



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

# INSPECTION OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE POLICE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS BRANCH

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary



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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**1.1** Following the 2006 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspection of the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch (RMP SIB) as part of an ongoing process to inspect the Service Police,<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Defence (MoD) Director of Business Resilience (DBR) Robert Rooks commissioned the inspection of the Royal Air Force Police (RAFP) Special Investigations Branch (SIB).

**1.2** The commission was accepted on the understanding that the inspection would not review individual operations or cases, but would focus on an assessment of processes and procedures for major and serious crime investigations.

**1.3** HMIC is honoured to conduct this inspection and trust it will confirm how HMIC supports the MoD in the wider context of service policing.

## Terms of reference

**1.4** The terms of reference were agreed with the Office of the DBR and the Office of the Provost Marshal (Royal Air Force) (PM(RAF)):

- to inspect SIB specialist policing functions in the investigation of major and serious crimes, including investigations conducted on operations (overseas), and to identify any areas for improvement in the context of current good practice;
- to identify any other transferable good practice emerging from the inspection;
- to alert the Service Provost Marshals to issues that may affect the conduct of a live investigation; and
- to deliver a draft report to the PM(RAF) for his consideration on behalf of the Minister for the Armed Forces, and to DBR, in order to deliver a final report for the PM(RAF).

## Methodology

**1.5** The inspection was conducted in three distinct phases:

- analysis of written documents supplied;
- interviews with RAF officers and personnel; and
- interviews with those who engage with or have an impact on the SIB in the course of investigations.

**1.6** These phases were conducted by the inspection team, which included current practitioners who are experts in their relevant disciplines and in the best practices applicable.

**1.7** The SIB gave HMIC a very helpful selection of documents prior to the inspection that were supplemented by additional documents as the inspection progressed.

**1.8** The SIB interview phase was conducted in March 2009 by a team of officers with specialist knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

**1.9** HMIC recognises that interviews can be disruptive and is grateful to all concerned for finding the time to see the inspection officers.

**1.10** This inspection follows the RMP SIB inspection of 2006. The methodology of report writing mirrors that used for the Home Office Police Forces (HOPFs) inspections of 2008 for major crime.

## Acknowledgements

**1.11** HMIC would like to express its sincere appreciation for the assistance provided by the Office of the Provost Marshal. The personnel of the Specialist Police Wing (SPW), within which the SIB sits, displayed a high level of appreciation of their public service role, which they fulfil in a professional and highly trained manner; everyone was open to the full potential of the inspection process. This report is intended to contribute to developments that will enable them to make an even greater contribution to the RAF and the communities they protect.

# CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

**2.1** This is an inspection of the RAFP SIB capability and capacity to investigate major and serious crime and to be proactive in intelligence gathering to prevent such criminality. It looks at relevant areas of business that impact on this function, but it is not a full inspection of the RAFP.

**2.2** The inspection recognises that the RAFP is not an HOPF and therefore is not subject to statutory inspection by HMIC. Inspection criteria in the areas of major and serious crime and intelligence are not universally applicable to this inspection. HMIC understands that the RAFP SIB is responsible for policing RAF uniformed and service personnel in the UK and overseas, and its estate and critical infrastructure. It faces real threats to the physical security of sensitive and high-value assets and of criminality or critical incidents that may harm the good reputation of the RAF. This inspection recognises that these policing services will benefit from regular inspection by a competent authority.

**2.3** The request for this inspection arose from an MoD review of service policing. A voluntary request for this level of scrutiny by an external body is rare.

## Headquarters RAF Police

**2.4** The PM(RAF) is responsible to the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Force Board through the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for the delivery of effective policing to enable the RAF's operational capability.

**2.5** To deliver policing effectively, the RAFP has three wings: the Specialist Police Wing (SPW), upon which the inspection focused; the Police Wing; and the Tactical Police Wing. The SPW includes the SIB, the Counter-Intelligence (CI) Squadron and the Security Services Squadron. The SIB conducts investigations into criminal and security offences committed by British service personnel or other persons subject to the Service Discipline Acts. The CI Squadron provides intelligence for both security and crime investigations.

**2.6** The Military Criminal Justice System addresses criminal offending through the court martial system, which complies with the European Convention on Human Rights.

**2.7** The headquarters (HQ) of the RAFP is at RAF Henlow, Bedfordshire, and intelligence and investigative functions operate from there. The RAFP also contributes, with the Army and Royal Navy, to the Service Police Crime Bureau, which is located separately, as is the Defence Police College, which provides investigative training.

**2.8** The experience and expertise of HOPFs is available to the RAFF SIB through direct liaison with individual forces and through its links with the NPIA and the ACPO Homicide Working Group.

