



HMIC Inspection Report

Suffolk Constabulary

October 2007



Suffolk Constabulary – HMIC Inspection Report

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Contents

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

Programmed frameworks
Risk-based frameworks
The grading process
Developing practice
Future HMIC inspection activity

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area
Demographic profile of force area
Strategic priorities
Force developments since 2006

Findings

National summary of judgements

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing

Performance Management

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

Recommendations

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Introduction to HMIC Inspections

For a century and a half, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the police service in England and Wales, with the first HM Inspectors (HMIs) being appointed under the provisions of the County and Borough Police Act 1856. In 1962, the Royal Commission on the Police formally acknowledged HMIC's contribution to policing.

HMIs are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Home Secretary and report to HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who is the Home Secretary's principal professional policing adviser and is independent both of the Home Office and of the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/>.

In 2006, HMIC conducted a broad assessment of all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, examining 23 areas of activity. This baseline assessment had followed a similar process in 2005 and has thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

Having reached this view internally, HMIC then consulted key stakeholders, including the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). A consensus emerged that HMIC could add greater value by undertaking fewer but more probing inspections. Stakeholders concurred with the emphasis on protective services but requested that Neighbourhood Policing remain a priority for inspection until there is evidence that it has been embedded in everyday police work.

HMIC uses a rigorous and transparent methodology to conduct its inspections and reach conclusions and judgements. All evidence will be gathered, verified and then assessed against an agreed set of national standards, in the form of specific grading criteria (SGC). However, the main purpose of inspection is not to make judgements but to drive improvements in policing. Both professional and lay readers are urged, therefore, to focus not on the headline grades but on the opportunities for improvement identified within the text of this report.

Programmed frameworks

This report contains assessments of the first three key areas of policing to be inspected under HMIC's new programme of work:

1. Neighbourhood Policing;
2. performance management; and
3. protecting vulnerable people.

Neighbourhood Policing has been inspected not only because it is a key government priority but also, and more importantly, because it addresses a fundamental need for a style of policing that is rooted in and responds to local concerns. The police service must, of course, offer protection from high-level threats such as terrorism and organised criminality, but it

October 2007

also has a key role in tackling the unacceptable behaviour of the minority of people who threaten the quality of life of law-abiding citizens.

Performance management is an activity largely hidden from public view, although members of the public are directly affected by poor performance on the part of their local force. This inspection has focused on the need for forces to maximise the opportunities for performance improvement. It also posed questions as to whether forces have an accurate picture of how they are doing and the capability to respond to changing priorities. This area was selected for inspection because it is a key factor in delivering good performance across the board.

Protecting vulnerable people covers four related areas – child abuse, domestic violence, public protection and missing persons – that address the critically important role of the police in protecting the public from potentially serious harm. In the 2006 baseline assessment this was the worst performing area and raised the most serious concerns for HMIC and others. As a result, this area was prioritised for scrutiny in 2007.

Risk-based frameworks

In addition to its programmed inspection work, HMIC continues to monitor performance across a range of policing activity, notably those areas listed in the table below.

HMIC risk-based frameworks
Fairness and equality in service delivery
Volume crime reduction
Volume crime investigation
Improving forensic performance
Criminal justice processes
Reducing anti-social behaviour
Contact management
Training, development and organisational learning

While these activities will not be subject to routine inspection, evidence of a significant decline in performance would prompt consideration of inspection. For 150 years, HMIC has maintained an ongoing relationship with every force. This allows it to identify and support forces when specific issues of concern arise. On a more formal basis, HMIC participates in the Home Office Police Performance Steering Group and Joint Performance Review Group, which have a role in monitoring and supporting police performance in crime reduction, crime investigation and public confidence.

HMIC conducts inspections of basic command units (BCUs), also on a risk-assessed basis, using the Going Local 3 methodology. Combining these various strands of inspection evidence allows HMIC to form a comprehensive picture of both individual force performance and the wider national picture.

The grading process

Grades awarded by HMIC are a reflection of the performance delivered by the force over the assessment period April 2006 to July 2007. One of four grades can be awarded, according to performance assessed against the SGC (for the full list of SGC, see <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/baseline-introduction/ba-methodology-06/?version=1>).

Excellent

This grade describes the highest level of performance in service delivery and achieving full compliance with codes of practice or national guidance. It is expected that few forces will achieve this very high standard for a given activity. To achieve Excellent, forces are expected to meet **all** of the criteria set out in the Fair SGC and the vast majority of those set out in Good. In addition, two other factors will attract consideration of an Excellent grade:

- The force should be recognised, or be able to act, as a 'beacon' to others, and be accepted within the service as a source of leading-edge practice. Evidence that other forces have successfully imported practices would demonstrate this.
- HMIC is committed to supporting innovation and we would expect Excellent forces to have introduced and evaluated new ways of delivering or improving performance.

Good

Good is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as 'of a high quality or level' and denotes performance above the minimum standard. To reach this level, forces have to meet in full the criteria set out in Fair and most of the criteria set out in Good.

Fair

Fair is the delivery of an acceptable level of service, which meets national threshold standards where these exist. To achieve a Fair grading, forces must meet all of the significant criteria set out in the Fair SGC. HMIC would expect that, across most activities, the largest number of grades will be awarded at this level.

