two proved to be a major boon to encouraging forces to self-assess and respond quickly and appropriately to changes in their profile of outstanding cases.

The Future for PNC

17. PNC can provide a cornerstone for policing for many years to come if harnessed correctly and treated with due priority. Unfortunately, the experience of this inspection is that the Service greatly undervalues its importance and that only a huge effort on the part of HMIC finally produced significant prioritisation within forces to achieve the progress required to reach an acceptable standard. When that pressure and spotlight is removed the fear must be that forces will revert to under-resourcing and under-achieving, to the detriment of PNC and the Service as a whole.
18. It is imperative that the Home Office, HMIC and the Service itself agree a way forward that will ensure that the major advances achieved in this inspection are not lost. Whether through agreement or an element of compulsion, the Service must achieve and sustain a high quality of data integrity. The recommendations within this report, and the interim report, are designed to support such a position.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE INSPECTION

(A) An Introduction to the Police National Computer (PNC)

- 1.1 The PNC is the only computer system currently in day-to-day use by all police forces in the United Kingdom. As a mainframe system it was first implemented in 1974, recording details of stolen, recovered and suspicious motor vehicles. This had obvious advantages when vehicles from one police area were of interest in another. At the time it was considered to be successful and much was said about bringing the police service into the 'computer age'.
- 1.2 Building upon this success, additional functions were added to the PNC, on average, one every two years. These included fingerprints, vehicle owners, criminal names and wanted/missing persons³.
- 1.3 The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO)⁴ provides and maintains PNC. The organisation often promotes the technical capabilities of the system for example the volumes now handled, 50 million vehicle records, 6.1 million criminal and wanted/missing person records, and the systems resilience. Indeed there is little doubt that technically the system provides reliable computer support for the police service.
- 1.4 PITO is responsible for the provision and maintenance of the PNC computer hardware, whilst the responsibility for how the equipment is used and the quality of the data rests with individual chief officers. Inconsistent responses across police forces to this responsibility have far-reaching implications for the integrity of PNC data and will be discussed in some detail later in this report.
- 1.5 Prior to 1995, PNC nominal record inputting and updating was undertaken centrally at the National Identification Bureau (NIB). In that year the 'Phoenix' project enhanced the PNC (Criminal) Names Index to allow the updating of nominal records by all forces.
- 1.6 With responsibility for PNC updating devolved, centralised standardisation and quality assurance was removed and chief officers viewed the maintenance of PNC data as one of many demands for resources. It is the response to those demands and the ensuing problems of quality and timeliness of the nominal record data that are the prime focus of this report.

(B) The Criminal Justice Process

- 1.7 One of the prime purposes of the PNC is to maintain a record of the initiation of proceedings and the final result. To understand the significance of this to the criminal justice process it is necessary to have an understanding of the process itself.

³ A full description of PNC functions can be seen on the PITO website at <http://www.pito.org.uk/our/services/pncprofile.asp>

⁴ PITO is Non Departmental Public Body

- 1.8 Delivering justice involves many different agencies. Although the police initiate the majority of prosecutions, increasingly more are initiated by Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPAs). Such agencies range from statutory local and national bodies - for example, local authorities and government departments - to charities such as the NSPCC and RSPCA.
- 1.9 At the commencement of a prosecution for a recordable offence⁵ the police or any NPPA must ensure that the necessary details of the offence and the offender are recorded on PNC.
- 1.10 As the prosecution papers pass to either the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) or, in the case of agencies, a local prosecuting solicitor, advice will be given and at the appropriate time the case brought before a court. Inevitably during this process certain features of the case may change - for example, the number and type of charges may be altered.
- 1.11 When before the court the case may be again changed and some consolidation or rationalisation can occur. At some point, and in complex cases this can be some years later. The case is finalised and a judgement given. Once a case is completed at court, the result is passed from the courts to the local police for entry onto PNC.

(C) Some Early Concerns

- 1.12 For any computer system fully to support critical business processes, all parties involved in its use have to be convinced that the data can be relied upon for accuracy and currency.
- 1.13 As detailed above, between initial input and final result, the nature and substance of charges can change virtually out of recognition. This makes reconciliation of specific results to initial reports difficult and time-consuming to result. This position was exacerbated when some chief officers decided locally that case resulting, as an 'administrative' function, scored poorly within force priorities, and therefore attracted insufficient staff or resources effectively to reconcile results or to prevent backlogs building up.
- 1.14 This fragmented and inappropriate prioritisation between forces resulted in large backlogs of documents awaiting input. It also resulted in record information not being available to other users of the system for a significant time - in some cases, years.
- 1.15 It is against this background that early in 1998, PITO commissioned the (then) Police Research Group (PRG) to conduct a study on the quality of PNC data. The subsequent report⁶ concluded that data quality on PNC was not up to the required standard. In the HMIC 'On the Record' report published in July 2000,⁷ it was concluded that data quality and timeliness had not improved in the previous two years; indeed there was evidence to suggest it had deteriorated. This not only

⁵ All offences that carry the option of imprisonment, and certain offences listed in the National Police Records (Recordable Offences) Regulations 2000.

⁶ Phoenix Data Quality - Police Research Group Special Interest Series: Paper 11 - March 1998.

⁷ On the Record - HMIC Thematic Inspection Report on Police Crime Recording, the Police National Computer and Phoenix Intelligence System Data Quality. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/otr00.htm

impacted adversely upon the operational effectiveness of the police service, it also breached data protection legislation.

- 1.16 This attracted the attention of the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee that commented on it in early 2001 in a report on the forthcoming Criminal Records Bureau.⁸

(D) ACPO⁹ Compliance Strategy

- 1.17 In response to the PRG report, and in an effort to introduce common standards amongst all PNC users, ACPO commissioned work which was to lead to the production of a compliance strategy. In April 2000, Chief Constables Council agreed the ACPO Compliance Strategy (Appendix 1). To enable forces to prepare for its adoption it was to go live on 1 April 2002.
- 1.18 Developed by a working group, the strategy identified key action areas for improvement and set precise timeliness performance indicators. It recognised that current performance was well below standard and concluded,
- “The working group recognise the urgency that needs to be attached to the whole area of data quality and believe that above approaches will secure the committed response required.”*
- 1.19 As the principal agency with update access to PNC, the burden of urgently bringing the data quality up to even a usable standard fell to the police. At the time of adoption of the Compliance Strategy many forces were carrying significant inputting backlogs, particularly in relation to case results. To reduce these and deal with new cases coming into the system would require substantial investment in personnel and training. At a time when chief officers were being encouraged to increase investment in visible policing and cutbacks were being sought in non-operational areas, post-court work was regarded as not time-critical and therefore a suitable area for making savings, militating against the necessary input of additional resources.
- 1.20 In addition, to achieve the objectives of the strategy a fundamental review and re-working of business processes was required in many forces. It was found in a number of forces, primarily because business processes had not been reviewed for some time, that the ACPO timeliness criteria could not be met even when systems were optimised. This was apparent in both critical areas, Arrest/Summons timeliness and court resulting. The information exchange interfaces between the police, NPPAs and the courts was found in many places to require fundamental review.
- 1.21 The ACPO strategy details a number of performance indicators intended to regulate data exchange between the police and other organisations. Unfortunately these are of little value because the statistical data to support them is not available.

⁸ Paragraph 32 and 50 Home Affairs Committee Session 2000-01 Second Report - Criminal Records Bureau 28 March 2001.

⁹ Association of Chief Police Officers

An example covered in more detail later is the time taken for a case result to pass from the court to the police (See 7.5 to 7.11).

(E) The Importance of Timeliness

- 1.22 It is the failure to comply with the timeliness criteria that has adversely affected the quality of data. This has been the basis of the significant concerns expressed. It is worth considering why, when the service has managed 'Phoenix' data since 1995, timeliness suddenly became such an important issue.
- 1.23 Timely, accurate data is the lifeblood of PNC. By expeditiously recording the commencement of proceedings (within 24 hours) a travelling prolific offender can be identified and dealt with appropriately. For both public and police officer safety it is vitally important that the most up to date information known to the police service is available at all times.
- 1.24 The police service has for a number of years regarded PNC less as an operational aid and more as a part of the record keeping process. In more recent times forces have invested in local computer systems which, in many cases, are relied upon as the prime source of a suspects previous conviction history. Typically the preparation of a case file would require the interrogation of both local and national systems. If there was any indication that there may be convictions not recorded on PNC in existence elsewhere, the local force would be contacted and that local system checked.
- 1.25 The updating of information on PNC was not given precedence. Indeed, as local systems took priority in many forces, updating PNC slipped further and further into arrears. This has created a degenerative circle. As PNC became less current, forces invested in new computer systems to plug what was perceived as an information gap. It is primarily for these reasons that historically some case results have not been entered for months or even years. It is only recently when access to the system has been opened to agencies outside the police service and PNC is regarded as the definitive record, that the timeliness issues have become critical.

(F) The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

- 1.26 Prior to 11 March 2002 the police carried out PNC and local intelligence system vetting checks on applicants for jobs dealing with the vulnerable (e.g. teachers, carers for children). Since that date the process has been centralised through the establishment, under Part V of the Police Act 1997, of the CRB. By providing wider access to criminal record information, the CRB will help employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors identify candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involving contact with children or other vulnerable members of society.
- 1.27 In the case of positions involving working with children and in the future with vulnerable adults, the Disclosure service offered by the CRB provides organisations with a 'one-stop shop' service to access information held by the Department of

Health and the Department for Education and Skills as well as by the police. The CRB aim to offer a more timely service than was hitherto available from the police.

- 1.28 The CRB has three levels of subject access request - Basic¹⁰, Standard and Enhanced. The accuracy of Basic and Standard level reports will, to a large extent, be dependent upon the quality of PNC data. Only the Enhanced level will be referred to police forces for additional research when information held by the force but not on PNC could, if appropriate, be brought to the attention of the enquirer.
- 1.29 CRB access is only one area of the criminal justice system requiring a high level of PNC data integrity. Recent research into youth justice and bail policy has looked to PNC for statistical data. As wider access to the PNC is used to support government objectives the requirement for good quality, consistent and timely data has never been greater.

(G) Concerns of the Government

- 1.30 In early 2001 the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee carried out a short enquiry into aspects of the CRB including PNC data quality. Their report stated;

‘It would be unacceptable if errors on the PNC let even one undesirable person through the checking system. Equally, inaccurate data should not be allowed to traduce a blameless individual. The manifest level of PNC error make us doubt whether it can support a system of criminal records certificates.’

..They continued..

“The Home office must ensure that improvements are made to the quality of data stored on PNC...”¹¹

- 1.31 The Home Secretary, Chief Officers and other parties also shared this concern as did other agencies with an interest in PNC data quality. It was apparent that a consolidated approach to the issues was required and HMIC was identified as the appropriate organisation to carry out an inspection.
- 1.32 In March 2001, following discussions with key interested parties it was decided that HMIC would carry out a review and inspection of the performance of all forces (England & Wales) with a view to reinforcing the importance of accuracy and timeliness and to help forces achieve an acceptable performance level. It was agreed that the objective for forces would be that
- No force should have any ‘Impending Prosecutions’¹² on PNC that are older than 12 months, that had not been the subject of investigation to confirm that the court result is still legitimately outstanding.

¹⁰ The ‘Basic’ level of subject access is expected to become available later in 2002.

¹¹ Paragraphs 32 and 50 Home Affairs Committee Session 2000-01 Second Report - Criminal Records Bureau, 28th March 2001

¹² The term ‘Impending Prosecution’ is explained in paragraph 2.8.

- The above performance should be effective from 1 April 2002 with forces moving towards that position from 1 April 2001 and maintaining it thereafter.
- The ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy timeliness performance standards would be part of the overall validation exercise.

2. THE INSPECTION

- 2.1 This inspection commenced on 1 March 2001 and was divided into two phases. The first phase concluded on with the creation of an interim report covering roughly the first 6 months of the programme (published December 2001)¹³. The full inspection had to be finalised by the end of March 2002, broadly in line with the go-live date for the Criminal Records Bureau. The final statistics used in this report were taken on 15 April 2002. This report will update that information with the performance of forces over the whole period.

(A) Methodology

- 2.2 The purpose of this inspection was to ensure that all forces introduced efficient working practices to ensure that data on PNC was current and accurate. Although similar in principle to the standard HMIC thematic inspection approach, the normal practice of visiting just forces with differing performance was not appropriate for addressing the wide-scale problems of PNC timeliness. The inspection was necessarily conducted on a large scale the only precedent for which was the millennium compliance project in 1999. Of the 48 forces involved in the inspection of PNC, only 14 were not visited by inspection teams in the 12 months of the review.

Features of this inspection;

This inspection had several quite unique features, which helped to speed the progress of the teams' work.

a) Remote Monitoring of Performance

As computerised processes could check some of the major performance indicators remotely, it was possible to monitor force performance on a bi-weekly basis. This information was used to focus effort on those forces which were under-performing.

b) The Use of Electronic Media

The inspection was managed in real time. All correspondence with forces was by electronic media.

c) The Role of HMIC Inspectors

HMIC fulfilled the role of expert observer. A total of sixteen inspectors, all temporarily seconded to HMIC from forces, visited forces at different stages of the inspection. The inspection teams were composed of police and senior civilian staff with expertise in different areas ranging from business systems to courts and PNC management within forces.

- 2.3 Where forces were seen to be performing below standard, HMIC inspectors visited and sought to identify areas of weakness. The subsequent report was sent to the force, usually within ten working days. As a result the majority of inspection time was spent in forces where performance was below the national average. Details of the forces visited can be seen at Appendix Two.

¹³ A copy of the Interim Report is available from HMIC and the Home Office or the internet at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/pncdqt.pdf>

(B) Performance Indicators

- 2.4 This inspection concentrated on a very specific set of performance indicators that relates to only a small part of what is a complex, sophisticated computer system. These indicators were selected primarily because performance in these areas has a direct impact upon the accuracy of nominal data. The indicators were
- Arrest/Summons – The time taken to input details onto PNC once proceedings have been instigated against an individual.
 - Impending Prosecutions – The number of Arrest/Summons reports awaiting input of a court case result.
- 2.5 It will be seen that the indicators measure both the commencement and conclusion of the criminal justice process. The data entry is the responsibility of the police although whether it should continue to be so is discussed later (see paragraph 7.7).

Arrest/Summons

- 2.6 The Arrest/Summons performance set by the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy is that data should be entered onto PNC within one day of the Arrest/Summons event.¹⁴ This challenging target was set in April 2000 with the expectation that integrated computerised systems for custody and case preparation would be delivered in the near future. Although this has not occurred the performance target has remained unchanged. The HMIC interim report suggested (at paragraph 6.4) that the one-day performance target was for many forces unachievable and should be reviewed.
- 2.7 The Arrest/Summons performance was measured in two ways
- The number of days a force takes to record 90% of its total input.
 - The percentage of that total recorded in one day.

The 90% total input target is the performance goal, it is a ‘first past the post’ measurement. If a force achieves 89% in one day and then takes ten days to enter the additional 1%, the performance figure would be 10 days. This simple pass or fail statistic does not identify underlying trends of improvement and for this reason the percentage recorded in one day was also used to measure how close a force was to achieving the 90% target.