**2.9** The SIB operates from bases in the UK and has personnel in Germany. The SIB also contributes personnel to joint units in Cyprus, Gibraltar, the Falkland Islands and Diego Garcia. Numbers of RAFF personnel and civilian staff are set in consultation between the PM(RAF) and HQ Air Command within the Government's authorised establishment for the RAF and in accordance with budget allocation.

## Operational environments

**2.10** The SIB investigates all crimes up to a certain level committed within its jurisdiction on UK bases. For the most serious of crimes, such as rape or homicide, in the UK the responsibility to investigate rests with the host HOPF. The SIB provides two levels of overseas deployment. The first supports operational theatre deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, led by the RMP SIB. The second level applies where the RAF is either the largest UK military force at the location (Oman, Bahrain and Qatar) or where it is agreed that the RAFF SIB should lead and run a serious and/or complex investigation, for example where RAF personnel are involved as suspects or victims. They are deployed on a case-by-case basis and cases include major crimes such as rape and investigations of fatalities.

**2.11** Investigating crime overseas, particularly in operational environments, presents challenges rarely experienced by HOPFs:

- SIB investigators deploy alongside fighting forces in locations where levels of hostility place them under deadly threat.
- The maintenance of crime scene security requires a major logistical exercise if examiners are to achieve even a limited search opportunity. Some scenes are not accessible for days, with consequential loss or degradation of evidence.
- The cultural aspects of caring for the dead place an obligation on the SIB to understand issues of language, faith and custom.
- The political implications of action have to be taken into account in areas of conflict.
- SIB actions are open to interpretation by the media both locally and in the UK.
- In addition to the specific rules of engagement set for a particular theatre, service personnel are subject to the laws of England and Wales, wherever they are serving, by virtue of the Air Force Act 1955.

**2.12** Operating conditions in Iraq have previously been seen first hand by members of the inspection team.

# CHAPTER 3: LEADERSHIP

**3.1** The SPW is led by an Officer Commanding of wing commander rank who reports to the PM(RAF). The SPW is supported by a second-in-command and by three specialist squadrons, each under the command of a squadron leader. The SIB is one of these specialist squadrons and consists of 114 RAFP personnel, 3 RAF photographers and 14 civilian support staff based at 10 locations in the UK and Germany.

## Strengths

**3.2** The inspection team found a rank-oriented, structured organisation, as is necessary for military order. The executive leadership team is approachable by the staff.

**3.3** The restructuring of the RAFP and the SIB, in particular under Project Darwin and Project Beagle, is seen as a sound choice for the realignment and streamlining of the force and should enable it to deliver more effectively and be better at adapting to demand. In 2008, Project Darwin 2 reorganised the former fragmented structure under the command of station commanders into three wings under the single command of the PM(RAF). There was some feeling that a period of stability was now required to embed these changes and reap their benefits.

**3.4** There is a culture of command resilience in the RAFP SIB, provided by cover from flexible and adaptable officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, and other personnel within the organisation.

**3.5** The SIB's mission, vision and values are published by the RAFP command team in written and electronic format under administrative procedures and are reinforced through verbal instruction and example. An RAFP intranet site is available along with CD-ROMs for overseas outstations.

**3.6** Standing core priorities of espionage, terrorism, extremism and crime have been set in response to the continuing nature of threats facing the RAF.

## Work in progress

**3.7** It is planned that the RAFP SIB will mirror the police district boundaries of the General Police Duties squadrons in the Police Wing to reduce the SPW presence in Germany, following the drawdown of SIB D Flight in 2011/12. The SIB is also redistributing a layer of command at flight lieutenant rank from HQ to three of the four SIB flights in order to provide support for each investigative team and to improve the quality of supervision.

**3.8** Project Darwin 2 is currently at the ‘test and adjust’ phase, to assess whether the current structure can meet demand levels. HMIC looks forward to the outcome of this Darwin 2 review phase.

**3.9** The inspection team found that the management team had now to manage the impacts of overseas deployment, previously the remit of Air Command. Staff goodwill enabled inevitable gaps caused by overseas deployment to be filled, but their transfer to the PM(RAF) presents a real shift in choice of personnel for operational benefit.

### Areas for improvement

**3.10** All personnel may suggest improvements by upward briefing. However, lower ranks displayed some reticence in ‘challenging’ senior officers, no matter how respectfully this might be achieved. This experience should not be underestimated, and further encouragement in this regard will yield dividends.

**3.11** The RAFP is led by a group captain, and the suggestion was made that the organisation would benefit from

representation by a specialist police officer of air commodore rank. This is not a reflection on any individual, but an observation based on the breadth and depth of the RAFP’s responsibilities, particularly in light of the statutory requirement for investigations arising from the Armed Forces Act and the interpretation across the forces of post-to-rank comparisons. This has led to a drop in interest in roles in ACPO positions such as air support, where RAF experience would be of undoubted benefit.