Poor

A Poor grade represents an unacceptably low level of service. To attract this very critical grade, a force will have fallen well short of a significant number of criteria set out in the SGC for Fair. In some cases, failure to achieve a single critical criterion may alone warrant a Poor grade. Such dominant criteria will always be flagged in the SGC but may also reflect a degree of professional judgement on the level of risk being carried by the force.

Developing practice

In addition to assessing force performance, one of HMIC's key roles is to identify and share good practice across the police service. Much good practice is identified as HMIC conducts its assessments and is reflected as a strength in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit examples of its good practice. HMIC has selected three or more of these examples to publish in this report. The key criteria for each example are that the work has been evaluated by the force and the good practice is easily transferable to other forces (each force has provided a contact name and telephone number or email address, should further information be required). HMIC has not conducted any independent evaluation of the examples of good practice provided.

October 2007

Future HMIC inspection activity

Although HMIC will continue to maintain a watching brief on all performance areas, its future inspection activity (see provisional timescales below) will be determined by a risk assessment process. Protective services will be at the core of inspection programmes, tailored to capacity, capability and the likelihood of exposure to threats from organised criminality, terrorism and so on. Until its full implementation in April 2008, Neighbourhood Policing will also demand attention. Conversely, those areas (such as volume crime) where performance is captured by statutory performance indicators (SPIs), iQuanta and other objective evidence will receive scrutiny only where performance is deteriorating, as described above.

The Government has announced that, in real terms, there will be little or no growth in police authority/force budgets over the next three years. Forces will therefore have to maintain, and in some areas improve, performance without additional central support or funding. This in itself creates a risk to police delivery and HMIC has therefore included a strategic resource management assessment for all forces in its future inspection programme.

Planned Inspection areas
Serious and organised crime
Major crime
Neighbourhood Policing
Strategic resource management
Customer service and accessibility
Critical incident management
Professional standards
Public order
Civil contingencies
Information management
Strategic roads policing
Leadership

Force Overview and Context

Geographical description of force area

Suffolk Constabulary is responsible for policing an area of 939,510 acres, with a population of 692,100, which has grown by 23,547 (3.5%) since 2001. Suffolk is a rural county and has large expanses of low-density population areas, principally in Mid-Suffolk. The long coastline stretches from Felixstowe in the south to Lowestoft in the north and the county is renowned for its rural businesses, such as farming, light industry, brewing and tourism. The county has some notable landmarks, such as the headquarters of British horseracing at Newmarket and the largest container port in Europe at Felixstowe. It has a number of military bases, two of which – Lakenheath and Mildenhall – are home to the US Air Force and approximately 20,000 dependants. The county town of Ipswich poses the greatest policing demands, many of which relate to the night-time economy.

The force is divided geographically into three BCUs – Eastern, Southern and Western, all of which have their challenges. Until recently, each BCU was divided into policing sectors. However, these have now been replaced by a district-based structure, coterminous with district council boundaries and each commanded by a chief inspector. The change in structure was partly to improve supervision of front-line policing by freeing the time of patrol inspectors, but mostly connected with the move towards an entirely new policing culture, based around the introduction of 47 Safer Neighbourhood teams (SNTs) designed to improve local policing and enhance visibility in all communities.

Demographic profile of force area

As Suffolk is a predominantly rural county, it is perhaps not surprising that its economic growth is lower than the national and regional averages. Suffolk also has a relatively low level of working age population (63.5%, 2005), and this is closely related to the fact that some parts of the county are popular locations for retirement.

The national index of multiple deprivation (2004) showed that Ipswich and Lowestoft were the most deprived areas in the county. The number of young people in Suffolk (aged 15–19 years) is second lowest in the region generally, suggesting that young people are inclined to move away from the area on reaching working age. In April 2007, there were 8,128 unemployed persons in the county, representing 2% of the total working age population.

Some significant developments will impact on the county in the foreseeable future. The A14 corridor between Cambridge and Ipswich has been identified as a key area for development in terms of investment in science, technology and small businesses. Equally, the structural changes to the University of East Anglia will bring substantial increases in student populations as the University of East Anglia and Essex University have come together to underwrite a higher education provision in Suffolk. The proposed Snoasis development at Great Blakenham would also have a substantial impact on the infrastructure of the county in terms of service and transport requirements. All of these developments pose major challenges for the force.

Strategic priorities

Following extensive consultation, in 2001/02 the police authority (PA) adopted a three-year programme to increase spending on policing in the county – primarily through the recruitment of additional front-line police officers and the development of scientific support services. The Suffolk First initiative was designed to make people ‘feel safe’ as well as making sure they ‘are safe’ in terms of the actual risk of crime.

October 2007

This additional investment has now been completed, along with a range of other initiatives designed to meet the Suffolk First aim of becoming the safest county in the country. The Suffolk First programme was updated in 2005 to Suffolk First For You (SF4U), the aim of which is “to provide Suffolk people with the safest local communities and highest quality services compared with similar areas in the country”. The style of policing is also summed up within the SF4U slogan: ‘Taking pride in keeping Suffolk safe’.