Impending Prosecutions

- 2.8 Prior to the entry of a disposal (e.g. court result, caution or discontinuation), a PNC record is referred to as an Impending Prosecution. The ACPO Strategy performance target is that the police update the PNC record within three days of receipt of courts results from the court. As the court should forward the result to the police within three days of the hearing, the maximum time delay from hearing to entry on PNC should not exceed six days.¹⁵

¹⁴ This ‘Stage Process date’ is detailed in Appendix 10.

¹⁵ Home office circular 24/1991 recommended that Magistrates Courts forward case results to the police within 3 working days. Court Business Extract B2208 in September 1991 set the same criteria for Crown Courts. Both documents are reproduced in full at Appendix Four in the Interim Report.

- 2.9 Performance in relation to Impending Prosecutions was measured by different methods in each part of the inspection. In phase one forces were expected to reduce the total of Impending Prosecutions first recorded prior to 1 July 2000 by 4% per two-week period. If achieved, this would mean that every force would remove their entire backlog of older cases by the end of the 25 x 2-week periods leading up to April 2002.
- 2.10 The second method, introduced after 7 October 2001 attempted to ‘profile’¹⁶ all outstanding cases by the date the case was first recorded. This more sophisticated method recognised that forces will always have a residue of legitimately outstanding cases which were created in previous years. The profile has been found accurately to reflect force performance although some refinement is currently being added to make it more sensitive to monthly performance changes.
- 2.11 By monitoring the performance statistics in this way, HMIC was in a position to inspect and advise those forces where performance was below expectation.

¹⁶ The performance profile is explained in more detail in Appendix 8.

3. SUMMARY AND RESULTS OF PHASE ONE

Introduction

- 3.1 Phase one of the inspection was built upon the earlier work relating to PNC, primarily the Police Research Group report 'Phoenix Data Quality' and the HMIC report 'On the Record'. A protocol based upon the recommendations of the latter was used as a basis for performance evaluation.
- 3.2 Performance across the country was poor in both the critical areas of Arrest/Summons and outstanding Impending Prosecutions. The national average for Arrest/Summons (ACPO performance criterion 'one day') was 55 days. There were 216,891 Impending Prosecutions outstanding which had been created prior to 1 July 2000, some of which were legitimately outstanding but at that time it was not known what proportion of the total that was.

(A) Arrest/Summons

- 3.3 Improvements against performance in respect of the Arrest/Summons target were found to vary. The monitoring of Arrest/Summons performance was made difficult by the significant skewing of statistics caused by the mass input of 'old' case results leading to apparent inconsistencies in performance. Where input delays existed, they were invariably a result of poorly designed processes and a number of forces have tackled these head on and reduced the time to input 90% of cases from between 30 and 50 days to single figures.
- 3.4 There was significant unease as to whether forces without an IT solution could achieve the 1-day target. Only 4 forces consistently achieved 1 day but by the end of September 2001, 23 forces were inputting over 90% of all Arrest/Summons details within 10 days, which is a more realistic standard.

(B) Impending Prosecutions

- 3.5 To clear the backlog of old cases and not allow new cases to increase, forces needed to achieve a reduction in impending case result backlogs, both cumulatively across England & Wales and individually, against their personal targets. Between 28 March and 7 October 2001, the overall total of outstanding pre-July 2000 cases was reduced from 216,891 to 98,296 a reduction of 118,595 (55%). This was in line with the overall reduction required to meet the April 2002 target.
- 3.6 Individually, the performance of forces varied significantly. By the end of August 2001 all but five forces had achieved a net reduction in their overall case result backlog. Twelve forces had achieved or exceeded their original targets and a further thirty-one had achieved reductions, albeit below their targets. In the 5 forces with poorest performance, the main problem was identified as inadequate chief officer prioritisation and resultant under-resourcing. HMIC undertook an intensive exercise

to address this blockage and by the end of September each of the five forces had engaged and their performance was improving.

- 3.7 Concentrating specifically on the pre-July 2000 cases, 12 forces still had significant work ahead to achieve the April 2002 timescale. Of these, seven had made a considerable effort in the last few weeks and were on target to reach their goal. Three had the ability to achieve the April 2002 deadline if they applied more consistent effort. The remaining two were very large metropolitan forces which accounted for a substantial proportion of the remaining national backlog. At the time they are attacking their backlog effectively but were likely to require additional resources to accelerate their respective predicted completion dates of July and August 2002.

(C) Other Issues

- 3.8 The work of the inspection teams has also highlighted wider areas of policy, infrastructure and support where there would need to be concerted efforts from forces and other organisations (e.g. PITO) if improvements in PNC data quality and timeliness were to be continued and then sustained. To ensure the progress made at the end of the initial inspection period was maintained, HMIC continued issuing statistics and closely monitoring the performance of all forces.
- 3.9 A full report on phase one of the inspection, which is obtainable from HMIC, can also be accessed on the Internet.¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/pncdqt.pdf>

4. SUMMARY AND RESULTS OF PHASE TWO

Introduction

- 4.1 In January 2002, HMIC received a further direction from the Home Secretary under section 54 (3) of the Police Act 1996 to continue monitoring the performance of forces and report further after 31 March 2002.
- 4.2 The interim report had suggested that forces had made significant progress but that a number of forces still had some work to do to achieve the performance criteria by April 2002. It was also apparent that changes to business processes undertaken by the larger forces had yet to deliver the projected benefits.
- 4.3 At the outset the current performance of each force was examined and risk assessed against the performance criteria detailed in Appendix Three. The process confirmed that a number of larger forces were not achieving the required standards and that some forces not previously visited were also now performing poorly.
- 4.4 As the 1 April 2002 deadline approached there was greater urgency in the inspection process. A new inspection protocol¹⁸ was introduced which focused with a more clinical precision on business processes supporting the two prime performance indicators. This was complemented by an in-force inspection schedule that differed dependent upon the size of the force. Visits to the non-metropolitan forces lasted one and a half days, the larger forces and forces with particularly poor performance, three days. The revised protocol was circulated to all forces with guidance on how to evaluate business processes and monitor their own performance.
- 4.5 Special attention was given to the Merseyside, Metropolitan, Greater Manchester and West Midlands forces. Whilst these forces had made significant inroads into their backlog of cases awaiting entry onto PNC, they still carried 63% of the national total of pre-July 2000 outstanding records. There was significant evidence to suggest that the business processes within all of the forces had been improved but it was of some concern to HMIC that the benefits would not be delivered by 1 April 2002.

(A) Arrest/Summons

- 4.6 As new business benefits took effect, the reduction in the number of days to record 90% of new inputs continued. In the period from October 2001 to April 2002 the national average fell from 37 days to 16 days. This average was adversely affected by unusually poor results from three forces which, when removed, took the average down to 11 days.
- 4.7 The underlying trend when measuring the percentage of all cases recorded by each force within one day showed significant improvements in 41 of the 48 forces monitored. Four of the remaining seven forces were performing well at the outset

¹⁸ See Appendix 4.

and the reduction was caused by normal statistical fluctuation. Of the 41 forces, 15 forces showed over 50% improvement in performance.

(B) Impending Prosecutions

- 4.8 The trend detailed in the interim report showing a significant number in the reduction of outstanding Impending Prosecutions continued. The reduction in the total of all cases outstanding was 57,469. The percentage still outstanding recorded before 1 July 2000 dropped from 55% to 11%.

(C) Other Issues

- 4.9 Whilst, during the course of the inspection, there had been considerable improvements in performance by all forces, the inspectors were concerned that this had been achieved by short-term measures such as the temporary transfer of staff or the utilisation of police officers on light duties. Improvements delivered in this way cannot be sustained. This is particularly true in the larger forces with high-volume file throughput. There is serious concern that, unless national standards are adhered to on a day-to-day basis, the police service will have to undertake the same labour intensive and costly 'catch up' exercise in the future.
- 4.10 Poor results in forces could often be attributed to decisions made at the strategic level. A reduction in resources, particularly in relation to PNC inputting, based upon local constraints with no reference to agreed national standards inevitably led to a failure to achieve, or, in some cases, even approach those standards. Only strict national adherence will restore the credibility of PNC as the definitive record upon which operational decision can be securely based.

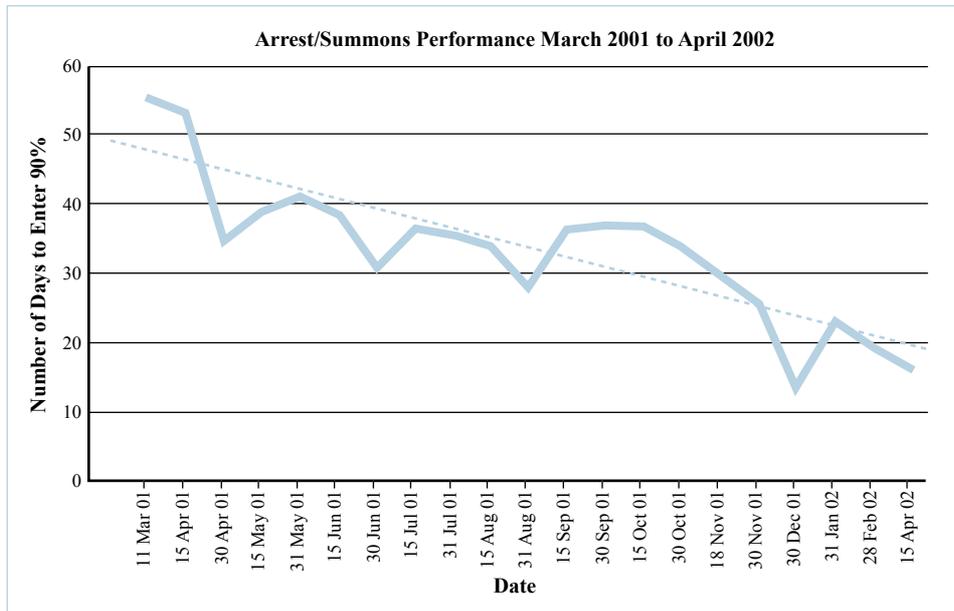
5. FULL INSPECTION FINDINGS

- 5.1 This Section sets out the statistical results for the whole period of the inspection, 11 March 2001 to 15 April 2002. Appendix Five contains the performance data for each force in respect of Arrest/Summons performance at the start and end of the inspection process. Appendix Six contains the data for Impending Prosecutions.
- 5.2 During the course of the inspection, all forces improved performance in relation to PNC record creation and maintenance. Indeed, a significant number of smaller mainland forces had achieved their targets within six months. The offshore forces also improved but, as the number of cases processed often only amounted to double figures, performance appeared to fluctuate when represented in percentage terms. In most of the larger forces, and in particular the metropolitan forces, it was found that revised business benefits did not feed through into improved performance until April 2002.
- 5.3 The prime driver for success was management ‘buy in’ leading to the appropriate strategic approach. This was particularly apparent in a number of forces where chief officers became closely involved with the work and maintained a high profile throughout. This strategy, when followed by a pragmatic review and overhaul of outdated business processes and an imaginative approach to training/awareness, quickly produced positive results.

(A) Arrest/Summons

- 5.4 Between 11 March 2001 and 15 April 2002 the national average, measured in days, for recording 90% of the total Arrest/Summons entries improved from 55 to 16 days. In the earlier stages this figure was distorted by forces ‘catching up’ putting old cases into the system. National performance is shown in Table 1 by the solid line with the dotted line representing the trend.

Table 1



5.5 See Appendix Five for details of all forces, an extract sorted by performance is at Table 2 below.

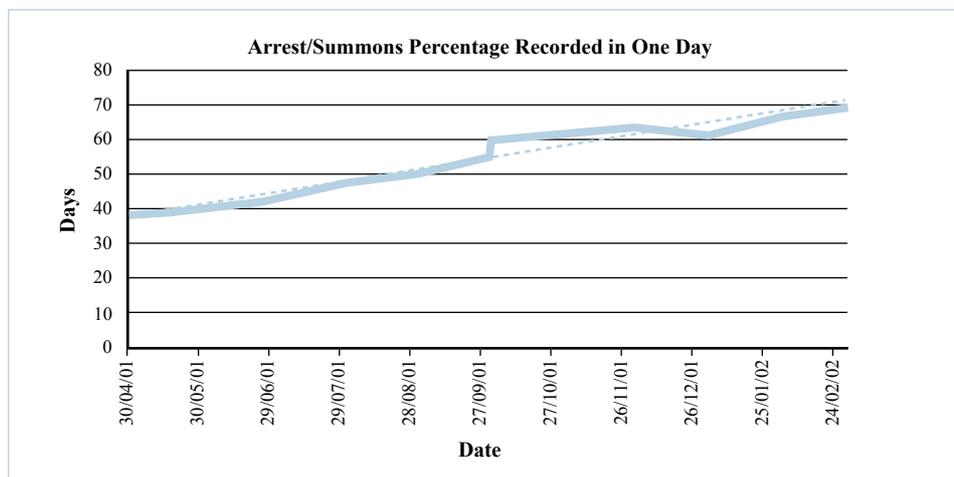
Table 2

	Force	11-3-01	15-4-02	Average¹⁹
1	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	1	1	1
2	Norfolk Constabulary	24	1	1
3	Kent County Constabulary	1	2	2
4	Suffolk Constabulary	62	2	2
5	West Yorkshire Police	22	2	2
6	Cumbria Constabulary	18	2	3
7	Northumbria Police	32	2	3
8	South Wales Constabulary	86	5	3
9	Thames Valley Police	49	3	3
10	Cheshire Constabulary	84	4	4
38	Staffordshire Police	55	4	23
39	Dyfed-Powys Police	26	22	25
40	Merseyside Police	47	36	25
41	Wiltshire Constabulary	73	16	25
42	Nottinghamshire Constabulary	41	20	29
43	Cleveland Constabulary	51	33	36
44	North Wales Police	86	54	40
45	Lincolnshire Police	109	87	46
46	British Transport Police	68	54	66
47	Gloucestershire Constabulary	7	50	71
48	Isle of Man Constabulary	107	139	106

5.6 The figures in Table 2 above, identifying the number of days to achieve 90% of total Arrest/Summons input by a ‘first past the post’ method concealed a positive trend of improvement.

5.7 The percentage of cases recorded within one day was also measured, this shows steady improvement across the whole period of the inspection. National performance is shown in Table 3 by the solid line with the dotted line representing the trend.

Table 3



¹⁹ Over eight weeks prior to the 15 April 2002.

- 5.8 The full table detailing each force's performance in this area is at Appendix Five. An extract, sorted by performance is reproduced at Table 4 below.

Table 4

	Force	11-3-01	15-4-02	Average²⁰
1	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	90	93	92
2	City of London Police	96	91	90
3	Norfolk Constabulary	86	90	90
4	Kent County Constabulary	94	89	89
5	Thames Valley Police	10	88	88
6	West Yorkshire Police	51	87	88
7	South Yorkshire Police	80	88	87
8	Northumbria Police	0	87	86
9	Leicestershire Constabulary	50	88	83
10	Lancashire Constabulary	93	89	76
38				
38	Derbyshire Constabulary	36	54	51
39	Hertfordshire Constabulary	0	51	49
40	Greater Manchester Police	3	42	45
41	Essex Police	9	49	41
42	Guernsey Police	39	35	39
43	North Yorkshire Police	0	49	33
44	Jersey Police	6	38	33
45	Gloucestershire Constabulary	14	31	31
46	Merseyside Police	21	18	24
47	Isle of Man Constabulary	1	21	17
48	British Transport Police	4	21	11
	National Average	38	69	

- 5.9 The underlying trend showed some improvement during the inspection period but it was disappointing that forces did not perform better. Two themes were common amongst forces not achieving the required standard:

- **Processes** - Almost without exception, the inspection team found that outdated business processes contributed significantly to poor performance, particularly in relation to paper-based submissions. For example, a document that describes the appearance of the individual, as is the case with the PNC input document, can only be checked when that person is within the view of the person checking. Any subsequent examination can only establish the completeness of the document and, if undertaken at a later date, will inevitably generate delay in the submission process. With the PNC input document it must be a case of 'get it right first time.'
- **Awareness and Training** - Many examples were found of police officers not being aware of the importance of timely submission and of source input documents passing between departments before submission to the PNC input bureau.