**3.12** Arising from the RMP SIB inspection, the link between the RMP and the ACPO Homicide Working Group is a good example of what might be possible, though the benefits are yet to be fully exploited by the RAFP and RMP. HMIC considers that benefits are deliverable for the RAF, particularly in relation to ACPO’s air support and organised crime portfolios.

#### Recommendation 1:

Regular and close liaison between the RAFP and ACPO’s Air Support Working Group and Organised Crime Programme Board is needed.

# CHAPTER 4: MANAGING INTELLIGENCE

**4.1** Police forces use the National Intelligence Model (NIM) to identify threats to the communities they police and to assign their resources to maximum effect. This section of the report includes both the intelligence function itself and some of the individual teams in this sensitive area.

## Strengths

**4.2** The SPW has embraced the NIM, with assistance from the NPIA and Kent Police. Its implementation is in progress.

**4.3** The inspection team found a functional Strategic Assessment (SA) and Control Strategy with clear priorities in place. These were well informed and considerable effort had been made to elicit information from a wide range of sources. A great deal of effort had gone into writing the SA and it goes a long way towards informing decision makers and operational personnel about the most significant threats faced by the RAF. It alludes to a lack of specific RAF-related data in respect of a number of threats, but draws proper inferences from the information available. HMIC looks forward to reading the reviewed document and the associated Control Strategy and Force Intelligence Requirement in September 2009.

**4.4** There was some evidence of emerging threats<sup>3</sup> that currently sit outside the Control Strategy. Appropriate consideration is given to these, with indications of new intelligence requirements being set. While such threats outside the control of the RAFF are identified, it is not clear whether action is taken to offset these by requesting support from other agencies and forces.

**4.5** The intelligence function, the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) and covert assets such as the Covert Operations Team (COT) are generally well resourced and highly trained. These units come under the CI Squadron and are responsible for conducting intelligence operations in alignment with the core priorities of espionage, terrorism, extremism and crime. In particular, the Dedicated Source Unit and its wider team are beginning to deliver, following a period of staff turbulence, and will be ideally suited to respond to intelligence requests. The COT has assisted others such as the MoD Police.

**4.6** The nature of the CI commitment has created a highly secure environment, operating up to and including top-secret clearance, that is more than fit for purpose.

## Work in progress

**4.7** The CI Squadron is developing the SA for the RAFF and must bear in mind the following points:

- The SA is not a performance review, but performance should be reviewed by evaluating progress against previously set Control Strategy priorities. A review of force assets and organisational threats, such as forensic capability and systems deficiencies, that affect the ability to deliver the Control Strategy is essential. Including this review within the SA will allow decision makers to assess RAFF capability and capacity against priorities and to recommend changes in provision or priorities. Some recommendations will align with prevention, intelligence and enforcement activities; and the input of subject experts, such as intelligence analysts, crime prevention leads and investigators, will help make recommendations more complete.
- The SA should detail specific intelligence that links threats to RAFF activities and reveal the likelihood or probability of each threat occurring, along with the impact of such an event. This will help to define gaps in resources and to refine priorities within the Control Strategy in an auditable fashion.
- The Control Strategy should have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed) objectives and a separate delivery plan that indicates who is responsible,

relevant timescales and definitions of success. Without these changes, the RAFF may not develop as fast as it should. The RAFF needs to be satisfied that the SA has identified the appropriate Control Strategy priorities to manage the risks of identified threats.

**4.8** The discipline of the NIM, as adapted for the RAFF, is being rolled out to all members of the RAFF. This will improve understanding and intelligence flows to the benefit of decision makers.

## Areas for improvement

**4.9** The FIB and its Intelligence Analytical Cell are not co-located and do not use fully compatible software, resulting in some disconnect and reduced capability. The related assets of the COT and Dedicated Source Unit require sensitive co-location within HQ as their work is often aligned. While they remain separate, they must have access to the FIB and the intelligence requirements they seek to fulfil.

**4.10** The inspection team found limited engagement of the FIB and the covert assets in relation to some criminality, and only a limited understanding of the intelligence requirements. There should be closer liaison between criminal investigators and the FIB's intelligence experts.

**4.11** The inspection team believes that the RAFP is facing a real threat from serious organised criminality at a level not previously understood. Acceptance of this fact should prompt the deployment of the best RAFP investigators to combat the threat. The size and complexity of such investigations may require diversion of investigation and intelligence staff from other duties to take a more proactive role against organised criminals.

**Recommendation 2:**

The Office of the PM(RAF) should continue to implement the NIM with sufficient resources to deliver future SAs, Control Strategies and Force Intelligence Requirements. Where threats with potential for significant harm are identified early, appropriate resources should be swiftly and proactively tasked and co-ordinated. The NPIA has agreed to advise the Office of the PM(RAF) on the NIM.