An SF4U policing model has been developed that reflects the original Suffolk First twin aims, linked by the National Intelligence Model (NIM), and that also makes a citizen-focused approach integral to the way that policing is managed and delivered. The model emphasises that this is not a bolt-on to existing ways of doing business, but something that requires cultural and operational change at all levels of the force. The model has five parts, which make up the 2007/08 priorities:

- **First for citizens** – maintain a commitment to diversity, reintroduce service standards, implement the Quality of Service Commitment (QoSC) and increase front-line policing.
- **First for value** – reduce bureaucracy, implement Front Line Focus, develop activity-based costing, exploit opportunities for remote data/working, develop IT in support of citizen focus policing, further develop inspection and review within the constabulary and enhance the performance management framework.
- **First for local services** – improve community intelligence, introduce SNTs, improve partnership working and explore opportunities for workforce modernisation.
- **First for safety** – reduce level of criminality and maintain level of sanction detections, improve targeting of level 2 criminality, minimise the terrorist threat and improve road safety.
- **First for staff** – encourage active intrusive management (AIM), use performance development reviews (PDRs) effectively, maximise training opportunities, better recognition and reward, implement National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) doctrines and listen to staff and be responsive to what they say.

Force developments since 2006

In the 2006 HMIC Baseline Assessment report, the force received either Poor or Fair and Declined gradings in respect of managing critical incidents and major crime, tackling serious and organised criminality, protecting vulnerable people (PVP), providing specialist operational support and training, development and organisational learning.

With the exception of PVP (which was the subject of detailed inspection activity in 2007 featured elsewhere in this report) and training, development and organisational learning (which has been the subject of re-examination by specialist staff from HMIC’s personnel, training and diversity team), these areas were reinspected in March 2007 to monitor progress.

Managing critical incidents and major crime

Since the publication of the 2006 baseline report, the force has faced perhaps the most significant challenge of recent times with the investigation into the murder of five women in and around Ipswich during November and December 2006 (Operation Sumac). The judicial outcome of the case is as yet unknown but the force coped admirably in the face of unprecedented demand, well supported by ACPO, NCPE and more than 30 forces across the UK. Simultaneously, a separate murder in Ipswich involving links to gang-based criminality has been investigated, with support from Operation Trident in London. The revisit to the force took place at a time when the pace of Operation Sumac had slowed slightly, but

October 2007

nonetheless this investigation remains the most pressing issue facing the force. The backdrop of Operation Sumac is important to note because much of the force activity to improve the weaknesses identified in the 2006 Baseline Assessment was interrupted by the tragic events in Ipswich.

A proposal to form a major investigation team (MIT) was agreed in principle by the force management board (FMB) in summer 2006, but funding constraints and the drive to implement Neighbourhood Policing mean that an MIT is unlikely to be established until 2008. The absence of a dedicated capability to deal with homicide and other major crime remains an area of vulnerability for the force, although the new Chief Constable and the PA remain committed to the establishment of an MIT at the earliest opportunity. There is an inherent impact on the force's ability to undertake 'cold case' work, in respect of both homicide and serious sexual offences. Home Office funding has been secured to undertake a particular cold case review but it is unclear as to how this work will be progressed given current demands, although there are plans to commence activity in September 2007.

No progress has been made in relation to developing protocols with military establishments for the investigation of unexplained deaths. There is, however, evidence of effective working with military partners. The force acknowledges this deficiency and will seek to address it over the coming year. Training issues in relation to the use of MIRWEB have been addressed, evidenced by the very successful use of the system when activated in support of Operation Sumac.

The force should examine the resilience and capacity of its single point of contact unit to ensure that it is capable of servicing the demands of both major and volume crime. Although the unit performed admirably during Operation Sumac, there has been a build-up of work as a result, and this could have a detrimental effect on other investigations. The PA has led work to convene an independent advisory group (IAG) for use in critical incidents and policy development; this has progressed well. The force should ensure it continues to work with the authority fully to exploit the opportunities offered by the existence of an IAG in support of major crime investigations. The force and authority have invested considerable time and effort into the implementation of risk registers, with both force and departmental registers now appearing on the force intranet.

The force is commended for the improvements made in the management of critical incidents and major crime, but further progress will be needed to meet the national threshold standards for major crime recently agreed by ACPO. This will be the subject of inspection in Phase 2 of HMIC's programme, along with serious and organised criminality, in 2007/08.

Tackling serious and organised criminality

A paper was accepted by the FMB in October 2006 recommending the creation of a dedicated organised crime directorate (OCD). The OCD commenced operation on 1 April 2007 and is headed by a detective superintendent, supplemented by a growth bid creating a detective chief inspector (DCI) post. The OCD will, when fully operational, comprise the technical support unit, a confidential unit, organised crime unit, disclosure officer and financial crime unit. The creation of the OCD should serve to rationalise and drive the force's effort to tackle level 2 criminality, which is beginning to feature in strategic assessments, notably gun crime in Ipswich which is linked to a number of prominent offenders from the London area. It is essential that a clear vision exists of precisely what the OCD will achieve and how its performance will be measured against these expectations, while maintaining the ability to service appropriate requests at level 1. A recently introduced suite of performance indicators should assist in this regard.