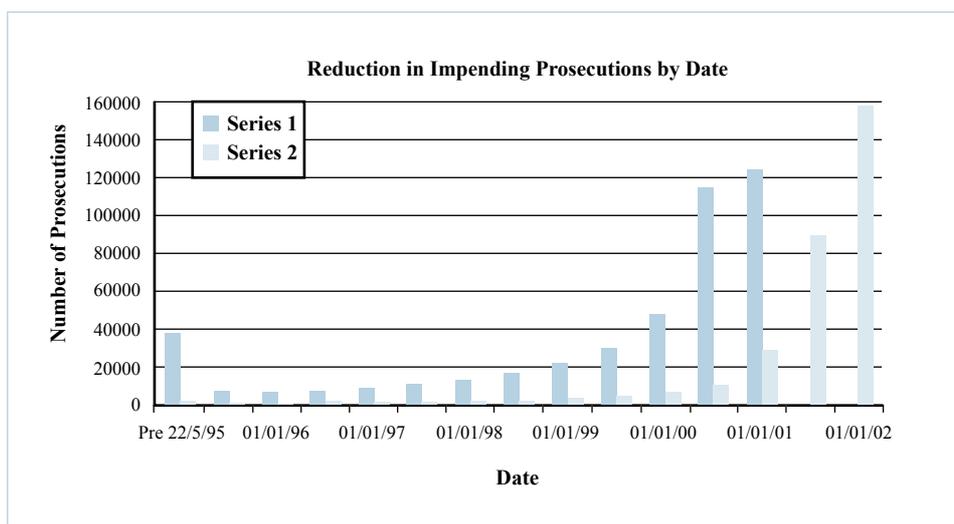
²⁰ 1 January to 31 March 2002.

5.10 There is clearly more work to be done to improve performance in this area. This is discussed in some detail in Appendix Seven.

(B) Impending Prosecutions (Court Results)

5.11 It was identified at the commencement of the inspection that a significant number of old records had not been finalised by the addition of a case result. Many of these records were in excess of five years old. The first phase of the inspection required forces to reduce the total outstanding by 4% per two weeks period. The second phase moved to the ‘profile’ monitoring method. Series 1 in Table 5 identifies the number of cases outstanding by year of creation in March 2001. Series 2 identifies the number outstanding on 15 April 2002. This clearly shows how the backlog of ‘old’ cases has disappeared. Any of those remaining are legitimately outstanding as the prosecution has not been finalised.

Table 5



5.12 On 11 March 2001 nationally there were 216,891 (48% of all cases) over nine months old still not resulted. On 15 April 2002, the total over nine months old was 64,503 (21%). This averages at 1,343 per force with many forces holding substantially less.

5.13 The Impending Prosecution ‘Profile’ extract in Table 6 was developed to allow forces accurately to monitor performance in this area. Unlike simple numerical measures used in the first part of the inspection, the profile can accommodate the reality that forces will always have a number of cases legitimately outstanding but, over time, the total of the older cases will diminish. By identifying what percentage of the total number of cases a force holds in each of the previous seven years, the profile quickly identifies the development of backlogs. A full explanation of the profile can be found at Appendix Eight. See Appendix Nine for the full table.

Table 6

	Force	Prior To	12 months to	12 months to	12 months to	12 months to	12 months to	12 months to	Total cases
		30/06/1996	30/06/1997	30/06/1998	30/06/1999	30/06/2000	30/06/2001	30/06/2002	
		<i>0.51%</i>	<i>0.47%</i>	<i>0.82%</i>	<i>1.43%</i>	<i>3.05%</i>	<i>11.59%</i>	<i>75.36%²¹</i>	
1	Northamptonshire	0.11%	0.04%	0.09%	0.40%	0.85%	4.77%	93.74%	4487
2	North Wales	0.07%	0.15%	0.11%	0.49%	1.19%	4.44%	93.54%	2680
3	Warwickshire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%	6.29%	93.36%	1144
4	Leicestershire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.58%	6.92%	92.44%	3771
5	North Yorkshire	0.85%	0.30%	0.41%	0.70%	0.70%	5.92%	91.12%	2702
6	Guernsey	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.51%	0.00%	8.72%	90.77%	195
7	Durham	0.00%	0.03%	0.10%	0.34%	1.45%	7.33%	90.74%	2905
8	Northumbria	0.10%	0.14%	0.17%	0.42%	1.33%	7.99%	89.84%	9972
9	Dorset	0.37%	0.33%	0.45%	0.58%	2.02%	6.43%	89.81%	2425
10	Derbyshire	0.15%	0.23%	0.25%	0.43%	1.59%	7.92%	89.44%	3966
38	Cleveland	0.31%	0.25%	0.49%	1.75%	3.67%	13.17%	80.35%	4463
39	Surrey	0.99%	0.75%	1.06%	2.08%	3.04%	12.44%	79.64%	2927
40	Hertfordshire	0.17%	0.39%	0.58%	1.75%	5.21%	13.15%	78.74%	4107
41	<i>Greater Manchester</i>	0.70%	0.49%	0.67%	1.77%	4.21%	15.66%	76.51%	17336
42	City of London	0.40%	1.41%	1.62%	1.82%	4.24%	14.85%	75.66%	990
43	Jersey	0.00%	1.14%	0.76%	1.14%	2.65%	19.32%	75.00%	264
44	British Transport Police	0.35%	0.10%	0.62%	2.01%	6.60%	17.78%	72.54%	5124
45	<i>West Midlands</i>	0.66%	0.31%	1.50%	3.00%	5.72%	19.05%	69.77%	27916
46	<i>Merseyside</i>	2.07%	1.24%	2.17%	4.20%	6.05%	16.00%	68.27%	14492
47	<i>Metropolitan</i>	4.29%	1.73%	1.90%	3.57%	5.63%	15.10%	67.78%	54493
48	Ministry of Defence	0.41%	0.41%	1.65%	0.41%	6.17%	23.87%	67.08%	243

5.14 It will be noted that four metropolitan forces highlighted are near the bottom of table. This caused particular concern, as these forces were responsible for a significant number of outstanding Impending Prosecutions. During the course of the inspection and subsequently, HMIC has engaged with these forces to identify weakness and support business change. The situation in respect of each of these forces is detailed below.

Merseyside Police

Arrest/Summons performance in Merseyside improved during the inspection period from 26 days to an average of 19 days. The percentage recorded within 24 hours in April 2001 was 21%, this deteriorated to 18% in April 2002. During the course of the inspection the force has reduced the number of outstanding Impending Prosecutions by a huge amount, which was necessary due to the historically poor performance of the force in relation to PNC. It now has 62.05% of the outstanding 15,533 Impending Prosecutions recorded since 1 July 2001. This is below the national average. At the commencement of the inspection the force implemented a special project, 'Operation Wakefield' to address these issues.

²¹ Appendix Eight explains the target percentage totals shown on this line.

The force was visited on 25 February 2002, the inspectors concluded:

“Operation ‘Wakefield’ has reduced the I/Ps from 43,000 to 15,000 and funding has been made available to continue the work with I/Ps after 1 April.

A fully detailed list of all 15,000 outstanding I/Ps has been produced and each outstanding I/P examined as to its validity.”

Greater Manchester Police

The force has been visited twice - 18 June 2001 and 4 March 2002. Arrest/Summons performance has improved from 31 days to an average of 8 days. The percentage recorded within 24 hours in April 2001 was 3%, this improved to 42% in April 2002. Although only 67.62% of the 18,165 Impending Prosecutions have been recorded since 1 July 2001, which is below the national average, there is substantial evidence to suggest that this backlog is being actively managed. In June 2001 the inspectors concluded:

“It is the view of the Inspection Team that the Force is now turning the corner in relation to Impending Prosecutions and that progress, albeit slower than desired, will begin to be made. There is a need for them to urgently address the systemic difficulties which exist in the submission of PSD’s if the performance indicator is to be met”.

After a further visit in March 2002 the team stated:

The force has procedures in place to ensure that all Impending Prosecutions over 12 months old are legitimately outstanding. The procedures are constantly reviewed and adequately resourced.

The force has identified every one of its 3,406 outstanding cases and has its own database called the ‘Old Impending Database’ that provides a visible progress report. There is evidence of ongoing discussions between the force and courts.

The Project Team provide the CRU Manager with weekly updates and from these she updates the ACC, who once again, takes a personal interest in progress.

West Midlands Police

The force was visited on 18 June 2001 and 18 February 2002, during this time Arrest/Summons performance improved from 32 days to 3 days. The percentage recorded within 24 hours in April 2001 was 53%, this improved to 86% in April 2002. When compared with the national average, a low 61.25% of the 29,293

Impending Prosecutions have been recorded since 1 July 2001 and whilst the force is actively managing this backlog the projected completion date is later than required. The inspectors' report in February 2002 stated:

It was frequently stated that Action Plans had been prepared and this issue should be resolved within three to four months, which does not signal acceptance by the force that 31 March is, and always has been an absolute deadline. It is imperative that the force recognises 31 March as a deadline that must be achieved, and moves rapidly to ensure that it meets this national target. The alternative is that West Midlands Police, which is commendably addressing the future of PNC, will be perceived as having failed. Considerable effort to reduce Impending Prosecutions is required if the force is to achieve the appropriate recognition for its efforts in relation to PNC."

Metropolitan Police

The force was visited on 11 June 2001 and 12 January 2002. Arrest/Summons performance has remained in single figures throughout the course of the inspection. It is currently 4 days. The percentage recorded within 24 hours in April 2001 was 77%; this improved to 79% in April 2002. The January 2002 report stated:

"It is clear that PNC issues are now very high on the force agenda but the force is still unlikely to reach its target regarding Impending Prosecutions until May 2002 at the earliest.

The force was singled out for special attention because, although the recording of Arrest/Summons data was amongst the best in the country, the force had a substantial backlog of impending cases, some a number of years old. A series of meetings was held between HMIC and the force, which resulted in an agreed action plan to deliver improved performance. This plan has delivered significant benefits to the force and, whilst the backlog of cases has not been cleared, the progress made to date suggests that the issue is now being managed expeditiously. HMIC are continuing to work with the force to assist where appropriate.

- 5.15 The four forces detailed above, although in the lower part of the table when compared to other forces, are actively managing the outstanding cases and, if they have not already done so, identifying legitimately outstanding prosecutions. The percentages within the profile may require modification when these forces have legitimised all outstanding cases.

(C) Strategic Issues

- 5.16 In the relatively brief visits to forces the inspection teams quickly identified many critical areas that, if developed, would improve performance. It is suggested that, if these were so evident to the informed observer, they really should have been obvious to the force.

- 5.17 In February 2000 the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy identified ‘Key Action Areas’ for success. The inspection found that it was most often a failure to address these issues that resulted in poor performance. The following paragraphs summarise the key issues identified in the inspection visits, set out under the headings used within the ACPO Compliance Strategy. To assist the reader, the main expectations of the ACPO strategy are summarised in the header boxes, these ‘Areas’ are set out in full in Appendix 1.

Resources

ACPO Strategy Extract

Forces should establish the present level of resources committed to the gathering, collation, input and use of data and should determine the level required to achieve the principles behind the Information Management Strategy (IMS). The PNC Compliance Performance Indicators may assist in defining the resource levels required and the appropriate competencies of staff.

Areas of Concern

- 5.18 HMIC inspectors found many instances of insufficient inputting staff for the work. The negative effect on staff of being constantly faced with this scenario often manifested itself in low morale. The implications of resource shortfalls were more apparent in the Impending Prosecutions area. The inspectors found little evidence that forces performing poorly in this area had examined the throughput of work and funded the function appropriately. Time and time again the inspectors found too few operatives overwhelmed with work.
- 5.19 The inputters managed this on a day-to-day basis by concentrating on the elements of the systems that were being measured. This resulted in a substantial amount of data required to support the QUEST²² functionality being delayed.
- 5.20 To achieve the timeliness criteria most forces are inputting the basic ‘skeleton’ record²³. It was found that to capture the complete record created additional administrative burdens and thereby delay.

Good Practice

- 5.21 Prior to the commencement of this inspection the **Hampshire** force embarked upon a one-year project to clear the impending prosecution backlog by calculating the time required to do the work and then recruiting and training casual staff for that specific purpose. A number of forces are recording the full record from the outset. In **West Yorkshire** the full report is taken by telephone at the commencement of the case. In **Essex**, where the same system is in use, at least 10% of all reports are checked against a recording of the telephone conversation. The inputters also, when photographs have been taken, check the description entered onto PNC against the photograph. Whilst the value in this is limited by the nature of the medium it does provide a backstop and partial audit of both the reporting officer and the inputter.

²² Querying Using Enhanced Search Techniques see Chapter Six.

²³ The minimum input requirement for PNC to generate a record. Consists of basic details only.

- 5.22 In **Kent** the PNC Input Bureau supervisors check 100% of records entered by new staff until a threshold of 95% accuracy is achieved. This performance-based measure ensures an appropriate period of supervision based upon the learning abilities of the operator, not an arbitrarily chosen time. Experienced staff were monitored with errors fed back and, if necessary training needs identified. The information is reflected in the operator's Personal Development Report (PDR). The operators welcomed the feedback. The comment was made, "we like to do a good job and if we make a mistake we like to be told about it." At the time of the inspection the force was evaluating flexible working schemes for the retention of inputters with family commitments.
- 5.23 In **Sussex** a fulltime trainer works within the PNC bureau. The staff were quick to point out the advantages of having an expert on hand and the time savings made by not having to seek assistance externally.

Leadership

ACPO Strategy Extract

Senior managers need to understand the benefits of present systems and the potential for the future. They should establish the level of awareness amongst senior staff of the capabilities of PNC and ensure that the full potential of the system is appreciated.

Senior staff should explore how best use can be made of the system to improve force performance in both serious /series and volume crime.

Areas of Concern

- 5.24 Despite two national presentations²⁴ intended to alert forces to the current state of PNC data and the implications of non-compliance, there was still an element of denial by senior officers in a number of forces that they actually had a problem that required addressing. Throughout the course of the inspection it was found that the single most important factor in achieving a significant improvement in performance was early 'buy in' by senior officers.

Good Practice

- 5.25 In areas of good practice, however, the inspection found examples of chief officers allocating funding, managing and driving forward ambitious business plans to bring forces into compliance and ensure that they remained that way. In a number of forces the chief officer responsible for PNC had an understanding of procedures and demonstrated a willingness to become personally involved if quality and timeliness were not consistently achieved.

²⁴ In May 2001, PITO, HMIC, ACPO and the Information Commissioners Office jointly hosted two presentations for police managers to explain the implications of PNC non-compliance.

Organisational Positioning

ACPO Strategy Extract

Forces would benefit from viewing the national systems primarily as aids in crime investigation as opposed to functions of record keeping. They should be mindful that where they place the local management of PNC within the organisation [e.g. within C.I.D or Criminal Justice] can influence whether staff see their value as merely record keeping systems or powerful crime investigation tools.