# CHAPTER 5: CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

**5.1** Responsibility for the investigation of higher-level crime and for other specialist investigations rests with the RAFP SIB, which operates from HQ and from flights stationed at nine bases in the UK and one at Rheindahlen in Germany. The UK and Germany are treated as one operational area. The SIB provides a worldwide call-out facility for investigations that require RAF expertise. Major crimes such as murder and rape committed in the UK are investigated by the HOPF with jurisdiction for that location. HMIC has applied the same standards to this inspection as would be used elsewhere.

**5.2** During 2008 there were 1,594 investigations undertaken by the RAFP, of which 184 were conducted by the RAFP SIB; 53 of these were categorised as Level 3<sup>4</sup> crime. During 2007 the RAFP SIB conducted 117 investigations, and 56 cases resulted in court martial proceedings. Of these, 43 cases produced a guilty plea, a further 5 cases were convicted and 8 cases were acquitted: 86% of all the cases referred to a court martial resulted in a conviction.

## Strengths

**5.3** The inspection team found a well motivated and highly trained team with a good basic skill set and experience of a

range of predominantly lower-level crimes, although some have investigated major crimes such as murder and rape abroad. With this limited exposure, it is not possible to make a comparison between the RAFP and HOPFs in respect of major and serious crimes.

**5.4** The SIB operates a call-out system providing 24-hour cover, 365 days of the year. The goodwill and personal commitment of SIB members adds a further valuable layer of support.

**5.5** There are five fully trained Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs), and those interviewed were competent and capable of investigating at Level 3. They are trained to HOPF standards but are yet to be accredited. The RAFP SIB has displayed a high degree of confidence in the abilities of SIOs deployed abroad to locations where the RAF is the lead military service. At such times, SIOs have equipped themselves well, using a number of the key strategies and impact assessment techniques that an HOPF SIO would adopt. SIOs participate in the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire SIO Development Programme.

**5.6** RAFP SIB investigators are deployed in theatre alongside the RMP SIB on extremely difficult and challenging

enquiries, including those relating to fatal incidents. In these deployments, the RAFF SIB investigators have been found to be competent Level 3 investigators capable of working without supervision, under pressure and in adverse conditions.

**5.7** The quality of files and investigations is reported to be at a high standard by the RAFF Legal Adviser. The RAFF also has access to a former SIO with considerable experience in an HOPF as an independent case reviewer. Learning from these reviews is ongoing.

### Work in progress

**5.8** As reported above, the RAFF SIB plans to realign flights following the drawdown from Germany, taking the opportunity to confirm demand and allocate resources proportionately.

**5.9** The Professional Standards Department or PSD (which is not part of the SIB) has developed a self-assessment tool to review serious crime investigations. This will be rolled out to SIB flights, its effectiveness monitored and feedback provided.

**5.10** The RAFF and its SIB are clearly ideally placed to support HOPFs in investigations that have flying and/or RAF elements. The SIB is encouraged to continue to offer this expertise as it has no equal in this area. Offers of help should be made via the ACPO air support portfolio lead and should seek to tailor assistance extended to meet the specific needs of the SIO.

### Areas for improvement

**5.11** The greatest risk to investigations appears to be the RAFF SIB's ability to cope with a quickly escalating or prolonged major crime investigation abroad. Limited experience of such cases means that the SIB can find it difficult to estimate the length and complexity of this kind of investigation. Shadowing SIOs in a busy HOPF would provide some of this experience. Staff and equipment contingencies made available to the SIO on such deployments would help mitigate the risk while providing extra capacity during the early stages of any investigation.

**5.12** Members of the RAFF are not deployed in theatre as SIOs, as this role is undertaken by the RMP SIB. As a result, necessary levels of experience in supporting operations abroad are not being acquired. As well as shadowing, creating Deputy SIO roles could provide opportunities to develop the necessary skills.

**5.13** The RAFF currently uses a Microsoft Excel-based incident room management system known as SANDMAN (Statements, Actions, Nominals and Documents Management) for complex cases, not the HOPF-favoured HOLMES 2 (Home Office Large Major Enquiry System 2) database. SANDMAN is yet to be tested and deployed, and the inspection team questioned the necessity and functionality of this system, given the potential need to transfer any database to another incident room. HMIC noted that the RMP has invested in mini HOLMES systems that utilise laptops for flexible deployment.

**5.14** The inspection team believes that there is a real opportunity to develop a proactive capability by widening the investigative focus to defeat geographical or themed threats. This opportunity could, when time is available, test investigative skills against obvious risks such as theft. Investigators currently carry an average of three cases at any one time, and HMIC believes that this provides scope for a heavier workload. Such proactivity would raise visibility of the SIB's investigative capabilities and also increase subject-matter expertise when investigating RAF systems. This topic has been tasked to the Officer Commanding SIB, but options are yet to be developed.