October 2007

Although there has been improved take-up of collaborative opportunities in respect of serious and organised criminality, there is evidence that the force is not referring cases to the regional intelligence unit (RIU) because it is believed that they will not 'score' sufficiently to merit adoption when faced with competing bids from other forces. It is accepted that the lack of an operational arm within the RIU is an inhibitor in some circumstances. The force can submit operations to the RIU, which in turn carries out intelligence development. However, when it comes to operational activity, responsibility rests with the submitting force or any others it can persuade to help.

The proposal to move the dedicated witness protection unit (WPU) into the newly formed public protection directorate (PPD) should be reviewed. Resilience within the WPU is a further issue the force should consider revisiting. The improvement in capacity and capability to tackle serious and organised criminality is insufficient to merit a change in the overall grade of Poor, primarily because the new OCD is still embryonic and ascertaining demonstrable improvement is problematic. However, when the OCD is fully operational it is likely that the force will meet the proposed national standard.

Providing specialist operational support

There is now much improved integration of the NIM within the operations arena, including tasking processes and a more relevant strategic assessment. However, there is still insufficient access to analytical capability, which inhibits the ability to update intelligence on a 24/7 basis for dedicated operations staff.

Firearms policy and associated compliance work has been satisfactorily addressed, with NCPE licence submission due in 2007. The force accepts that organisational learning in relation to firearms, both from in-force and external incidents, could be further improved by developing the 'library' concept and through an appropriately password-protected IT process. There was limited knowledge among the staff interviewed of the good practice firearms library. There is limited joint training for firearms officers and surveillance officers. Personnel interviewed stated that although the system works, there should be a formalised training schedule.

The absence of a duty management system is a real issue when considering call-out arrangements and knowledge of the specialist skills held by staff, particularly those on duty at any given time. The current process for initiating police support unit (PSU) mobilisation is not robust in that it is too heavily reliant on individual officers and an element of chance that suitably trained officers are on duty. The force has acknowledged this deficiency and is seeking to address it with some urgency. There is still evidence of staff double/treble hatting, with a number of officers being multi-skilled in elements such as POLSA/PSU/CBRN. This weakens resilience and represents a risk if concurrent incidents require specialist skills. The force leads both regionally and nationally around joint response to raves. This is a particular area of strength for the force and it is evident that issues from debriefs are addressed in a manner that leads to improved standards for gold/silver commanders.

Contingency plans with key partners have been developed and one plan in particular (MOD Woodbridge) is due to be tested in the near future. A detailed training schedule exists for other key sites in conjunction with local resilience forum partners. Meaningful progress has been made regarding business continuity management. However, there is still work outstanding following the sign-off of the force business continuity plan, in respect of departments/functions completing their plans and the testing of the gold group (known elsewhere as the crisis management team).

October 2007

Although some progress is still to be made, the noticeable improvement in the provision of specialist operational support has been sufficient to amend the direction of travel of the Fair grade from declined to improved.

Training, development and organisational learning

HMIC has previously raised concerns regarding insufficient engagement with stakeholders in the management of the learning and development (L&D) function. In particular these concerns related to an absence of formal staff and customer surveys and the level of engagement with community representatives. Other issues identified included the need to strengthen costing, evaluation and marketing of L&D products.

There has been significant progress made by the force in the last year. The context within which progress has taken place has been particularly challenging, and this has undoubtedly had an adverse impact on the pace of improvements. Nonetheless, effort has been sustained, processes have been strengthened and leadership and governance are becoming increasingly more effective. It is essential that impetus to embed the revised processes and practice is maintained, particularly as many of these are relatively recent introductions. These processes are technically sound, and offer good potential to improve practice within the L&D function.

The role of the head of L&D has been examined and was found to contain elements of human resources (HR) activity that do not logically fit with this role. It was agreed that this area needs to be addressed, and is a product of transitional arrangements from previous post-holders. In addition, the force is also considering a review of HR from which further improvements to L&D structures are envisaged.

The noticeable improvement in the provision of training, development and organisational learning has been sufficient to amend the direction of travel of the Fair grade from declined to improved.

Findings

National summary of judgements

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Neighbourhood Policing				
Neighbourhood Policing	6	14	21	2
Performance management				
Performance management	6	29	8	0
Protecting vulnerable people				
Child abuse	3	17	21	2
Domestic violence	1	13	27	2
Public protection	2	16	23	2
Missing persons	1	21	21	0

Force summary of judgements

Neighbourhood Policing	Grade
Neighbourhood Policing	Fair
Performance management	Grade
Performance management	Good
Protecting vulnerable people	Grade
Child abuse	Poor
Domestic violence	Fair
Public protection	Fair
Missing persons	Good

October 2007

Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE

FAIR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

National contextual factors

The national Neighbourhood Policing programme was launched by ACPO in April 2005 to support the Government's vision of a policing service which is both accessible and responsive to the needs of local people. It was anticipated that, by April 2007, every area across England and Wales would have a Neighbourhood Policing presence appropriate to local needs, with all Neighbourhood Policing teams in place by April 2008. For local communities this means:

- increased numbers of police community support officers (PCSOs) patrolling their streets, addressing anti-social behaviour and building relationships with local people;
- access both to information about policing in their local area and to a point of contact in their Neighbourhood Policing team; and
- having the opportunity to tell the police about the issues that are causing them concern and helping to shape the response to those issues (Home Office, May 2006).