Areas of Concern

- 5.26 Perspectives on PNC varied widely across the service. This was to a large extent dependent upon the positioning of the system within the force. The updating of case commencement and conclusion means that the system is primarily accessed by the department in the force involved in pre- and post-court work. These are variously referred to as the Administration or Criminal Justice Support Units. Operational officers use PNC to access vehicle owner/keeper functions such as VODS²⁶ and simple criminal name checks. However, the potential of the really powerful QUEST investigation tools is not realised as operational staff do not believe the data is timely and accurate.
- 5.27 Whilst a number of forces have recognised the potential benefits of the system and explored this potential, it is because the integrity of the output is in doubt that many have regarded the maintenance of records on PNC as a tiresome chore. Indeed, one force suggested that their efforts in key wording²⁶ are negated by a lack of such activity in surrounding forces. The inevitable result is that the national data set was incomplete and the aims of forces seeking to use PNC were frustrated.
- 5.28 Many forces have procured computer systems in recent times and a significant number of the functions provided by these systems replicated or almost replicated those provided by PNC. At best this necessitated 'double keying' of data, at worst PNC was not updated. Quite how force Information Management Strategies (IMS) have permitted this situation to arise is outside the scope of this inspection although it does raise doubts over how much PNC features in the strategic planning of the forces concerned. This subject is discussed in more detail under 'Ownership and Sponsorship' below.

Good Practice

- 5.29 During the course of the inspection it became apparent that forces were addressing strategic issues in relation to PNC. The formation of a PNC Steering Group chaired by a chief officer ensured that the departments involved in the systems use discussed relevant issues. There were a number of instances of this, for example one group, in **Wiltshire** was chaired by a chief officer and included representation from Force Intelligence, the Criminal Justice Unit, PNC Training, Data Protection, the PNC Bureau, Scientific Support and the Information Technology Departments.

²⁵ The vehicle on Line Descriptive Search allows interrogation of the system on a partial registration number or owner location.

²⁶ Record key wording supports the search functionality of QUEST.

Training

ACPO Strategy Extract

The operational officer must have the awareness to understand the capabilities of PNC and their own responsibilities in providing source data.

The terminal operator must have the requisite skills to use the systems to its full potential and offer guidance on capabilities to operational staff.

Line managers should recognise how information systems can best contribute to operational performance.

All the above should be addressed by national training programmes and adherence to national training standards.

Areas of Concern

- 5.30 The inspectors also found that, in many forces, operational officers did not understand the potential of PNC. In one force visited, a scenario was put to a group of officers where a VODS enquiry would quickly identify an offender. Of the eight officers present, only one knew of the facility. When queried one officer said, “..we just ask the control room to do a check..” Unfortunately, if the officer is not aware of the facility, such a check will not be requested. Whilst personnel tasked with updating the system need specialist training and audit, operational officers only need an understanding of the system’s potential. The latter is a far less costly option.
- 5.31 Centrex (formerly National Police Training) is responsible for running a specialist PNC training wing in Leicestershire. It is a requirement that force PNC trainers attend this central facility before training in force. All forces have sent staff to this centre and the training of operatives was satisfactory. It was apparent however, that when required to input old records expeditiously, many forces did not have sufficient trainers or trained staff capable of undertaking this work. This was usually because staff with the necessary skills had either left the service or been re-deployed to other duties.
- 5.32 Many good initiatives to raise patrol officers’ awareness of PNC were found. Most forces took advantage of the publicity material available from the PITO Customer Service department at PNC headquarters in Hendon. **South Yorkshire Police** have introduced ‘Table Talker’ condiment holders on canteen tables for the officers to read whilst taking refreshment.

Good Practice

- 5.33 There were many examples of good practice in this area. In **Kent**, A3 laminated posters were displayed in custody and report-writing areas explaining how to complete the input form, with examples. In **Cheshire**, the Force Strategy Group has undertaken a series of awareness seminars for all senior and middle level managers.

In **Staffordshire**, a pilot ‘road show’ was carried out in respect of the intelligence tools available on PNC, i.e. VODS and QUEST and a subsequent evaluation showed that the use of these tools has greatly increased. **West Yorkshire** was amongst a number of forces running PNC features in the force newspaper. In **Lancashire**, the PNC manager has a separate PNC awareness budget and has purchased notice boards solely for PNC marketing material, these are distributed throughout the force. In **Surrey**, and a number of other forces, PNC marketing information is propagated by use of the force intranet. In **Durham** a leaflet was attached to all officers pay slips outlining the facilities available on PNC and the importance of accurate source documents.

Internal Scrutiny and Performance Indicators

ACPO Strategy Extract

The Service should recognise the benefits of taking a proactive approach to auditing to maximise performance. They should ensure that reporting lines exist to allow Data Protection Officers to raise matters at a senior level.

Where appropriate Internal Performance and Best Value Reviews should focus on optimum use of data and compliance to standards and make clear the links between effective data management and operational performance.

Forces should understand the reason for their performance against national P.I's and take action where appropriate.

Areas of Concern

- 5.34 The inspection found that most forces have in place an auditing regime based upon a regular cycle of inspections. A number of the forces had not undertaken a PNC audit in accordance with this cycle, usually because of a shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Where found, this was highlighted and reassurances were obtained that the situation would be resolved.
- 5.35 Although statistical data detailing poor performance was produced and circulated by PNC Customer Services at Hendon clearly showing that some forces were not complying with the minimum requirements for PNC updating, this did not lead to remedial action by the force. One of the clearest examples of this is in the area of key wording where a number of forces consistently make no attempt to comply with the national strategy.
- 5.36 The circulation of PNC statistics varied by force. At the start of the inspection they were received by the PNC Bureau Manager in most forces and not circulated. The situation has since improved and they are used to inform the decision making of the force PNC Steering Group.

Good Practice

- 5.37 A number of forces, **Staffordshire** being one, cascaded PNC statistics to departmental/divisional heads. In **Kent**, PNC performance is raised as a standing item in discussions between the ACC and divisional officers. **West Mercia** was one of a number of forces where the Data Protection Officer had carried out a risk-assessed PNC audit.

Accountability

ACPO Strategy Extract

Issues in relation to audit and accountability must assume a higher profile.

HMIC will continue PNC compliance audits and explore the linkage between efficient data management and operational effectiveness. HMIC will also audit forces against the nationally agreed data management P.I's and inspect in-force audit processes.

Areas of Concern

- 5.38 Currently HMIC audits PNC compliance against the following references:

- The ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual (Version 1) (March 1998)
- The ACPO Codes of Protection for Data Protection (1995)
- PNC System Security Policy Code of Connection (Volume 1 Version 2.1) (25-2-97)

These references, which have been due for review for a number of years, have an emphasis on security and data protection. The ACPO Compliance Strategy introduced performance criteria in relation to timeliness but the inspectors found little evidence of these being monitored and managed by individual forces. There was evidence of senior management being unaware of the monthly performance indicators provided by PNC until HMIC took the initiative and circulated them to all forces bi-weekly. Had these indicators been monitored it would have been apparent at an early stage that forces were failing to achieve minimum data quality and timeliness standards.

- 5.39 The service has yet to appreciate fully the potential of PNC as a resource. Whilst the audit responsibility will remain with individual forces, it is the responsibility of HMIC to ensure that the appropriate checks and balances are in place and the processes are being managed.
- 5.40 The HMIC PNC Compliance Audit section inspects forces against the requirements of the Manual. The inspections have been time-based mechanistic exercises to date and have not achieved the desired improvements in performance.

Comment

- 5.41 The HMIC inspection methodology is currently under review. HMIC has developed a PNC Protocol and risk assessment process that not only makes the inspection process more wide-ranging and relevant to current working practices, it also harmonises the PNC inspection process with other HMIC functions. With PNC inspectors based within HMIC operating regions and not centrally based, a more hands on approach and the performance of each force will be closely monitored.

Ownership and Sponsorship

ACPO Strategy Extract

ACPO Information Management Committee has on-going responsibility for the IMS²⁷, the overarching framework within which this PNC Compliance Strategy sits.

The strategy will only work if Centrex, HMIC, PITO and individual forces fulfil their KEY ACTIONS and fully adopt the principles within them.

Areas of Concern

- 5.42 The PNC Compliance Strategy was created by and is currently owned by ACPO and ACPOS²⁸ Councils. Prior to the commencement of this inspection there was no evidence to suggest that these owners had taken any action to ensure that forces complied with the strategy.
- 5.43 There are numerous groups and committees tasked with the management of PNC, some of which have been re-modelled in recent times. Unfortunately, the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the present structure is capable of delivering the national cohesiveness required to deliver a reliable national system. There is no PNC 'Executive', no group or individual with the authority to censure a force for failing to comply with the national standards. This weakness was identified in 1998 by the Police Research Group-

"Even when standards are agreed, forces will then introduce their own policies which contravene these. The problem is no one has the power to ensure compliance by individual forces. No-one polices the PNC."²⁹

- 5.44 The strategy identifies four 'partners' to assist ACPO to fulfil the strategy - Centrex, HMIC, PITO and individual forces. Since the commencement of this inspection all parties have done much work to deliver compliance. There was little evidence in forces however of any significant movement towards compliance with paragraph (13) of the ACPO Compliance Strategy for PNC which states;

²⁷ Information Management Strategy

²⁸ Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland

²⁹ Phoenix Data Quality - Police research Group Special Interest Series: Paper 11.

“(Forces should) determine how the IMS will support the force’s long medium/long term strategic plan and then where necessary re-align local IS/IT strategies with the service-wide IMS. In doing so forces should ensure that local strategies support the high level policy statements.”

It is this lack of a shared strategic vision that has resulted in the duplication of functionality found in many forces today.

- 5.45 Forces may, with some justification, suggest that due to late delivery by PITO of products³⁰ central to police business, any long-term strategic view is all but impossible. There is, however, in many forces a duplication of computerised functionality that has its roots in ill-defined strategy from the early 1990’s. Instead of building on the functionality of PNC, forces have locally duplicated it.

(D) Other Issues

- 5.46 Although, during the course of this inspection, statistics indicate that quality and timeliness has improved, there are two areas of particular concern where failure to utilise the capabilities of PNC can have a serious detrimental effect, one within the police service and one more widely. In Chapter Six the potential of the PNC intelligence tool ‘QUEST’ is examined. Chapter Seven discusses the role of other criminal justice agencies and their day-to-day working practices with the police.

³⁰ PITO is currently developing a Case and Custody computer system which will capture most of the data required by PNC.

6. QUEST - THE OPPORTUNITY MISSED

- 6.1 The QUEST facility on PNC is an example of how non-compliance with the ACPO Strategy is leading to missed opportunities for quickly detecting crime in the police service.
- 6.2 PNC supports an intelligent search facility, Querying Using Enhanced Search Techniques (QUEST). The QUEST facility allows searches on many nominal details for example, tattoos, shoe size, height. Any combination of these can identify an individual where the name is not known. The QUEST facility is solely intended to increase the detection powers of the police and, if successful, can considerably increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- 6.3 QUEST is dependent upon the quality of the information entered onto PNC. The prime source of this information is the form completed by an officer when processing an accused person. It is with some concern that inspectors found in a number of forces that the nominal details had been entered onto PNC to comply with the requirements of the inspection but large numbers of QUEST input documents containing descriptive information were still awaiting processing. In some forces there were thousands of these forms.
- 6.4 To understand the potential of QUEST some examples of its successful use are set out below.³¹
- In the West Midlands, counterfeit currency was used in a public house. A search was carried out on the description of a white male, 6' tall, thin build with a skinhead haircut, brown hair, aged 20-22 years. The offender had a tattoo of a swallow on his left hand. Enquiries at the scene suggested he lived in Solihull and may have been called 'Barry'. A QUEST search produced one suspect who was dealt with for the offence.
 - In Suffolk, a male prisoner detained for robbery gave false details but his wife referred to him as 'Simon'. A QUEST search on the Christian name and a tattoo identified the man who had outstanding warrants in Cambridgeshire.
 - The discovery of the female body of a heroin addict in South Yorkshire started a homicide enquiry. Enquiries resulted in a QUEST search for a white male aged 20-29 with a specific forename, involved in the use of drugs. The computer search was limited to the immediate area. The search produced 77 suspects one of whom, a Coventry-born man, was charged two weeks later.

By the use of post-coding and the integration of a Geographic Information System (GIS), both technologies currently available, the potential is significantly enhanced. It is then possible to define an area on a screen map, simply drawing a circle, and query QUEST. Some examples:

³¹ Compiled by PNC Customer Services, Hendon.

“List any person with a gold capped front tooth living in this area with a conviction for any offence with a sexual content.”

or

“ List any person over six foot tall who talks with a speech impediment, has previous convictions for violence and lives within half a mile of this footpath.”

- 6.5 The successes above are encouraging but the full potential of QUEST has not yet been achieved.
- 6.6 In some forces considerable investment will be required to overcome the present backlog of QUEST input documents. Unfortunately, there is little doubt that a considerable amount of intelligence data is being delayed in this way. Operational police officers will not use the QUEST facility with confidence until forces ensure that all available data is recorded on the system expeditiously.

7. OTHER AGENCIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

(A) Non Police Prosecuting Agencies (NPPA's)

- 7.1 NPPAs have an obligation to notify the police within 24 hours of the commencement of proceedings for a (PNC) recordable offence. As with prosecutions originated by the police, the purpose of this is to alert any subsequent enquirer that the accused person has proceedings (but not necessarily convictions) pending. As many agencies manage the whole process without involving the police, it is particularly important that the notifications are timely and accurate.
- 7.2 There was considerable evidence during the inspection that these notifications are not forthcoming. Indeed, when one force wrote to all local agencies to highlight this, a number were unaware that it was required. As non-police prosecuting agencies are dependent upon PNC previous conviction history when preparing an accused person's antecedents there is a real risk that the antecedent history put before a court may be incomplete.
- 7.3 In addition such omissions can result in a lack of intelligence to support multi-agency working. For example, the fact that a suspect is currently subject to proceedings initiated by the Inland Revenue, local authorities and the police will be of interest to all agencies. The implications of this information not being available could be grave when proceedings relate to vulnerable adults and children.
- 7.4 The integrity of these channels of communication, which deliver PNC data to the point of input, cannot rely upon good faith. All agencies should jointly agree and adhere to the obligations created by a suitable information-sharing protocol. For additional security the situation could be resolved if, for recordable offences, the courts insisted that an Arrest/Summons number, proving that the case had been registered on PNC, be included with the accused person's details at the commencement of process.

(B) Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts

- 7.5 This inspection did not extend to the working practices of the CPS and the courts. It has become apparent, as the police have cleared the backlog of existing cases, that significant delays are now caused by the late release of results by the courts.
- 7.6 In general, the working relationship between the police and courts at a practitioner level was found to be good and local issues were managed to the satisfaction of both parties. Good examples were found where police accessed the court computer systems directly for results or received the information via a printer on police premises from the court computer system.
- 7.7 The creation and finalisation of PNC records is currently the responsibility of the police, although the service is of the firm view that the courts should enter court

results. The police, however, do not have control over the progress of the case in the interim. As case papers pass from the police via the CPS to the courts charges may be substantially amended or discontinued. This information is not updated on PNC, with the result that a case result may bear little relationship to the original charge. As a result, the inputters entering court results have to update a record the details of which have changed considerably. The requirement for manual seeking/matching as a result of the above, apart from being time-consuming, also frustrates any computerisation of the process. There is no common reference number for a charge recognised by the police, the CPS and the courts.