**Recommendation 3:**

The Office of the PM(RAF) should test its response to short-term deployments to critical incidents in terms of management, records, handover and the ability to provide resilience if the incident is prolonged.

**Recommendation 4:**

The RAFP should explore the potential of the latest HOLMES developments for its own needs, in liaison with the NPIA National Co-ordinator. If adopted, all SIB investigators should be trained to access the system and a much smaller number of individuals should be trained to input.

**Recommendation 5:**

The Office of the PM(RAF) should consider the proactive deployment of SIB investigators – and appropriate support – to determine the reality of some threats at an early stage and as a means of developing skills.

# CHAPTER 6: FORENSIC SERVICES

**6.1** The RAFP has a forensic unit based at RAF Henlow that reports to the SIB command. The inspection team assessed the service provided against the standards expected of a small HOPF.

## Strengths

**6.2** The RAFP has good forensic facilities, including separate crime scene training scenario rooms, situated in a secure single-purpose building considered suitable for the level of demand currently experienced. The equipment levels are on a par with those in an HOPF in terms of dedicated crime scene investigation vehicles and a fully functional chemical treatment laboratory. A digital photography laboratory provides timely photographic services.

**6.3** Forensic services are provided by committed staff dedicated to the role, including hi-tech crime examiners trained to ACPO standards in computer forensics.

**6.4** The Forensic Support Team has developed a good working relationship with Bedfordshire Police, with which the RAFP has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for fingerprint submissions.

## Work in progress

**6.5** The inspection team found the forensic team in the process of reorganisation, with the establishment of a Forensic Warrant Officer, a Scientific Support Manager, a Forensic Laboratory Manager and a dedicated team of five Crime Scene Examiners (CSEs), brought together with three RAF photographers who are already in post. This should produce benefits for the RAFP, including a more professional CSE provision, force-wide continuation training and greater laboratory technician cover. The requirement for CSEs to be SIB trained and rank specifications have been removed to ensure that the CSE posts are open to all non-commissioned members of the RAFP, subject to competitive selection.

**6.6** CSEs in the RAFP are not currently accredited. The RAFP is monitoring the national accreditation arena, currently in a state of flux, and expects to follow new guidelines as they are published.

**6.7** Work is continuing to agree an SLA with HOPFs to provide CSE capabilities at units, such as RAF Valley in North Wales and RAF St Mawgan in Cornwall, where there are limited numbers of RAF personnel, the crime levels are low and the travelling time from RAF Henlow would be prohibitive.

## Areas for improvement

**6.8** The RAFF does not appreciate the true nature of forensic demand internally and externally, nor the scene attendance policy and submission standards it wishes to apply, or how and when to deliver the best possible contribution to the intelligence or investigation effort. The RAPF needs to better understand the outputs and outcomes of its service delivery.

**6.9** In the absence of the above data, HMIC is not convinced that the forensic provision is gainfully employed and

adding value to the operations it supports. HOPFs frequently review their services to ensure that best value is offered. The RAPF should review its forensic services once the new structure is embedded, but should not delay this beyond 12 months.

### **Recommendation 6:**

The Office of the PM(RAF) should consider the potential for an internal review of forensic services in order to maximise the benefits to be gained.

# CHAPTER 7: CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESSES

## Strengths

**7.1** The RAF has placed a Legal Adviser within the HQ RAFP. This officer provides timely professional advice to investigators, in a similar way to the station-based Crown Prosecution Service representatives found within HOPFs, and also advises the PM(RAF) on service issues.

**7.2** The role creates a strong link between the RAFP and the Service Prosecuting Authority, which allows for swift tasking and learning pre- and post-trial. The knowledge of the post holder aids the work of the investigators by introducing a new layer of quality control in relation to documentation and files submitted.

## Areas for improvement

**7.3** The requirement for investigators to produce a file of evidence that covers every eventuality has been the subject of comment; however, there is opportunity to reduce unnecessary work and create investigative freedom in future cases. The Regional Legal Service has played a critical role in this regard, as identified in a recent case review, and it is planned that such early engagement will be adopted by the new Service Prosecutions Authority.

# CHAPTER 8: HUMAN RESOURCES

## Strengths

**8.1** The inspection team was impressed by the positive attitude of the vast majority of the personnel. The nature of their roles and the culture of this organisation allow for real flexibility of working at short notice.

**8.2** The adaptability and goodwill of the staff is instrumental in the organisation fulfilling its role when personnel are deployed on operations. At times, their goodwill masks the true nature and extent of absent staff and allows the organisation to function, albeit not at full strength.

**8.3** There is recognition and understanding in the leadership team of the importance of the welfare of all personnel and their families. The planning and thought processes followed when posting and deploying personnel were impressive.