By focusing on the key areas of resources, familiarity/accessibility, problem identification and joint problem-solving, this inspection has identified the extent to which Neighbourhood Policing is being implemented. It has also examined forces' capability and commitment to sustain implementation beyond April 2008.

Contextual factors

The force has established a total of 47 SNTs with geographic boundaries and areas agreed with partners through a consultation period between November 2005 and June 2006. All SNTs were in place by April 2007, although a small number, particularly on Western area, have yet to be formally launched. A nominated sergeant leads each team (although some sergeants have responsibility for more than one SNT) supported by police constables, PCSOs, special constables, volunteers and partners. All teams are introduced to the community through a two-tier approach, the first being a launch at district level where key partners and community contacts are invited. This is followed by a more localised event at SNT level where the local officers engage and introduce themselves to the community via a street meeting or other public events.

Strengths

- The force has recruited its target of 142 PCSOs and additionally employs a further two who are funded by the Lowestoft regeneration project. All PCSOs are either

October 2007

deployed or nearing the end of their formal training. Work is under way to identify the potential for further private funding for additional PCSO posts.

- All 47 SNTs are in place although some are yet to undergo their formal 'district launch'.
- One BCU has produced an SNT directory folder, which includes the abstraction policy, neighbourhood profiles and contact sheets, community engagement information and community intelligence. This is an extremely informative document that the force plans to develop in the other BCUs.
- The PA has been fully supportive of Neighbourhood Policing since the outset and a member speaks at each SNT district launch. The PA has been represented on the force Neighbourhood Policing project board for 18 months. The force project lead also reports formally to each PA meeting.
- Every PA member is aligned to an SNT inspector to interact, support and monitor the progress of SNTs.
- Driven by the interaction between the PA and the project board, the force has re-examined its estates strategy to incorporate the Neighbourhood Policing agenda. A funding stream has been identified to maintain police operating bases. Four police stations are to be sold, with the finance generated reinvested in new SNT operating bases.
- A force-wide plan has been developed by the Temporary Assistant Chief Constable to help understand community cohesion at neighbourhood level. The actions therein relate to strategic commitment, neighbourhood profiling and community engagement and intelligence. The overarching aim is to obtain a clearer understanding of the nature of different communities within the county and how they relate to each other.
- A number of SNTs were subject to an internal force inspection in February 2007 as part of a rolling programme through to October 2007. The National Neighbourhood Policing Programme Team's BCU self-assessment guide was circulated to all SNT officers of sergeant rank and above and was the basis for the inspection work. It also served to allow the BCUs to identify any gaps in their own implementation of Neighbourhood Policing. Any issues identified were highlighted on the returned report and from this a generic findings report was prepared by the project team; this was circulated to all the SNTs inspected. From this report, BCU-based action plans were generated and implemented.
- Neighbourhood Policing is central to the local policing plan and PA strategy.
- The temporary deputy chief constable (T/DCC) chairs the Neighbourhood Policing project board, which is working to a clear project management structure and using PRINCE 2 methodology. Representatives on the project board include the three BCU commanders, HR, finance and operations department, together with the assistant director of Suffolk County Council.
- A number of partnership tasking meetings (titled SNT meetings in some areas) are held fortnightly or monthly at various locations, such as local schools. Several partners attend routinely, including local councillors, fire and rescue officers and Connexions staff; these meetings are the primary means of setting SNT priorities, which must be agreed by those present.

October 2007

- Representatives of the county and district councils meet with BCU commanders and are involved in, and contribute to, the six-monthly BCU strategic assessment process.
- The force has a dedicated QoSC group with representatives from each BCU and a number of other departments that have been nominated QoSC champions. The group met regularly prior to Operation Sumac and there are plans to resurrect it. An action register details actions relating to the relevant standard of the QoSC with timescales and nominated owners. This plan is maintained on a shared drive so that owners can update it electronically.
- The force has developed a credible performance framework that reflects the work of SNTs. Although some of the performance indicators are national requirements, such as those concerning satisfaction and confidence, others are linked to SNT activity and the ultimate intention is that the framework will be built around outcomes as opposed to outputs.
- Each SNT has a six-month engagement plan, in operation since April 2007. This is a live document and sets out the structure for engagement activity based on the SNT neighbourhood profiles. The SNTs are also provided with an engagement ‘toolkit’ that outlines a wide range of engagement activities, together with the advantages and disadvantages of using each. It was from this document that the engagement plans were formulated.
- A communications officer from Suffolk County Council is seconded to the force for two days a week to critique the communication strategy from an independent partnership perspective.
- Running in tandem with the force project board is a partnership group that includes representatives from each of the district councils, borough councils, county council, parish councils and voluntary organisations. The only police representation on this group is the assistant chief constable (ACC) and the project lead. A conscious decision was made to convene this group to maintain partner interest and involvement; it plays a major role in shaping Neighbourhood Policing activity and the roll-out of SNTs. Through this group, there is full partner consultation on a range of business.
- The project board has agreed a ‘minimum standards for communications and marketing’ document, which sets out requirements and ownership of key marketing techniques and is split into daily, monthly, quarterly and annual tasks.
- The crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) responsible authority groups routinely feature Neighbourhood Policing on their agendas.
- A communication strategy covers purpose, current position and challenges, as well as setting out key messages and target audiences (both internally and externally), and a communications toolkit. The partnership group has been instrumental in agreeing and signing up to the communications strategy.
- Considerable effort has been invested in the branding of SNTs, with work agreed in advance by the partnership group. The force includes branding in its communication strategy and has produced a style and user guide to explain the rationale behind branding. It includes a number of examples of stationery, business cards, headed paper and PowerPoint templates, thereby ensuring total consistency.