- 7.8 Performance by the courts across the country was generally good. Some examples were found of the courts seeking to minimise delay. In one court area in Cambridgeshire, where a case result could not be verified it was transferred to a pending list to allow the verified cases to be released to the police and the results entered onto PNC.
- 7.9 By contrast, an example was found where a force received almost one month's court results two months after the hearing. This had the effect of a 'tidal wave' of work to be processed by the police, disrupting normal business. To avoid this situation developing in future, one force visited had temporarily seconded a clerical officer to work in the courts result office. Whilst admitting this may not resolve the staffing problems in the courts, her supervisor justified the initiative by saying, "it will save us (the Criminal Justice Unit) a lot of work later". Such initiatives, whilst demonstrating initiative, only serve to conceal what appear to be, pressing staffing problems in the courts.
- 7.10 Forces are now encouraged to time and date stamp incoming correspondence from the courts. Although only currently a local practice, this has produced statistics indicating that a substantial part of the delay in recording conviction data is due to inefficient working practices in the courts.
- 7.11 The inspection revealed an unfortunate lack of common purpose, in relation to PNC updating, between the courts and the police. Forces raising timeliness issues tell how staff shortages, failures of technology and heavy workload are put forward by the courts as reasons for not achieving the required performance. The majority of forces have resolved these issues. However, the timeliness and quality of data on PNC will not improve until both parties in the court result recording process comply with the nationally-agreed performance criteria.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 This inspection has been instrumental in raising the performance of forces in respect of very particular areas of PNC business. It would be very easy to identify a large number of detailed recommendations that would serve to improve practice at tactical and operational levels but the key to sustainability in the future will be to achieve real change and progress at strategic levels, both nationally and within individual forces.
- 8.2 The staff and managers responsible for the input of Arrest/Summons and court case results to the PNC are only part of the larger jigsaw that represents the value of PNC to the criminal justice system as a whole. Just as the police are not the only users of PNC so they are not the only ones who have ownership of either the problems or solutions associated with data accuracy and timeliness.
- 8.3 It has been difficult enough to achieve standard approaches and voluntary cooperation simply within the police service. For future success, cooperation and standardisation must transcend not just force boundaries but also organisational boundaries. This may not be achievable if compliance with national agreed standards remains voluntary and subject to local considerations. To ensure a greater element of compulsion within the system, the Home Office, and indeed Government, may need to consider legislation or regulation to safeguard the future integrity of PNC.

(A) Standards

- 8.4 Key to any standard approach will be appropriate and consolidated standards that are owned and recognised by all the parties involved. Currently the ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy and the other manuals³² are the main reference sources. Unfortunately they represent voluntary guidance that some forces have either selectively implemented or patently chosen to ignore. It has been noted that in recent times at least one none police organisation with legitimate access to PNC has been severely censured for falling below required standards, this has not happened to any police force.
- 8.5 There is an opportunity to agree binding standards with the advent of the Police Standards Unit, the National Centre for Policing Standards and the likely powers to be taken by Government to 'codify' some procedures or activities as national 'best practice' and/or statutory guidance. Whilst it would be preferable for the Service, via an ACPO lead, to drive the agreement of standards for PNC, it may be that experience suggests that the Home Office should lead and coordinate this review.
- 8.6 In any review, it will be vital that standards are agreed and enforced across departmental and organisational boundaries, in particular within the wider criminal justice system. The Home Office is better placed than ACPO to deliver such inter-departmental cooperation.

³² The ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual (Version 1) (March 1998), The ACPO Codes of Protection for Data Protection (1995) and PNC System Security Policy Code of Connection (Volume 1 Version 2.1) (25-2-97)

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.

(B) Strategy

- 8.7 The inspection revealed that all too often, PNC did not feature prominently, indeed often not at all, in forces' information management strategies (IMS). It is hardly surprising therefore that PNC was not regarded as a high priority nor considered when local systems were being developed or enhanced. The functionality and capabilities of PNC should be fully accommodated and integrated within each force IMS.
- 8.8 Perhaps equally disappointing was the paucity of knowledge amongst operational staff of the undoubted operational benefits of PNC, if used correctly. There were few forces that displayed a strategic approach to training and awareness of PNC as an operational tool.
- 8.9 A key factor in both raising the profile of PNC and ensuring integration with other operational or IT domains was the personal involvement of a chief officer. Although nominally in place prior to the inspection, it was clear that for the vast majority of nominated 'champions' PNC was neither a high priority nor something that featured routinely in their planning. Chair of the PNC Steering Group should always be a person of chief officer rank.

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.

(C) Robust Process For Monitoring And Evaluation

- 8.10 Undoubtedly one of the most useful features of the inspection was the statistical profile introduced for phase two. Until that time statistics were available to forces in lengthy tabulated format that required time and effort to analyse and evaluate. Furthermore, there was no routine central analysis of such statistics. As a result, few PNC managers had the time or inclination to spend lengthy periods interpreting the figures.

- 8.11 The phase one 'league tables' clearly attracted forces' attention and the more sophisticated profiles locked in the renewed interest of managers in carrying out local self-assessments, the colour coding providing an easy flag for areas of potential concern as well as providing inter-force comparability. Both sets of statistics became increasingly part of force strategic planning during the inspection. HMIC would contend that there is great advantage for such statistics to be integrated into force and Basic Command Unit (BCU) level management information.
- 8.12 Remote national oversight, inter-force comparability, ease of analysis and encouragement to local self-assessment must be vital elements of any future evaluation process. The force profiling approach provides all these elements and should be built into any regulatory regime.
- 8.13 HMIC has been concerned to note that post-April 2002, PITO appear to have abandoned or, at best, greatly modified this approach, possibly due to the absence of appropriate technical skills or resources. It has been noted that a member of staff whose prime responsibilities lie elsewhere provides statistics. The preparation of statistical performance information in a form that enables informed decision making within forces is crucial. There is initial evidence that the new format is less easy for strategic managers to understand and therefore risks losing influence in the decision-making regimes within forces.

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.

- 8.14 Whilst the profiles will encourage and support local self-assessment, there is a clear need to establish a structured programme of HMIC monitoring, audit and inspection. Action has already been taken to locate PNC Audit Team members within each of the four HMIC regional offices and this will allow a closer working relationship with forces' PNC managers.

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**

(D) Remedial Action

- 8.15 Where HMIC identifies particular problems within any force, there needs to be a clearly understood process for taking remedial action. The basic premise should always be to support the force to solve their own problems. There could be occasions, however, where the solution is not agreed or the force senior management decline to follow action suggested by HMIC. It would be sensible to have an agreed escalation procedure for achieving an appropriate remedy.
- 8.16 Remedial action for failing to meet national standards should be defined as part of the work when designing the new national standards (see earlier recommendation) and the involvement of HMIC and the Police Standards Unit should be clearly factored into any escalation procedure.

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

(E) Conclusion

- 8.17 This inspection has clearly shown what can happen when a national computer system is not rigorously maintained to national standards. The growth of such a large inputting backlog over a number of years has, more than any other factor, shown how the perception of PNC has slipped down force priorities and stopped the considerable potential of the system being exploited.
- 8.18 All forces have committed considerable resources to a task that should not have been necessary in the first place. And yet there is some concern that some forces have regarded this as a 'one off' exercise and even as the inspection was concluding there was evidence that resources were being redirected from PNC into other areas.
- 8.19 Without a total commitment by chief offices to ensure that record maintenance of PNC is adequately resourced, users are trained and the potential of the system is fully exploited, the lessons learned in this exercise will be forgotten.

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Appendix 1 - ACPO PNC Compliance Strategy

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Accessible on the ACPO Intranet by:		All	
Contents may be seen by:		General Public	
Author:	Richard Earland	Force/Organisation:	Kent Constabulary
Date: Created:	16 February 2000	Telephone:	
Date: Revised:		Reference:	

STATUS: At its meeting on 27 April 2000 Chief Constables' Council agreed to accept this strategy and to recommend to Chief Constables that they adopt it for implementation as appropriate in their forces. It was further agreed that the target date for implementation should be the end of the financial year 2000/2001.

Compliance Strategy For the Police National Computer

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FOREWORD

This strategy is subordinate to the National Police Information Management Strategy (IMS) and designed to be applied to PNC. The IMS is owned by Chief Constables' Council/ACPOS Council and was developed by the ACPO Information Management (IM) Committee.

The Service must recognise that Performance Indicators are needed for all national systems covering :-

- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- Completeness
- Relevancy

Strategy status and ownership

Chief Constables' Council and ACPOS Council own the strategy.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate and where appropriate ACPO IM Committee oversee the application of the strategy. Individual forces and agencies have responsibilities to implement the strategy.

Reasons For A PNC Compliance Strategy

The drivers for the development of this strategy have been identified in the IMS (see page 4) and will continue to be: –

Acknowledged shortfalls in data handling, accuracy and timeliness – as evidenced by the PRG report on Phoenix Data Quality.

Data Protection principles governing Subject Access and the move after transitional periods to full application of the new Act beyond 2000. At present the Service may not meet the Registrar's standards on Relevance, Accuracy and Timeliness. The Registrar has already seen the PRG Report and is aware of the issues which face the service. Given the Registrar's considerable enforcement powers concerning data handling, compliance is essential.

The Service is failing to maximise the full business potential of its major national crime reduction and investigative IT systems. As Mr M. O'Byrne C.C. Bedfordshire states in his report on proposed Phoenix Performance Indicators "given the current scrutiny which is being applied to the management of the service, the fact that the service has stated that the future of effective policing lies in an intelligence led approach....it is essential that the service puts its house in order as quickly as possible in the management of this key system."

We must be able to demonstrate that we can be trusted to deal with information about individuals with integrity – this requires adherence to agreed standards.

The Freedom of Information Act will be drafted so that it is compatible with the principles of the Data Protection Act.

The Human Rights Act will pose fundamental questions on how the Service handles and uses data – the Home Secretary has stated, "Rights flow from duties – not the other way round. One person's freedom is another person's responsibility."

If our systems are defective The Freedom of Information Act, the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act will increase the likelihood of litigation against the Service based on data handling procedures and use in operational situations.

The ACPO/ACPOS Information Systems Community Security Policy provides a set of security requirements for safeguarding sensitive information including procedural and compliance issues. All members of the Community are required to comply with its content.

Best Value demands that we “ deliver services to clear standards – covering both cost and quality – by the most effective, economic and efficient means available “ Best Value Policing, DETR 1998. This has clear implications given that the annual costs in 1998/99 for PNC services amounted to £17.6 million.

Strategy benefits

Full implementation of the Compliance Strategy will allow the service to demonstrate a more professional and ethical approach to data handling. This will enable the Service to continue to develop the investigative and crime reduction capacity of its national systems confident that it can stand scrutiny and is helping to improve operational performance. It will also allow the Service to approach issues of disclosure with greater confidence that the data will be relevant, timely and accurate.

Managing Information Strategically

The publication of a National Information Management Strategy recognises the need to shift from poor data quality management systems to a perspective where users understand their role both as providers and users of data and as a consequence, information being of a quality level which means it is fit for purpose.

This Compliance Strategy sets the framework and performance targets to ensure the service at large ensures effective management of National Police Data held in the PNC. The performance regime will require significant improvement in data quality in accordance with the principles enshrined in the IMS.

Key Action Areas

The areas this strategy identifies as requiring a response are collectively referred to as Key Action Areas. They are -

1. Resources
2. Leadership
3. Organisational Positioning
4. Training
5. Internal Scrutiny
6. Performance Indicators
7. Accountability
8. Ownership/Sponsorship

A more detailed breakdown of these Key Action Areas now follows

1. Resources

- a) In some Forces a significant under resourcing of data handling functions has contributed to present problems -
- b) Forces should establish the present level of resources committed to the gathering, collation, input and use of data and should determine the level required to achieve the principles behind the IMS. The PNC Compliance Performance Indicators proposed may assist in defining the resource levels required and the appropriate competencies of staff.

2. Leadership

- a) To improve performance results senior managers need to understand the benefits of present systems and the potential for the future. Serious concerns surrounding the perceived lack of knowledge and commitment to PNC were clearly laid out in the Police Research Group Paper “ Phoenix Data Quality”. This stated “ Line and Divisional managers, as well as Chief Officers, should be held accountable for compliance with these standards”. Therefore -

- b) Forces/ agencies should establish the level of awareness amongst senior staff of the capabilities of PNC/Quest/CCA/VODS and ensure that the full potential of these national systems is appreciated.
- c) Senior staff should explore how best use can be made of these systems to improve force performance in both serious /series and volume crime. / (IMS ACTION NO. 13 - HOW THE IMS WILL SUPPORT A FORCES MEDIUM TERM PLAN).
- d) Forces may wish to review their in-force crime reduction strategy to ensure that the national systems are integrated properly.

3. Organisational Positioning

- a) The IMS recognises that each force is different but forces would benefit from viewing the national systems primarily as aids in crime investigation as opposed to functions of record keeping -
- b) Forces should be mindful that where they place the local management of Police Information Systems within the organisation [e.g within C.I.D or Criminal Justice] can influence whether staff see their value as merely record keeping systems or powerful crime investigation tools.
- c) The IMS action plan identifies the need to re-focus the management of information so that an organisation-wide perspective is achieved. (IMS ACTION PLAN No. 14-page 15)

4. Training

The present situation has three dimensions: -

- a) The information user [operational officer] must be provided with sufficient awareness to understand the capabilities of the services available and their own responsibilities in providing source data.
- b) The information provider [terminal operator] must have the requisite skills to use the systems to their full potential and offer guidance on capabilities to operational staff.
- c) Line managers should be trained to recognise how information systems can best contribute to operational performance

All the above should be addressed by national training programmes and adherence to national training standards.

5. Internal Scrutiny

The Service should recognise the benefits of taking a proactive approach to auditing to maximise performance -

- a) Forces should comply with documentation and Manuals governing the use of PNC.
- b) Individual forces should ensure that reporting lines exist to allow Data Protection Officers to raise matters at a senior level.
- c) Where appropriate Internal Performance and Best Value Reviews should focus on optimum use of data and compliance to standards and make clear the links between effective data management and operational performance.
- d) Forces should understand the reason for their performance against national P.I's and take action where appropriate.

6. Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators specifically for Phoenix data standards have already been developed by Mr M. O'Byrne. Details of the proposed P.I's are included as an appendix to this strategy. The Service should recognise the need for these P.I's on data standards, acknowledging that some are aspirational and influenced by other organisations. Their staged implementation in some areas presents a progress path for forces to follow designed to deliver sustainable compliance -

- a) The Service should formally adopt the P.I.'s for Phoenix data standards.
- b) Individual forces should establish their position in relation to existing and future P.I's, understand the reasons behind their performance and take appropriate action.

7. Accountability

The Service should recognise the increasing importance of information as a resource. Issues in relation to audit and accountability must assume a higher profile -

- a) The Service will continue to be subject to separate PNC compliance audits by HMIC.
- b) HMIC will be able to explore the linkage between efficient data management and operational effectiveness during inspections of forces.
- c) HMIC will be able to audit forces against the nationally agreed data management P.I's.
- d) HMIC will be able to inspect in-force audit processes.