## Work in progress

**8.4** HMIC sees an opportunity to improve the process of succession planning and job rotation in some areas. The team recognises that some departments have already accepted this, and that work is in progress to identify key and critical posts and to strengthen mechanisms to keep these staff. Gaps created by promotion

and redeployments and at end of service present difficulties, particularly when investigations are mid-term, and the ability to post in would benefit from analysis to identify options. Management is progressing work for CSE arrangements, has reduced seniority requirements for the FIB, has reduced the rank requirements for computer forensics, and is allowing acting corporals to join the RAFP SIB.

**8.5** In respect of civilian posts, HMIC would like to see a more creative approach to the retention and development of staff. Measures such as job evaluation and pay comparison uplifts could be employed, as seen in the recent enhancement of the civilian analysts grade.

## Areas for improvement

**8.6** HMIC is surprised that formal exit interviews are not the norm for civilian staff who choose to leave. Consequently, there is little understanding of the experiences of staff and, in some cases, of their genuine reasons for departure. This represents a lost opportunity to understand how better to retain key staff in critical areas. The same formal, mandatory exit interviews given to Service personnel should also be given to civilian staff.

**Recommendation 7:**

Mission-critical posts, for example crime analysts, should be identified to ensure appropriate recruitment and retention of such posts.

**Recommendation 8:**

Formal exit interviews should be put in place for all staff who leave.

# CHAPTER 9: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Strengths

**9.1** There is a good level of investment in staff training for investigation and intelligence. The Training Needs Analysis is reviewed for these areas, and courses are allocated to individuals as required, to enhance their skills base.

**9.2** All personnel interviewed were clearly highly motivated and acknowledged a responsibility to develop themselves in order to perform at the highest levels in their role. There is an awareness of the need to develop investigators beyond the basic level and to equip staff, particularly for operational deployment overseas.

**9.3** Learning from reviews is triggered by a request from one of four sources: the RAFP chain of command; legal staff, in respect of a specific investigation or due to an emerging trend; as a result of adverse comment during a trial; or from an external source.

## Work in progress

**9.4** The inspection team noted that the introduction of a 'Professionalising the Investigative Process' (PIP) model based on the Cumbria Constabulary experience is being considered. This would give accreditation to investigators at different levels and access to a national standard of investigative knowledge. HMIC's opinion is that this is achievable at Level 1

and Level 2 investigations. Level 3 high-level investigation would prove difficult to substantiate for SIB investigators because of the low level of crime investigated by them in the UK.

**9.5** The RAFP has recognised a need for crime prevention capability in every police station, and 22 non-commissioned officers will attend training courses in 2009, with further courses allocated for 2010. The benefit of this training will be of great interest to HMIC in the future.

## Areas for improvement

**9.6** In HMIC's opinion, the SIOs in the SIB show the skills required of Level 3 investigators when dealing with cases overseas, which are often serious, complex and sensitive. HMIC believes that a formal approach by the PM(RAF) should be made to Skills for Justice, requesting that the work of Level 3 investigators be formalised and accredited to a national standard. This would recognise the unique skill and level of expertise in these investigations, while also providing a standard to work to and maintain that is more appropriate to the role and work.

**9.7** While the inspection team did note some excellent models, including the PSD's technical evaluation and self-assessment systems and the independent case reviewer, the ability to capture and develop the lessons learned during an

investigation or following the legal process through the formal structure was not universally applied. Evidence suggests that informal learning from issues that arise can be presented in many forms, including verbal advice to an individual or a group 'cascading' email. Without a formal review, individual ownership (with timescales and an evidenced outcome to validate the learning) was not forthcoming. HMIC believes that formalising debriefing and operational reviews, including using the PSD's self-assessment tool, will improve processes and investigative choices.

**9.8** HMIC is concerned that in some units there are a number of individuals who have been trained to a very high standard by attending numerous courses but are not then exposed to operational deployments where they can use the skills they have acquired or the equipment they have been trained on.

This is of particular note in some units in the SPW, where some individuals will probably never be deployed under the present structure and ethos, and where equipment has been purchased but no one has been trained to use it. Better use of the NIM process would match these areas together in a more robust and meaningful way, and the use and deployment of units and individuals would improve, particularly in proactive investigations as discussed above.

**Recommendation 9:**

The formal learning process in place within the PSD should be engaged across other parts of the SPW to enhance learning and the adoption of best practice in an auditable manner that preserves corporate memory.

# CHAPTER 10: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

**10.1** HMIC conducted an equality and diversity (E&D) impact assessment, as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, to assess compliance with duties and responsibilities.

**10.2** The assessment identified a “potential for the operations of the RAFF SIB to have a differential and/or adverse impact to staff members and consequently on the perception of and quality and nature of service delivery of their investigations”.