October 2007

- The force operations room (FOR) has been kept abreast of the introduction and development of SNTs. As well as information appearing on the intranet and in newsletters, all FOR supervisors were briefed by SNT leads with information that they were able to cascade to their staff. The force switchboard invited SNT staff to come to the FOR and explain their role. FOR staff are thus able to identify SNT staff and direct the public accordingly. POLARIS (command and control) incidents are now aligned to the relevant SNT areas.
- The force has launched a new postcode and A–Z search facility within the FOR so that switchboard operators and call takers can enter a postcode and automatically identify SNT priorities and team details.
- An effective process was adopted for identifying neighbourhoods, involving the analysis of demographic information and demand data. Initial proposals were subject to extensive consultation with both partners and the community. This process will be reviewed in April 2008 to enable the current boundaries sufficient time to settle.
- The force has drawn up a skills profile of all special constables and uses these skills to benefit the force – eg in website creation.
- The vast majority of special constables are allocated to the SNTs of their choice, helping to promote a greater feeling of ownership and involvement on both sides.
- Formal evaluation of the training of three PCSO intakes has been undertaken by the force training evaluator. The results have been made available and there is evidence that this has been used to improve future performance in this area.
- Co-location of SNTs with partners is a feature of the Neighbourhood Policing strategy. For example, one SNT is located in a clinic owned by the primary care trust where SNT staff book on duty and operate from; this affords them ready access to outreach workers and nursing staff. Another SNT is located in Ipswich hospital and there are realistic plans to expand the co-location programme.
- There is evidence of good integration between SNTs and response teams across the force. The Suffolk tasking and briefing system (STABS) contains a link document detailing all SNT priorities, and response staff have a good awareness of them. Whenever possible, response teams brief with SNTs and work towards SNT priorities when demand allows.
- Confidence and satisfaction measures are included in the force Neighbourhood Policing performance framework – qualitative aspects are measured through surveys collated by the consultation team.
- A signal crime survey was conducted in one area of the force, which showed increased levels of satisfaction since the implementation of the SNT in that area. Surveys are conducted quarterly and feedback is provided to SNTs. To ensure that a fair sample of the community is represented, survey forms are handed out in the street and included in newsletters.
- Suffolk Police Direct is a development of police message broadcasting as provided through the National Police Portal. It is an excellent means of providing up-to-date information on local crime, advice on reducing the risks of becoming a victim of crime and information on police activity in the area. The force currently has in excess of 25,000 registered users.

October 2007

- As part of the inspection process, a telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents was carried out, asking six questions about their experience and views of how Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered. Suffolk scored above the national average range for five of the questions, and within the national average for the sixth. One question asks if the public know how to make contact with any member of the police team who works in their area – on this, Suffolk is one of only two forces scoring significantly higher than the national average.
- Joint problem solving is beginning to work well across the force through partnership meetings that identify neighbourhood priorities, and is supported by strong commitment from partners. The public is becoming involved in problem solving and some issues are being addressed by community members, eg environmental activity to clean up streets and houses in a part of Ipswich.
- The force employed the consultancy firm KPMG to examine demand and call data spanning a two-year period, to ascertain what policing responses were required and whether warranted powers were necessary. This led to the identification of SNT and response team sizes. All constables not on a specialist unit were designated as SNT officers and invited to apply, if they wished, to carry out response duties. In recognition of this work, the force has a large number of 'hybrid' teams with dual SNT/response roles, mainly in the rural areas. Although the structure and make-up of SNTs is based on the model incorporating demand, and a template is in use for this process, BCU commanders had a strong influence on whether to employ dedicated or hybrid SNTs.
- The deputy director of HR sits on the Neighbourhood Policing project board and plays a key role in decision making around the strategic issues affecting the implementation and sustainability of SNTs.
- The force has in place an abstraction policy in respect of SNTs. This is supported by a strong direction from BCU commanders that SNTs will be left alone unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. Abstractions are monitored on a day-to-day basis at district commander level, and each SNT sergeant completes a statistical return on a monthly basis with the information going to HR and performance evaluators or managers.
- Evidence is emerging of SNT staff setting PDR objectives relevant to local policing priorities.
- Community impact assessments are routinely completed in response to local and national events – eg missing persons, murders or raves – and a dedicated template document is utilised for this purpose. Key individual networks are contacted as part of this process.

Work in progress

- The PA is in the process of producing a 'Role of the PA' document looking at support for SNTs, co-ordination and engagement, partnership working, good practice, the promotion of links between the force and CDRPs and scrutiny.
- To improve retention rates of PCSOs, the force is looking to broaden and vary the PCSO role.