8. Ownership and Sponsorship

For the strategy to be implemented effectively, monitored and remain relevant in the event of change it must have an owner -

- a) ACPO and ACPOS Councils own the PNC Compliance Strategy.
- b) ACPO Information Management Committee will have on-going responsibility for the IMS which is the overarching framework within which this PNC Compliance Strategy sits.
- c) The strategy will only work if the partners in the strategy fulfil their KEY ACTIONS and fully adopt the principles within them. The partners include:-
 - NPT
 - HMIC
 - PITO
 - Individual Forces

Their individual KEY ACTIONS now follow

KEY ACTIONS

The PNC Compliance Strategy assumes the actions in the IMS “action plan”, will be carried out. The action plan in the IMS and its relevance to the PNC Compliance Strategy is shown in the table below:-

	IMS ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	RELEVANCE TO PNC COMPLIANCE
1.	ACPO Council endorse the IMS as formal ACPO Policy.	ACPO Council	Provides the overarching framework for PNC Compliance Strategy.
2.	To use the agreed IMS policy statements as a basis for discussion with all non-police agencies about information exchange and new IT developments.	All agencies using PNC.	IMPLIED throughout this document.
6.	Identify where within the ACPO/PITO structures responsibility rests for Corporate (Service-wide) Information Management Policy. NB: The body which has responsibility for Service-wide Information Management Policy will be the final arbiter in respect of data standard and data management issues.	ACPO IM Committee	<i>ESTABLISHES THE ROLE OF IM COMMITTEE IN ENSURING ON-GOING IMPROVEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC USE OF INFORMATION ACROSS THE SERVICE</i>
7.	Identify (with the support of members of the ACPO IM Futures Group) which ACPO Committee is responsible for developing the high-level policy statements and ensuring all ACPO Committees take account of this Strategy in their development work.		
8.	Determine how the ACPO IM Committee will shift its focus from "Products" to "Information Management" and support the continued development of IMS.		
9.	Agree the basis of Service-wide Benchmarking of Information Management and Technology in support of the IMS both in terms of the methodology, process and resources.	ACPO IM Committee ACPO Council HMIC	Establish the IM Benchmarking approach includes section on Data Quality and IM Policy formation.
10.	Use the IMS/IT Benchmarking Tool Kit being developed by ACPO IM Committee (see 9) as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of Information Management and Technology Services within Forces	Forces	As above

<p>13. Determine how the IMS will support the Force's medium/long term Strategic Plan and then where necessary re-align local IS/IT Strategies with the Service-wide Information Management Strategy. In doing so, Forces should ensure that local strategies support the high level policy statements.</p>	<p>Forces</p>	<p>Ensures Forces see PNC as a strategic crime fighting tool and a Chief Officer has overall responsibility for managing information as a corporate resource.</p>
<p>14. Where Forces have "Computer Departments", these are to consider how the issues of managing information across the organisation will be delivered and where appropriate re-focus their organisation to ensure the high level policy statements can be implemented.</p>		
<p>15. To carry out an information audit at Force level against the policy statements and determine what action needs to be taken locally to meet the agreed standards.</p>	<p>Force Chief Officers with responsibility for Information Management</p>	<p>Compliance with PI's.</p>
<p>17. To commission a review of the impact of IMS on the current Service Training for IT Delivery and propose a way forward for a Service-wide Strategy of training</p>	<p>ACPO IM Committee</p>	<p>Training and education needs addressed.</p>

Chief Constables' Council agreed at its meeting on 27 April 2000 to accept this PNC Compliance Strategy and to recommend to Chief Constables that they adopt it for implementation as appropriate in their forces. It was agreed further that the target date for implementation should be the end of the financial year 2000/2001.

In so doing Council also agreed:

- a) That the PNC Compliance Strategy should be visited at least annually by ACPO IM and Crime Committees to assess its relevance to the Service and reflect developments in Police Information systems and new legislation.
- b) To adopt the Phoenix Data Quality Performance Indicators (see Annex A).
- c) To develop and implement a unified approach to Data Protection auditing by enhancing the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual.
- d) That ACPO IM Committee would consider the benefits of developing compliance strategies and where appropriate P.I's for all national systems covering accuracy, timeliness, completeness and relevance.

NPT is invited to: -

- a) Establish competency levels required in the use of PNC for different generic roles within the service e.g. uniform patrol officer, detective and S.I.O.

- b) Set minimum standards of training for PNC operators and quality assure training delivered via non-NPT sources.
- c) Ensure that opportunities are taken in all training delivered to emphasise the linkage between operational performance and information systems e.g. regional detective training and SCIMITAR.
- d) Develop a national skills profile to assist forces in selection of appropriate staff for training in the use of Police Information systems.
- e) Maintain a database of nationally approved PNC trainers.

HMIC is invited to:-

- a) Utilise inspections to advise forces of the links between force performance and use of Police Information systems.
- b) Identify and advise the Service on the links between efficiency plans, best value and data management.
- c) Consider including within the inspection process an assessment of individual force action plans designed to deliver their obligations to the strategy.

PITO is invited to: -

- a) Ensure production and maintenance of relevant user manuals for PNC.
- b) Ensure all users [including non-police users] are aware of the IMS and the PNC Compliance Strategy and HMIC's role in policing the system.
- c) Provide a marketing strategy to support the thrust of the Service in moving the focus of Police Information systems from record keeping to crime investigation and performance improvement, in keeping with the IMS.

Individual Forces should: -

- a) Comply with the IMS and PNC Compliance action plans.
- b) Be aware of and comply with, the ACPO Data Protection Audit Manual and other system manuals. When new systems are developed they should be used according to the operating rules provided.
- c) Ensure that appropriate staff are selected for training in PNC, and where appropriate apply the national competency profile [generated by NPT] and train to the national standard where these have been set.
- d) Establish the present level of resources committed to gathering, collation, input and use of data and determine the level required to achieve the principles in the IMS. The P.I's proposed may assist in defining resource levels required and the appropriate competencies those staff will need.
- e) Establish the level of awareness amongst senior staff of the capabilities of PNC/Quest/CCA/VODS and ensure that the full potential of these national systems is appreciated.
- f) Establish robust quality assurance processes in line with the IMS action plans.
- g) Ensure that reporting lines exist to allow Data Protection Officers to raise matters at a senior level.
- h) Ensure that internal Best Value and Performance Reviews focus on optimum use of data and compliance to standards and make clear the links between effective data management and operational performance.

- i) Understand the reason for their performance against national P.I's and take action where appropriate.
- j) Be aware of the importance of the Phoenix source document. Periodic reviews of the submission process should be carried out to ensure efficiency.

It is important for the Service to recognise that non-compliance by a single force can undermine not only the strategy but the integrity of the whole Service.

THE WAY AHEAD

This document represents the start of a continuous process of monitoring, evaluation and development for the Service and should be examined at least annually. It is important that the PNC Compliance Strategy is also visited on an annual basis through a formal process by ACPO Crime and IM Committees and Chief Constables' Council to ensure that it remains relevant to the Service's needs and sympathetic to future developments.

This strategy should be considered as any new national system is developed.

PHOENIX PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

TIMELINESS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Arrest and Charge

1. Initial details satisfying operational need 90% within 24 hours.
2. Full entry - 90% within 5 days.
3. Once compliance with 1 and 2 above is obtained then a staged improvement to 90% within 24 hours for full entry.

Bail Conditions

1. Police bail 100% within 24 hours.

Eventually the Service should aspire to establishing an identical PI standard in relation to court bail conditions. Appropriate technology and agreements need to be in place before this can be realised.

Court Case Results - Police Entered

1. 100% entered within 72 hours of coming into police possession.

This PI standard will remain valid only whilst work is continuing on the computerised link between forces and magistrates courts.

Court Case Results - Court Entered

1. 100% within 24 hours.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

These indicators must be supported by in-force dip sampling.

1. Number of offences with method recorded - 90%
2. Number of offences with location postcode recorded - 95%
3. Number of addresses with postcode recorded - 95%
4. Number of offences (England and Wales) recorded to the 4th level ACPO Offence Code - 95%
5. Number of marks, scars, abnormalities created with at least one keyword included - 95%

It is important to note that whilst forces could (and currently do) use the skeleton record approach to achieve the timeliness PI - they would need to complete a full record to achieve the quality PI's. So using the 2 suites of indicators would solve the current problem of forces getting skeleton records on quickly and not pursuing full records. It would also permit the fast entry of essential operational information.

The strategy which has been developed by the working group details the nature and depth of development forces need to undertake to deliver the improvements required across all Police Information Systems but particularly PNC applications. It is the groups' belief that not until aspects of the strategy (e.g. resourcing) are implemented will the capacity and approach exist within forces to deliver performance to the PI standards proposed, albeit that the standards are correct.

It is recognised that a significant number of forces do not achieve the present PI standards. This is likely to be even more pronounced given the more exacting targets proposed. Without commitment of resources and application of the strategy the working group feel performance will not improve and could worsen (some forces who have tackled part of their under performance to PI's by dedicating resources to areas such as backlogs have suffered alarming drops in performance to phoenix PI's in other areas). To ensure that only appropriate inferences are made over future PI performance, forces undertaking such development work should firstly notify and agree with PITO a work schedule. PITO in turn can then attach explanatory notes to any published PI performance data.

The working group recognise the urgency that needs to be attached to the whole area of data quality and believe the above approaches will secure the committed response required.

Appendix 2 - Schedule of Forces Visited

Force	First Inspection	Second Inspection
Avon and Somerset Constabulary		
Bedfordshire Police		13-3-02
British Transport Police		11-2-02
Cambridgeshire Constabulary		18-2-02
Cheshire Constabulary	25-6-01	25-2-02
City of London Police		13-2-02
Cleveland Constabulary	21-8-01	
Cumbria Constabulary	2-7-01	
Derbyshire Constabulary		
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	11-6-01	
Dorset Police		
Durham Constabulary		
Dyfed-Powys Police		
Essex Police	9-7-01	18-2-02
Gloucestershire Constabulary		
Greater Manchester Police	18-6-01	4-3-02
Guernsey Police		
Gwent Constabulary	29-8-01	
Hampshire Police		18-2-02
Hertfordshire Constabulary		11-3-02
Humberside Police		
Isle of Man Constabulary		
Jersey Police		
Kent County Constabulary	11-6-01	11-2-02
Lancashire Constabulary		6-3-02
Leicestershire Constabulary	16-7-01	
Lincolnshire Police	24-7-01	
Merseyside Police		25-2-02
Metropolitan Police	11-6-01	12-1-02
Ministry of Defence Police		
Norfolk Constabulary		
North Wales Police	25-6-01	27-2-02
North Yorkshire Police		
Northamptonshire Constabulary	16-7-01	
Northumbria Police	4-9-01	
Nottinghamshire Constabulary	9-7-01	
South Wales Constabulary	31-7-01	
South Yorkshire Police	9-7-01	4-3-02
Staffordshire Police		6-3-02
Suffolk Constabulary	7-8-01	
Surrey Police	2-7-01	20-2-02
Sussex Police	2-7-01	13-2-02
Thames Valley Police	18-6-01	6-3-02
Warwickshire Constabulary		
West Mercia Constabulary		25-2-02
West Midlands Police	18-6-01	18-2-02
West Yorkshire Police	25-6-01	
Wiltshire Constabulary	24-8-01	27-2-02

Appendix 3 - Criteria for Selection of Forces for Inspection, February 2002.

Arrest/Summons

Arrest/Summons is measured in two ways.

- The number of days taken to input the first 90% of cases.
- The percentage input in one day.

Forces not achieving the 90% target were measured by the trend in the second criteria. For example, if a force was inputting 90% within 20 days but the trend over the past few months was one of improvement, then that force was not listed for inspection.

Where previous contact with the force has indicated an initiative, usually the computerisation of a process, which will improve performance in the near future, the force will not be visited.

Impending Prosecutions

The 'Force Profile' rolled forward on January 1st 2002. The current period moved from January 2001/December 2001 to July 2001/June 2002. This means that the current period is, at this time, only seven months long.

Impending cases over seven months old are now part of the previous year and this shows up when the previous years total exceeds 11.5%.

Forces with a high previous year total were selected for inspection. The smaller forces with less than one thousand outstanding cases were excluded.

Appendix 4 - Second Phase Protocol

Suggested supporting documentation may be appropriate to evidence progress made. The list is not exhaustive.

- 1. 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.**
(On the Record Recommendation 12)

Supporting Documentation:

- Memorandum covering the commissioning/composition/meeting schedule of the Force PNC Steering Group.
- Meeting minutes covering the work of the PNC Steering Group (post July 2000).
- Force Strategic Plan for the development, use and marketing of PNC.

- 2. Performance indicators set by the PNC Compliance Strategy 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.**
(PRG Report Phoenix Data Quality)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force policy documents covering the P.I's from the ACPO Compliance Strategy for PNC.
- Force policy documents covering; Responsibilities of officers at each stage of the submission process of Source Document information, Approval arrangements, Time taken to pass to the input bureaux and Bureaux responsibilities for data entry and quality control.

- 3. 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.**
(PRG Report Phoenix Data Quality)

Supporting Documentation:

- Memorandum/research reports covering streamlining/speeding up the provision of Phoenix Arrest/Summons information to be entered onto PNC.
- Memorandum/research reports covering streamlining/speeding up the provision/entering/monitoring of court result delays and their entry onto PNC.

- 4. 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.**
(PRG Report Phoenix Data Quality)

Supporting Documentation:

- Probationary Constable training course /divisional training day/promotion course content detailing the inclusion of an input on Phoenix awareness and data provision responsibilities.

- 5. 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.**

(On the Record Recommendation 15)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force policy documents covering their expectations of staff on receipt of a rejected Phoenix Source Document and compliance arrangements.

- 6. Forces ensure that each Phoenix inputting department develops an audit trail to register the return of substandard Phoenix Source Document (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.**

(On the Record Recommendation 14)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force policy documents/memorandum covering the operation of audit trails for returned Phoenix Source Documents.
- A sample extract of the audit trail information recorded in the Phoenix inputting department.
- Details of 2 separate examples where the same officer has on at least 3 occasions been the source of a rejected Phoenix Source Document.

- 7. 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.**

(On the Record Recommendation 17)

Supporting Documentation:

- Memorandum/force policy documents covering arrangements for auditing a proportion of Phoenix inputting staff work and inclusion in PDR.
- Memorandum/performance reports covering the findings in auditing Phoenix inputting staff work.

- 8. Where not already present, that forces develop risk assessed Force Data Protection Officer audit programmes.**

(On the Record Recommendation 18)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force risk-assessed Data Protection Officers Audit Programme.

- 9. Forces integrate PNC and Phoenix data quality compliance into their performance review and Inspectorate programmes for BCUs and specialist departments.**

(On the Record Recommendation 19)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force policy document/memorandum covering the inclusion of Phoenix data quality in the assessment of BCU/Departmental performance during performance reviews.
- Force performance inspection reports covering the inclusion of Phoenix data quality in the assessment of BCU/Departmental performance.

10. 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.
(On the Record Recommendation 20)

Supporting Documentation:

- Force policy documents/memorandum covering the provision/publication and accountability for Phoenix Source Document timeliness and rejection statistics and accountability measures for compliance.
- Published performance statistics reports covering timeliness and rejection statistics for Phoenix Source Document information and whether they are published as part of overall performance statistics in-force.

11. Current Performance Arrest/Summons
(PNC Statistics)

Supporting Documentation:

- Documentation governing commissioning and conducting of research/action in relation to addressing the PNC Compliance P.I's for arrest summons.