**10.3** HMIC determined to use the inspection to promote E&D as and when the review process provided opportunities.

**10.4** The RAF has a government-set target to achieve a representation from ethnic minority communities of 3.6% by the end of 2009 and of 8% by 2013. Currently, the RAF has achieved 2.5%; however, within the SPW workforce, 99% are described as white.

**10.5** Female representation is approximately 2.5% lower within the SPW, at 11.36%, than in the wider RAF population and the small number of personnel involved means that any improvement would have a major impact. The RAF does not recruit against gender targets.

**10.6** The RAFF has an E&D action plan for 2008–10, which is owned by the Air Member for Personnel and managed by the Assistant Chief of Staff Personnel

Policy. This is monitored on behalf of the PM(RAF) by the E&D Adviser (EDA), who reports by exception at monthly PM(RAF) briefings.

## Strengths

**10.7** The RAF E&D policy maintains that all personnel should be treated fairly irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion and religious belief, gender, sexual orientation or social background. The RAFF has access to an EDA to ensure that policies and activities comply with obligations. Where the policy is created centrally by the MoD or HQ Air Command, such a policy is also impact assessed centrally.

**10.8** When SIB individuals are deployed on tours to theatre, they are given pre-deployment training and briefings that make them aware of specific issues they may face.

## Work in progress

**10.9** The inspection team found that all RAFF personnel were provided with E&D training to ensure communication and implementation of diversity strategies, policies and objectives. Following completion of the initial training, and from October 2010, all RAF personnel will take part in refresher E&D discussions on various E&D issues. This will be facilitated by EDAs and is mandated to be completed every three years.

**10.10** The inspection team found that E&D issues were the subject of a review to identify trends. This will require monitoring by the EDA.

### Areas for improvement

**10.11** Currently, only policies created at a level above the PM(RAF) are subject to mandatory equality impact assessment. In HMIC's opinion, this creates a serious vulnerability to discrimination in the actions and conduct of personnel if impacts are not considered for all policies.

**10.12** While the RAF is improving the representation of black and minority ethnic communities within the organisation, the RAFF is yet to reap the benefits. A policy on positive action to monitor and improve equality of numbers and diversity of the workforce is required. The development of the NIM should highlight vulnerable communities and may suggest more targeted and perhaps direct recruiting.

**10.13** The SIB and RAFF do not have access to an Independent Advisory Group with which they can consult and test opinion. HOPFs have such groups and the RAFF may be able to utilise one of these, gaining from others' experiences. The benefits of gaining the insights of the public – outside RAF bases and in personnel families – are to be tested, but experience has shown HMIC that the opportunity may well increase understanding and support.

**10.14** As RAFF increases its investigations, it will need to consider its ability to organise to meet equality needs such as gold groups, family liaison officers and case-specific diversity training.

**10.15** Any impact identified within an assessment requires the development of a transparent action plan in response. Actions must have a designated lead, timescales and clear objectives.

#### **Recommendation 10:**

It is strongly recommended that the EDA be invited to:

- review the current E&D strategy to ensure its integration into all RAFF activities; and
- advise on impact assessments of policies and strategies within RAFF, and SPW in particular, where service delivery may have a significant impact on the investigation's outcome, on organisational reputation and on public confidence.

# CHAPTER 11: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

## Strengths

**11.1** The inspection team found that investigator caseloads are reviewed at 28, 60 and 100 days. These intervals focus the investigator on compiling cases within set timescales and produce consistent and timely investigations.

## Areas for improvement

**11.2** Where performance measures were in place, they were of a basic nature, in

many cases simply quantitative or relating to timescales. The 100-day review is not formalised by minute taking or by following up actions assigned to individuals.

**11.3** The inspection team could not find a process for quality checks against standards in the field of forensic submissions, so it was difficult to assess the quality of work and how it contributed to a successful outcome.

# CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

**12.1** The PM(RAF) and his executive team identified issues of command resilience and communication within the structure of the RAFP. Through analysis and a succession of projects, the wings and flights have been realigned, and now 75% of police personnel come under the direct command of the PM(RAF). HMIC commends the leadership and direction given during these changes and is confident that the recommendations made in this report will enhance and help build on the solid base that has been put in place.

**12.2** As a result of the operating remit of the SIB in the UK, HMIC found the reactive investigative remit and the commensurate level of investigation to be generally at the lower levels of criminality and complexity. Investigations at these levels were thorough and competent. The SIB delivers competent high-level investigation overseas in more serious and complex enquiries on a case-by-case basis. In conclusion, the RAFP SPW has the necessary procedures, experience and skills required to investigate crimes at Levels 1 and 2. Some investigators are operating well at Level 3.