October 2007

- From June 2007 to March 2008, Neighbourhood Policing will enter Phase 2 of the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing. A document setting out the overview and focus has been prepared; it defines the project team roles and responsibilities, including their redeployment dates. Built in to this is a planned internal inspection of nine SNTs between October 2007 and January 2008. At the end of the project, in March 2008, a full formal review will take place.
- Following an issue raised in the 2006 HMIC Baseline Assessment, an audit of partner resources was undertaken by the force's partners. It is anticipated that all council staff working in uniformed roles will be accredited as wardens and come under the SNT umbrella. This process, carried out in August 2006, identified a large number of potential resources and has now been rerun to incorporate district councils. From this, a pyramid of involvement has been created, outlining the differing levels of involvement of partner staff.
- The force involved partners in the strategic assessment process for the first time in 2006. Lessons have been learnt from this process and a meeting is to be held prior to formulation of the next strategic assessment to explain the structure and process of the strategic assessment to partners.
- The Suffolk Management Information and Performance System (SMIPS) is at an advanced stage of development and will be introduced in the summer of 2007. The SMIPS team has built the force SNT performance indicators into the system so that a user can click on the relevant SNT and access performance information immediately. Some indicators will be reported on a daily basis, others monthly and some quarterly.
- The publication of photographs of SNT officers on the website has caused some debate, with a small number of officers refusing to have their photographs displayed. Force managers are continuing to work with individuals and staff associations to overcome obstacles to progress, because a key principle of Neighbourhood Policing is the local community knowing their local officers.
- The force has yet to develop a clear picture of all emerging and resident groups in the county. There is an expectation that SNTs will help to fill this gap through the gathering of community intelligence, which will link into and drive engagement plans. The force has recognised the need to improve knowledge in respect of the demographic picture of the county and has tasked SNTs, through the community cohesion action plan, to obtain such information.
- Neighbourhood profiles sit on the force intranet and will be divided into three sections. The first will be situated on the onesuffolk website and be accessible to the public. The second will be accessible to both police and partners and the third contains police-only information.
- Partnership data is available to the police through the community safety unit in Suffolk County Council. There are plans to include indices of deprivation data and overlay it with police data in neighbourhood profiles.
- Although a training needs analysis of SNTs has been conducted by the project board, a further analysis will begin in June 2007 now that most teams have been rolled out. SNT managers will conduct their own analysis to identify what training can be delivered at individual level through PDR objectives. Opportunities will be taken to identify any training that could be delivered at team level as well as force level.

October 2007

- Special constables are becoming aligned to SNTs and there is evidence that this is working well. Training for special constables is currently under review and, as a result of the decrease in regular officer recruitment, spare training capacity has been identified later in 2007 to provide training to special constables and PCSOs.
- A number of volunteers are in place to support SNTs but a need was identified for a volunteer co-ordinator. A job description has been prepared but there are insufficient funds available to fill the post. However, the force has worked in partnership with the Suffolk Federation of Volunteers, which has agreed to part-fund the role up to £20,000, with the force project board meeting the remaining cost. This post has now been filled.
- The force SNT training implementation plan states that it will involve community members in the training needs analysis and consult with the newly formed IAG, but this has yet to happen.
- The Suffolk County Council secondee is currently developing joint protocols between the force and partners in the communications field on how to handle press releases – specifically, who should lead on press issues, who should be quoted and who should authorise releases.
- The community safety unit has been tasked to relaunch problem-solving activity across the force and has replaced ‘Pathway’ (a paper-based system), with ‘Pathway Plus’, a password-protected, web-based, problem-solving tool/record-keeping system based externally. The underpinning software (SPARKS) was originally purchased by the county council on behalf of its CDRPs. Work is under way to increase SPARKS usage and awareness across SNTs. Pathway Plus (SPARKS) can be accessed from any terminal with internet access. Access can be graded – eg viewing rights for partners and SNTs – and there are plans to open it up to the wider community in the future.
- The force has begun to use the SPARKS database and a number of officers have been trained in its use, with plans to train partners. By the end of summer 2007, it is anticipated that all SNT staff will be trained in the SPARKS system.
- Problem solving will be assisted by problem-solving ‘facilitators’ (crime reduction officers) who will attend the Partnership Tasking and Co-ordinating Meetings and sift through data and assist in drawing out priorities prior to agreeing them. Identified problems will be allocated to a ‘problem owner’, which could be a partner agency, and a problem-solving process undertaken. Facilitators will advise and assist problem owners and a problem-solving toolkit is being developed.
- Special constables are part of SNTs and use SNT stations as their bases, and are not precluded from carrying out other duties such as public order or proactive work. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has been well received, but the force may benefit from an evaluation of this process when it has bedded in.

Areas for improvement

- There are concerns that engagement activity undertaken across the force is not truly reflective of the communities making up any particular area. For example, in the One Ipswich Forum, a number of agencies come together with the public to discuss problems. Although the forums are relatively well attended, the attendees were

October 2007

described by both police and partners as being 'the same old faces'.