12. Current Performance Impending Prosecutions
(PNC Statistics)

Supporting Documentation:

- Documentation relating to the commissioning and conducting of research/action in relation to addressing the PNC Compliance P.I's for Impending Prosecutions.

13. No force has any 'impending prosecution' on PNC which is older than 12 months that has not been the subject of investigation to confirm that the court result is legitimately outstanding. That the above performance standard should be effective from April 1st 2002, with forces moving towards that position from April 1st 2001 and maintaining it thereafter having implemented the ACPO (PNC Compliance Strategy)
(Agreed strategy with Information Commissioner)

Supporting Documentation:

- Memorandum/research reports governing commissioning and conducting of research/action in relation to addressing the agreed target with the Information Commissioner for researching all Impending Prosecutions over 12 months old.
- Validated list of outstanding Impending Prosecutions

Appendix 5 - Arrest/Summons Performance (Number of days for 90% of Input)

Force	11-3-01	15-4-02	Average³³
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	30	22	15
Bedfordshire Police	30	11	9
British Transport Police	68	54	66
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	1	1	1
Cheshire Constabulary	84	4	4
City of London Police	1	1	9
Cleveland Constabulary (AS)	51	33	36
Cumbria Constabulary	18	2	3
Derbyshire Constabulary	23	5	7
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	12	8	17
Dorset Police	13	13	15
Durham Constabulary	448	6	7
Dyfed-Powys Police	26	22	25
Essex Police	17	13	15
Gloucestershire Constabulary	7	50	71
Greater Manchester Police	44	10	9
Guernsey Police	13	11	13
Gwent Constabulary	52	6	9
Hampshire Police	13	10	11
Hertfordshire Constabulary	69	2	7
Humberside Police	12	9	10
Isle of Man Constabulary	107	139	106
Jersey Police	146	11	20
Kent County Constabulary	1	2	2
Lancashire Constabulary	1	9	13
Leicestershire Constabulary	23	2	15
Lincolnshire Police (AS)	109	87	46
Merseyside Police	47	36	25
Metropolitan Police	4	4	4
Ministry of Defence Police	5	4	5
Norfolk Constabulary	24	1	1
North Wales Police	86	54	40
North Yorkshire Police	20	12	16
Northamptonshire Constabulary	30	8	23
Northumbria Police (AS)	32	2	3
Nottinghamshire Constabulary	41	20	29
South Wales Constabulary (AS)	86	5	3
South Yorkshire Police	32	2	7
Staffordshire Police	55	4	23
Suffolk Constabulary (AS)	62	2	2
Surrey Police	74	5	20
Sussex Police	26	25	21
Thames Valley Police	49	3	3
Warwickshire Constabulary	369	4	6
West Mercia Constabulary	16	12	22
West Midlands Police	49	3	5
West Yorkshire Police	22	2	2
Wiltshire Constabulary	73	16	25

³³ Over previous eight weeks.

Appendix 5 - Arrest/Summons Performance (Percentage of Total Recorded in One Day)

Force	11-3-01	15-4-02
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	84	79
Bedfordshire Police	21	77
British Transport Police	4	21
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	90	93
Cheshire Constabulary	0	77
City of London Police	96	91
Cleveland Constabulary	75	81
Cumbria Constabulary	71	86
Derbyshire Constabulary	36	54
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	73	81
Dorset Police	62	64
Durham Constabulary	1	69
Dyfed-Powys Police	1	80
Essex Police	9	49
Gloucestershire Constabulary	14	31
Greater Manchester Police	3	42
Guernsey Police	39	35
Gwent Constabulary	0	62
Hampshire Police	69	82
Hertfordshire Constabulary	0	51
Humberside Police	65	68
Isle of Man Constabulary	1	21
Jersey Police	6	38
Kent County Constabulary	94	89
Lancashire Constabulary	93	89
Leicestershire Constabulary	50	88
Lincolnshire Police	14	70
Merseyside Police	21	18
Metropolitan Police	77	79
Ministry of Defence Police	65	82
Norfolk Constabulary	86	90
North Wales Police	39	71
North Yorkshire Police	0	49
Northamptonshire Constabulary	9	74
Northumbria Police	0	87
Nottinghamshire Constabulary	1	62
South Wales Constabulary	20	84
South Yorkshire Police	80	88
Staffordshire Police	11	81
Suffolk Constabulary	3	85
Surrey Police	17	67
Sussex Police	76	78
Thames Valley Police	10	88
Warwickshire Constabulary	42	60
West Mercia Constabulary	73	73
West Midlands Police	53	86
West Yorkshire Police	51	87
Wiltshire Constabulary	38	75

Appendix 6 - Impending Prosecution Performance

Force	1(%)	2(%)	3	4(%)
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	84	79	6479	83.93
Bedfordshire Police	21	77	2176	84.51
British Transport Police	4	21	5124	72.54
Cambridgeshire Constabulary	90	93	3213	83.85
Cheshire Constabulary	0	77	5132	88.85
City of London Police	96	91	990	75.66
Cleveland Constabulary (AS)	75	81	4463	80.35
Cumbria Constabulary	71	86	3516	88.08
Derbyshire Constabulary	36	54	3966	89.44
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	73	81	4337	88.84
Dorset Police	62	64	2425	89.81
Durham Constabulary	1	69	2905	90.74
Dyfed-Powys Police	1	80	1850	86.27
Essex Police	9	49	4929	80.60
Gloucestershire Constabulary	14	31	2982	87.56
Greater Manchester Police	3	42	17336	76.51
Guernsey Police	39	35	195	90.77
Gwent Constabulary	0	62	4299	86.11
Hampshire Police	69	82	8019	80.67
Hertfordshire Constabulary	0	51	4107	78.74
Humberside Police	65	68	5979	87.69
Isle of Man Constabulary	1	21	266	81.20
Jersey Police	6	38	264	75.00
Kent County Constabulary	94	89	7941	82.55
Lancashire Constabulary	93	89	9453	80.49
Leicestershire Constabulary	50	88	3771	92.44
Lincolnshire Police (AS)	14	70	2941	89.22
Merseyside Police	21	18	14492	68.27
Metropolitan Police	77	79	54493	67.78
Ministry of Defence Police	65	82	243	67.08
Norfolk Constabulary	86	90	2920	84.90
North Wales Police	39	71	2680	93.54
North Yorkshire Police	0	49	2702	91.12
Northamptonshire Constabulary	9	74	4487	93.74
Northumbria Police (AS)	0	87	9972	89.84
Nottinghamshire Constabulary	1	62	7562	84.49
South Wales Constabulary (AS)	20	84	7775	87.92
South Yorkshire Police	80	88	11143	81.97
Staffordshire Police	11	81	4914	83.39
Suffolk Constabulary (AS)	3	85	2311	86.98
Surrey Police	17	67	2927	79.64
Sussex Police	76	78	6493	80.52
Thames Valley Police	10	88	7906	83.75
Warwickshire Constabulary	42	60	1144	93.36
West Mercia Constabulary	73	73	5481	81.39
West Midlands Police	53	86	27916	69.77
West Yorkshire Police	51	87	12473	86.73
Wiltshire Constabulary	38	75	2071	83.78
National Average	38	69		83.59

(1) Percentage of new cases recorded within 24 hours 11th March 2001.

(2) Percentage of new cases recorded within 24 hours 15th April 2002.

(3) Total number of Impending Prosecutions Outstanding 15th April 2002.

(4) Percentage of (3) first recorded since 1 July 2001.

Appendix 7 - Business Processes Supporting PNC

The purpose of this section is to bring together the good practice found during the inspection.

PNC is a complex system with many functions. This section examines just two, those supporting the initial record creation (Arrest/Summons) and the finalisation (Impending Prosecution). Successful Arrest/Summons record maintenance is dependant upon clear-cut, understood business processes and the day-to-day management of those processes. Good Impending Prosecution performance also requires adequate resourcing.

Arrest/Summons Record Creation

The generic Arrest/Summons chart at Table 7 sets out what for many forces represents the way in which information for entry onto PNC is collected, processed and relayed. Each part of this process contains areas of good practice, which are detailed in the chart below.

(1) Arrested (2) Reported

The date to be entered in the 'Stage Process Date' field on PNC, which indicates the commencement of the process, is clearly defined (see Appendix 10)

Throughout the inspection it was in this area that forces found compliance difficult to achieve when dealing with process that did not involve custody. Officers are not aware of the wide diversity of offences now recordable on PNC.

Many forces identified the area of cautions to be a particular weakness, many of these 'getting lost in the system' and the information not being entered onto PNC. An area of particular concern is where the police take no further action. These cases, usually dealt with by a civilian decision maker do not involve the CPS therefore discontinuation notices do not come into being.

A number of forces updated PNC at the time formal process is commenced when the ACPO strategy clearly states that this should be done at the time the offender is reported. In the forces inspected this Compliance Strategy requirement that PNC be updated at the time of report is not complied with.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Officers being aware of and having access to updated information on what is and is not recordable. PNC operators can access this information on line and it is also included on the PNLDB³⁴ to which the majority of staff has access.
- Organisational structure reviewed to ensure that adequate processes support all possible contingencies.

(3) Other Source

An Arrest/Summons report can be created from two other sources, a prosecution commenced by a non-police prosecuting agency or a court result for a previously unrecorded offence.

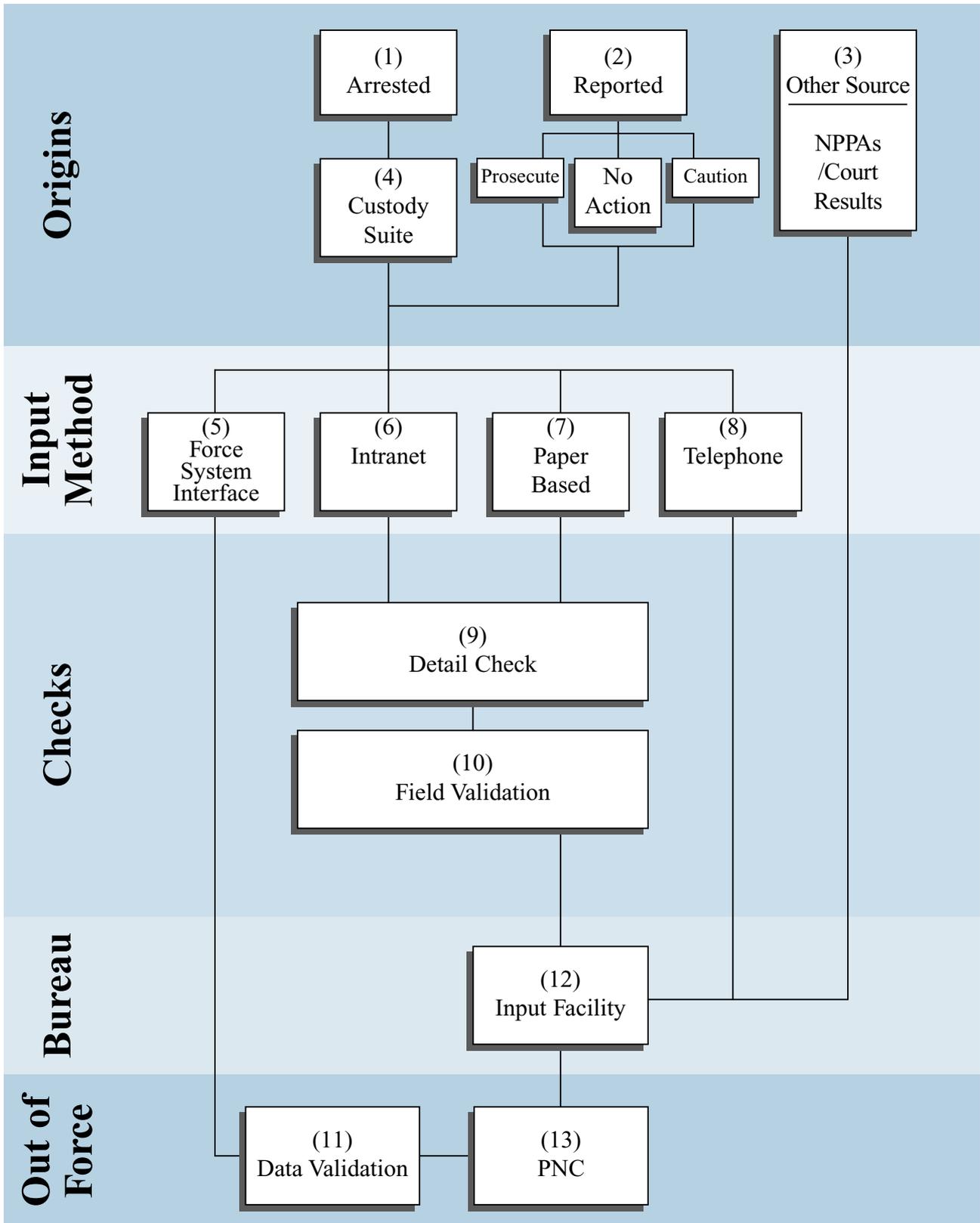
Non-police prosecuting agencies require firm management.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Writing to all NPPA's and setting out their responsibilities.
- A service level agreement with NPPA's managed by PNC Steering Group.
- Representatives from NPPA's visiting PNC inputting bureaux to understand the requirements of early notification and the effects of non-compliance.
- Any late notification is queried at the time of the event.
- Statistics compiled to monitor the performance of NPPA's.
- A willingness by the force to manage non-compliance by escalating to higher management if necessary.

³⁴ Police National Legal Database

Table 7
Arrest/Summons Generic Flowchart



(4) Custody Suite

Custody Suite procedures varied considerably between forces. In most of the forces visited police officers were responsible for source document input. The logic for this appeared to be that the officer had access to all the relevant information.

Whilst the above is in part correct, much of the information collected as part of the PNC initial input can be obtained by personal observation, for example the descriptive details of the accused.

In addition police officers believe, incorrectly that the PNC input process is not time critical and they therefore concentrate on the immediately pressing deadlines usually relating to imminent court appearances.

There is a conflict of interest in the supervision of police officers in the secure environment of the custody suite. Patrol supervision argues that when officers are processing prisoners they are often away from their normal place of work. Custody officers argue that their workload is excessive and they are not in a position to personally supervise every officer's paperwork.

Where civilian staff from non-police organisations are employed to manage detainees there may be some contract changes required if the completion of PNC documentation is to be part of their responsibilities.

The notification of the commencement of process within the force requires firm management. The following have been introduced with some success;

Good Practice/Benefits

- Late notification is queried at the time of the event.
- Statistics compiled to identify persistent non-compliance.
- Where the situation cannot be resolved locally, escalation to senior management.
- An examination of business processes to identify any contributory factors.
- Consideration of a training requirement.
- Sufficient computer terminals conveniently placed for easy access.
- Information on how to correctly complete PNC input forms readily available, in some cases displayed in laminated prints in the wall in rooms with no public access.
- In the case of printed forms, sufficient copies readily to hand with instructions and examples of how to complete them.

And particularly in relation to civilian custody staff;

- It has been noted that where custody suite staff, usually civilian gaolers, complete descriptive details for PNC the quality of the submission improves.
- There is a clear line of responsibility for the complete and timely submission of PNC documentation.
- Training and updating can be restricted to the smaller number of staff specifically charged with the task.
- An 'expert' knowledge by custody staff can be used to alert officers to the possible benefits of PNC.
- Custody staff are usually in contact with the detainee for a longer period and therefore better able to assess potential dangerous behaviour.
- The paper work required of police officers is reduced.