**12.3** The unique security aspects of policing and the CI function drive the focus of the RAFP, the SPW and the SIB. HMIC understands these requirements but urges

the RAFP and its SIB to become more proactive with their criminal intelligence function – for example by valuing surveillance resources – and to focus SIB resources on high-level proactive investigations rather than on low-level reactive investigations. To do this, the FIB needs to be merged closer with the Intelligence Analytical Cell and re-energised to drive the process forward. The NIM structure needs to be able to identify emerging threats and to align resources at an early stage, to prevent future serious criminality and critical incidents occurring. It must be recognised that the new and developing understanding of threats and risks brings with it a requirement for a response that prevents and disrupts.

**12.4** The introduction of a suite of performance measures, operated tactically and monitored strategically, would, in HMIC's opinion, improve the ability of the RAFP to understand the true nature of its capabilities and capacity and its impact on the reputation of the RAF.

**12.5** The RAFP is a legitimate law enforcement agency and should therefore be subject to regular inspection by a competent authority if it is to continue to improve. The fact that the RAFP and the MoD have made a voluntary request for such an inspection is to be commended.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** Regular and close liaison between the RAFP and ACPO's Air Support Working Group and Organised Crime Programme Board is needed.

**Recommendation 2:** The Office of the PM(RAF) should continue to implement the NIM with sufficient resources to deliver future SAs, Control Strategies and Force Intelligence Requirements. Where threats with potential for significant harm are identified early, appropriate resources should be swiftly and proactively tasked and co-ordinated. The NPIA has agreed to advise the Office of the PM(RAF) on the NIM.

**Recommendation 3:** The Office of the PM(RAF) should test its response to short-term deployments to critical incidents in terms of management, records, handover and the ability to provide resilience if the incident is prolonged.

**Recommendation 4:** The RAFP should explore the potential of the latest HOLMES developments for its own needs, in liaison with the NPIA National Co-ordinator. If adopted, all SIB investigators should be trained to access the system and a much smaller number of individuals should be trained to input.

**Recommendation 5:** The Office of the PM(RAF) should consider the proactive deployment of SIB investigators – and appropriate support – to determine the

reality of some threats at an early stage and as a means of developing skills.

**Recommendation 6:** The Office of the PM(RAF) should consider the potential for an internal review of forensic services in order to maximise the benefits to be gained.

**Recommendation 7:** Mission-critical posts, for example crime analysts, should be identified to ensure appropriate recruitment and retention of such posts.

**Recommendation 8:** Formal exit interviews should be put in place for all staff who leave.

**Recommendation 9:** The formal learning process in place within the PSD should be engaged across other parts of the SPW to enhance learning and the adoption of best practice in an auditable manner that preserves corporate memory.

**Recommendation 10:** It is strongly recommended that the EDA be invited to:

- review the current E&D strategy to ensure its integration into all RAFP activities; and
- advise on impact assessments of policies and strategies within RAFP, and SPW in particular, where service delivery may have a significant impact on the investigation's outcome, on organisational reputation and on public confidence.

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers	MoD	Ministry of Defence
CI	Counter-intelligence	NIM	National Intelligence Model
COT	Covert Operations Team	NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
CSE	Crime Scene Examiner	PM(RAF)	Provost Marshal (Royal Air Force)
DBR	Director of Business Resilience	PSD	Professional Standards Department
E&D	Equality and diversity	RAFP	Royal Air Force Police
EDA	Equality and Diversity Adviser	RMP	Royal Military Police
FIB	Force Intelligence Bureau	SA	Strategic Assessment
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary	SIB	Special Investigations Branch
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System	SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
HOPF	Home Office Police Force	SLA	Service Level Agreement
HQ	Headquarters	SPW	Specialist Police Wing

# ENDNOTES

1 The Service Police are defined as the Royal Navy Police, Royal Military Police and Royal Air Force Police (Armed Forces Act 2006, Section 375). Individually they provide the policing, investigative and protective services unique to the needs of their Service.

2 The team included: Detective Chief Inspector Jeff Longrigg, National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) Professional Practice Developer; Dr Peter Stelfox, Head of Investigative Practice, NPIA, and a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Homicide Working Group; Detective Superintendent Jane Tilzey, a member of the ACPO National Co-ordinator's Office for Organised Crime; Mr Andy Williamson, NPIA

Forensics Subject Matter Expert; Mr Bob Youldon, NPIA Implementation Manager, supported by Mr Everett Henry, NPIA Head of Equality, Diversity and Human Resources; as well as Mr Huw Jones QPM.

3 'Threat' for the purpose of this report describes the scope and intensity of the demands that a force's intelligence leads it to believe it faces.

4 Level 3 investigations deal with serious offences or incidents reported to or detected by the RAFF that, by nature of their gravity or surrounding circumstances, demand investigation by experienced SPW or RAFF SIB investigators. Case management and oversight is provided by a trained SIO.



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