(5) Force System Interface

The majority of forces have in-house computerised systems intended to assist the case handling process, custody and crime recording and the most common. Data collected for these purposes can be used to populate/update PNC records.

Whilst a number of force applications interface directly with PNC a number are still dependant upon the data being re-keyed, a process commonly referred to as 'double keying'.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Ensures consistency of data across in-house and national systems.
- With custody systems removes an input requirement from operational officers.
- The accuracy of the record will be greater if it is completed in the presence of the accused.

(6) Intranet

As forces develop an intranet facility the use of this medium for the submission of PNC data to the point on input has become more widespread.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Intranet transmission offers a low cost medium for PNC data. Without a PNC interface, double keying is unavoidable however it does offer a workable interim solution pending the introduction of a full interface.

(7) Paper Based

This traditional method of data capture is still used extensively throughout the police service. It has two significant advantages over other systems it is cheap and easily accessible.

Many forces have semi-mechanised the transmission of information by use of facsimile.

Since the abolition of a national input form, forces have integrated the PNC input document into data collection for other purposes. Many forms currently in use extend into many pages, much of the information being repeated. These 'jumbo' input documents will not actually fit into a facsimile machine.

Any data entered can only be checked manually.

The inspection highlighted many issues surrounding illegible forms either due to poor handwriting or faulty facsimile machines.

Good operators returned the forms to source with the inevitable delay, a number admitted to guessing what the data should read and entering the information accordingly.

Good Practice/Benefits

- With the exception of economy and access as detailed above, there is no advantage to be gained capturing data on a paper-based system for entry into a computerised one.

(8) Telephone Reporting

Forces are progressively moving towards the telephone reporting of Arrest/Summons information at the time of the event.

Concerns have been raised that, for the system to function satisfactorily 24 hour, 365 cover is required and such expenditure can only be justified in larger forces with sufficient traffic. A recommendation in the interim report, that larger forces could support smaller neighbours on a regional basis, is still valid.

A suggestion that officers still have to write information down to enable telephone reporting in privacy ignores the fact that the majority of the information required is captured in other documents.

Most forces capture sufficient information for a skeleton record only. A small number of forces have moved to full record creation by this method.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Transmission to point of PNC input immediate.
- Automatic date/time marking of messages to support the monitoring of performance.
- Some field validation (see (10) below).
- This real time reporting ensures PNC is updated immediately.
- Input staff have the opportunity to challenge inconsistencies whilst viewing PNC data.
- Input staff have the opportunity to advise operational officers what is required and what other facilities PNC can offer, an on-going training opportunity.
- Less form filling for the operational officer.
- In the case of full record creation, no requirement to track and monitor returned/late/substandard source input documents.

(9) Detail Check

Detail check involves the validation of data against its source. In the case of descriptive details the person to whom the description relates would need to be present.

The inspection revealed that this level of diligence is rare.

PNC Inputters interviewed put forward many examples of where the description of an accused person differs so dramatically from the previous input it is difficult to identify the individual.

This totally undermines the potential of QUEST.

Good Practice/Benefits

- A quality regime with clearly defined responsibilities within custody areas to ensure that the data captured is of the highest quality.
- Ensuring the information is recorded whilst the accused person is present.
- PNC input staff highlight inconsistencies in descriptive details and refer the papers back to supervision for attention.
- Any equipment used for this purpose (e.g. height measurement) be readily accessible and maintained in good condition.

(10) Field Validation

Field validation unlike the detail check is undertaken when the accused is not present. In computerised systems it can be automated.

The automated field validation used when PNC interfaces with local systems, checks that all data fields are complete. At this stage it does not validate the content of those fields (see Data Validation below).

Field validation on non-interface systems varies from a check that there is an entry into a compulsory field to some limited validation of that field against itself. For example, a simple validation could confirm that a date of birth has been entered; a more sophisticated system could check that the date is structured correctly (e.g. dd/mm/yyyy) and/or it is not the current date or a date in the future.

Many forces carry out this process manually when the form has been submitted, i.e. it is checked when the accused is not present. Whilst this may pick up some omissions it has the effect of delaying submission as, when errors are found, almost inevitably the form has to be returned for correction.

The inspection found, in a number of forces where departmental performance targets had to be met, an element of 'buck passing' between the PNC Input Bureau and operational personnel. There was evidence of the rejection of input

documentation for often-trivial reasons, for example a postcode was missing which the inputter could easily have added.

By contrast another force allocated a PNC Bureau manager the job of checking all documents at time of receipt and establishing if any omissions could be corrected by researching force systems.

Good Practice/Benefits

- A quality regime in the custody suite ensures that any data for entry on PNC is 'right first time'. This will ensure that time consuming and costly checking and re-submission of data is avoided.
- The operational efficiency of the force as a whole should take precedence over departmental performance indicators.

(11) Data Validation

The data validation process occurs when the PNC interface holding file downloads into the main system. This can be some time after the data was submitted. If conflict is found or the data cannot be matched to the existing record the new data will be rejected. This could result in rejected data being returned to its source some hours after initial submission and the possibility that the person responsible for the initial input being no longer present.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Forces have a mechanism to receive and respond to data returned in this way.

(12) Input Facility

The input facility, usually a bureau, forms the hub of PNC activity within a force. It is the forces final interface with PNC. The performance of the bureau impacts directly upon data quality and timeliness.

The facility is usually the main point of contact with non police organisations, primarily the courts and other prosecuting agencies.

It must be accepted by forces that external organisations will not, unless managed correctly, perform to the required standards. During the course of the inspection many forces cited instances of courts, particularly crown courts, delaying the return of case results by, in some cases, many weeks.

During the course of the inspection it was noted that in a number of forces, which did not have a 24/7 bureau, were creating this facility without which, the 24 hour performance criteria for entry of an Arrest/Summons record is unachievable.

The two prime drivers in successful forces were an ACC committed to compliance and a PNC Bureau Manager committed to delivery.

Good Practice/Benefits

- Training and maintaining a pool of trained personnel sufficient to manage the workload is the only way to achieve compliance. Unmanageable workloads will also adversely affect morale.
- The methodical monitoring of staff performance particularly in relation to quality of input was welcomed when undertaken openly with regular feedback.

Appendix 8 - Explanation of Impending Prosecutions Profile

This term indicate a prosecution details of which have been entered onto PNC at commencement but has no result.

There will always be prosecutions that have not been finalised with a result. From prosecutions that are still 'going through the system' through cases that take a number of years to resolve to the cases where the defendant has absconded and a warrant has been issued. These may still be outstanding many years later.

For HMIC purposes it was important that a distinction was made between the Impending Prosecutions awaiting a result and those where a result was known but this information had not been entered onto PNC.

At the commencement of the inspection in March 2001 it was not known what the residue of Impending Prosecutions would be, however as forces cleared the backlog of old cases this became clear.

To judge performance, HMIC identified the top twenty performing forces and averaged the number of Impending Prosecutions awaiting a result. This was calculated as a percentage of the total. It is referred to as the 'Force Profile'. All forces are expected to achieve this profile. The national profile is set out in Table 8.

During the course of the inspection every force was update bi-weekly on performance against the profile.

Table 8

Percentage of Impending Cases							
National Average On	Prior To	12 months To	12 months To	12 months To	12 months To	12 months To	12 months To
	30/06/96	30/06/97	30/06/98	30/06/99	30/06/00	30/06/01	30/06/02
		0.51%	0.47%	0.82%	1.43%	3.05%	11.59%
15-4-02	0.47%	0.37%	0.63%	1.19%	2.88%	10.86%	83.59%

The twelve months to 30 June 2002 indicates that the total should be not less than 75.36%. The totals in the other columns indicate that the total should be not more than the figure shown.

Appendix 9 - Impending Prosecution Performance 15th April 2002

	Prior To 30/06/1996	12 months To 30/06/1997	12 months To 30/06/1998	12 months To 30/06/1999	12 months To 30/06/2000	12 months To 30/06/2001	12 months 30/06/2002	Total Cases
Force	<i>0.51%</i>	<i>0.47%</i>	<i>0.82%</i>	<i>1.43%</i>	<i>3.05%</i>	<i>11.59%</i>	<i>75.36%</i>	
Northamptonshire	0.11%	0.04%	0.09%	0.40%	0.85%	4.77%	93.74%	4487
North Wales	0.07%	0.15%	0.11%	0.49%	1.19%	4.44%	93.54%	2680
Warwickshire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%	6.29%	93.36%	1144
Leicestershire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.58%	6.92%	92.44%	3771
North Yorkshire	0.85%	0.30%	0.41%	0.70%	0.70%	5.92%	91.12%	2702
Guernsey	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.51%	0.00%	8.72%	90.77%	195
Durham	0.00%	0.03%	0.10%	0.34%	1.45%	7.33%	90.74%	2905
Northumbria	0.10%	0.14%	0.17%	0.42%	1.33%	7.99%	89.84%	9972
Dorset	0.37%	0.33%	0.45%	0.58%	2.02%	6.43%	89.81%	2425
Derbyshire	0.15%	0.23%	0.25%	0.43%	1.59%	7.92%	89.44%	3966
Lincolnshire	0.20%	0.03%	0.41%	0.82%	1.67%	7.65%	89.22%	2941
Cheshire	0.41%	0.27%	0.53%	1.31%	1.87%	6.76%	88.85%	5132
Devon & Cornwall	0.51%	0.23%	0.58%	1.15%	1.75%	6.94%	88.84%	4337
Cumbria	0.20%	0.09%	0.34%	0.51%	1.54%	9.24%	88.08%	3516
South Wales	0.44%	0.23%	0.31%	0.36%	0.89%	9.85%	87.92%	7775
Humberside	0.22%	0.25%	0.32%	0.84%	1.89%	8.80%	87.69%	5979
Gloucestershire	0.40%	0.17%	0.60%	1.07%	1.91%	8.28%	87.56%	2982
Suffolk	0.13%	0.22%	0.39%	0.56%	2.34%	9.39%	86.98%	2311
West Yorkshire	0.42%	0.24%	0.44%	0.87%	1.68%	9.62%	86.73%	12473
Dyfed-Powys	0.27%	0.38%	0.97%	1.89%	3.73%	6.49%	86.27%	1850
Gwent	0.21%	0.28%	0.67%	0.91%	1.98%	9.84%	86.11%	4299
Norfolk	0.31%	0.07%	0.17%	0.55%	1.34%	12.67%	84.90%	2920
Bedfordshire	0.51%	0.51%	0.64%	1.56%	1.75%	10.52%	84.51%	2176
Nottinghamshire	0.25%	0.54%	0.69%	1.32%	2.29%	10.42%	84.49%	7562
Avon & Somerset	0.83%	0.65%	0.86%	1.77%	2.75%	9.20%	83.93%	6479
Cambridgeshire	1.06%	0.56%	1.03%	1.37%	2.27%	9.87%	83.85%	3213
Wiltshire	0.29%	0.05%	0.43%	1.26%	2.61%	11.59%	83.78%	2071
Thames Valley	0.25%	0.11%	0.16%	0.81%	2.38%	12.53%	83.75%	7906
Staffordshire	0.18%	0.59%	0.71%	1.67%	2.85%	10.60%	83.39%	4914
Kent	0.72%	0.54%	1.20%	1.86%	2.87%	10.26%	82.55%	7941
South Yorkshire	0.17%	0.13%	0.29%	0.78%	2.93%	13.74%	81.97%	11143
West Mercia	0.36%	0.42%	0.84%	1.02%	2.86%	13.10%	81.39%	5481
Isle of Man	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	4.51%	81.20%	266
Hampshire	0.64%	0.90%	1.17%	1.61%	3.39%	11.62%	80.67%	8019
Essex	0.89%	0.51%	1.12%	1.74%	3.59%	11.54%	80.60%	4929
Sussex	0.05%	0.02%	0.08%	0.46%	3.19%	15.69%	80.52%	6493
Lancashire	0.73%	0.45%	0.86%	1.42%	2.40%	13.65%	80.49%	9453
Cleveland	0.31%	0.25%	0.49%	1.75%	3.67%	13.17%	80.35%	4463
Surrey	0.99%	0.75%	1.06%	2.08%	3.04%	12.44%	79.64%	2927
Hertfordshire	0.17%	0.39%	0.58%	1.75%	5.21%	13.15%	78.74%	4107
Greater Manchester	0.70%	0.49%	0.67%	1.77%	4.21%	15.66%	76.51%	17336
City of London	0.40%	1.41%	1.62%	1.82%	4.24%	14.85%	75.66%	990
Jersey	0.00%	1.14%	0.76%	1.14%	2.65%	19.32%	75.00%	264
British Transport Police	0.35%	0.10%	0.62%	2.01%	6.60%	17.78%	72.54%	5124
West Midlands	0.66%	0.31%	1.50%	3.00%	5.72%	19.05%	69.77%	27916
Merseyside	2.07%	1.24%	2.17%	4.20%	6.05%	16.00%	68.27%	14492
Metropolitan	4.29%	1.73%	1.90%	3.57%	5.63%	15.10%	67.78%	54493
Ministry of Defence	0.41%	0.41%	1.65%	0.41%	6.17%	23.87%	67.08%	243

Appendix 10 - Stage Process Date for PNC

The Stage Process Date is a data field on the PNC input screen.

From information received, the PNC inputter will enter an event date into the data field. Arrest/Summons performance is measured from the date of the event to the date the information is input into this field. To comply with the ACPO strategy the 'Stage Process Date' field must be completed not more than 24 hours after the event.

An event is when a person is;

- Arrested
- Charged
- Reported
- Summoned

Arrested only applies to offences which are not dealt with in one of the other three ways (identified above), such as Prevention of Terrorism, Breach of the Peace, and where the subject is not dealt with for the offence for example, because of a mental health problem. It should be used when a suspect is remanded on 47(3) Police Bail.³⁵

Where a person has been cautioned for the offence, the reported option will be used. If the Arrest/Summons input is delayed other forces/agencies will not be aware of the impending prosecution.

³⁵ **The 47(3) instruction is contrary to the PNC User Manual, which is awaiting update. At the time of this report the updated manual was in the proof reading stage.**

Appendix 11 - Updated Recommendations from Interim Report

This section sets out all of the recommendations from the interim report; the paragraph references refer to that report.

Detailed below each recommendation is the progress made since publication.

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.

This has been an agenda item at ACPO Council but at the time of this report (June 2002) has not yet been discussed.

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.

All forces now have an executive group chaired by a chief officer with a remit to monitor PNC performance and drive forward the changes suggested in 'On the Record'.

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.

The type of statistical information has been reviewed by PITO on the recommendation of HMIC.

Recommendation Four (Paragraph 5.28)

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.

This work is currently ongoing.

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.

The Criminal Justice Information Technology team produced on 29 May 2002 a consultation paper considering the options for the above with particular emphasis on the exchange of conviction data between the courts and the police. The work is proceeding.

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.

- a) *Discussion have taken place between the Home Office and the Lord Chancellors Department with a view to the issue of further guidelines shortly.*
- b) *As above.*

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.

HMIC has now produced a national inspection protocol for PNC data quality and timeliness which has been circulated to all stakeholders.

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.

Since the introduction of the new Local Government Act, which will lead to the re-shaping of Best Value within the service, this has now been reviewed

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.

See Recommendation Seven.

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.

This recommendation has not been actioned.