- Priorities are agreed and set by the partnership meetings but there remains doubt as to how well informed they are by genuine community concerns. There is evidence, particularly in rural communities, that SNT activity is still police-driven and comments from parish councillors were relayed, such as 'what's in it for us?'. The force should review its marketing and communications strategy to target areas where SNTs are not so well engaged.
- The inspection examined the priorities of the ten SNTs on South BCU. With one exception, the priorities were all extremely general and broad – eg anti-social behaviour or parking, but exact locations and times were not specified. One SNT has priorities of night-time economy, parking and criminal damage. Again, this raises a question as to whether these really are community, as opposed to police, concerns. The priorities for two SNTs are exactly the same: police visibility, criminal damage and illegal parking.
- Confusion exists between police and partners as to the structure, format and precise role of partnership tasking meetings and neighbourhood panels. A number of community meeting structures already exist and there may be opportunities to align these in order to avoid duplication and enhance engagement opportunities.
- Partners state that the number of meetings they are required to attend is too high, although there are plans to merge some to reduce the volume.
- Little of the marketing and website material has been produced in languages other than English. Given that the force is developing knowledge of its emerging communities, opportunities for engagement are almost certainly being missed. The force should review how reflective is its current engagement activity.
- No training has been given to SNT staff in chairing meetings or public speaking, although these are seen as key skills for SNT officers.
- The capacity of the force analysts requires reassessment. They are, or will be, required not only to become involved in neighbourhood mapping, organised crime mapping and updating profile documents but also to meet the demands of regular BCU work, such as strategic and tactical assessment documents. When all SNTs are rolled out and community intelligence is submitted in greater quantities, there is a risk that analysts could be overwhelmed by the volume of community intelligence to process.
- There is a lack of awareness among SNTs of the abstraction policy and there are variations in its interpretation. The abstraction policy states that SNT officers deployed in support of the night-time economy on another SNT area are not classed as abstracted.
- A lack of consistency is evident across BCUs in the way neighbourhood profiles are maintained due to lack of analytical input and access to partnership data. Although some improvement has been made with the appointment of CDRP analysts, further improvement is required – in particular, the need for routine access to partnership data. Service level agreements are in place at strategic level to exchange information, but this is not replicated at operational level and is an obstacle to the creation of profiles and the partnership tasking process.
- Although PCSOs have a good knowledge of their roles, this is less true for SNT staff.

October 2007

Furthermore, there is a lack of consistency in the deployment policy for PCSOs – some routinely deploy themselves to incidents they should not (according to policy) be attending.

- A PDR system is in place for SNTs but there is a lack of awareness of, and training for, sergeants on the PDR system for PCSOs.
- Marketing of non-police operating bases is required to ensure that the public know where their SNTs are located and how they can be contacted. Occasions have arisen when urgent messages have been left on answering machines or members of the public have contacted operating bases unaware that they are not routinely staffed.
- The intranet presentation on community intelligence is out of date.
- Awareness training on the importance of intelligence has not incorporated community intelligence. Western BCU has produced a bespoke presentation on community intelligence and Prolific and Other Priority Offenders for staff on the BCU. The force would benefit from extending the Western training package force-wide.
- Reality checks in Woodbridge and Brandon highlighted several missed opportunities in respect of engagement and publication of SNT activity, particularly with the local business community. Very few SNT posters were evident and the majority of members of the public spoken to had little or no knowledge of the concept of SNTs.
- Methods for ensuring that effective feedback is given to communities vary considerably, but with limited evidence of success.
- SNT staff have been giving out direct dial numbers for SNT premises. Although this is generally acknowledged to be helpful for accessibility, it can cause confusion for the public. (The current position is to give only the main switchboard number.)
- The force does not award special priority payments to SNTs because this is seen as core business. Areas and departments have merit award schemes, although the current process is described as limited. The increasing number of community and commercial awards, and the media publicity, are seen as rewarding but there is scope to improve what the force does collectively.
- Examination of the force website revealed that a number of SNTs were displaying nothing other than a standard introduction page and there is a lack of consistency on how individual SNT sites are populated and updated.

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: District launch events for Safer Neighbourhood teams

PROBLEM:

As the Neighbourhood Policing model in Suffolk presents a new way of working, it was important to find a way in which that message could be communicated to partners and the public.

Key messages to be issued include:

- What is an SNT?
- Where will it be based?
- Who is in the team?
- How is it a different way of working?
- How do I contact my team?
- How can I get involved?

SOLUTION:

The solution approved by the Safer Neighbourhood project board was for each district to arrange and hold an event to launch all the SNTs within their district.

District launch events occur around two weeks after the 'soft' launch of the teams, so that any minor issues are dealt with prior to the public launch. The soft launch includes local publicity such as posters detailing team opening times, up-to-date web pages with team details and a 'welcome to our team' news story.

The formal district launch is open to a range of invitees, such as:

- PA members
- District councillors
- County councillors
- Parish council clerks
- Primary care trust representatives
- Council officers from district and county council services who work with the teams – eg area managers for Children and Young People's services and for adult and community services, housing managers, area highways managers
- Representatives from the local strategic partnership
- Representatives from CDRP
- Key people from the private sector, such as shopping centre managers.

The format of the event is:

- Welcome from the host organisation (if in non-police venue) – pleased to be supporting this work
- Introduction from a member of the PA – explaining the overall vision of SNTs
- Presentation by district commander – explaining how the teams will work, what is expected of partners, who is in the teams etc
- Question and answer session and informal networking refreshments.

October 2007

This is a closed meeting (invitations only) to facilitate easy exchange of views and ideas. Depending on local circumstances there may be a media briefing before or after the event for local media coverage on the SNTs.

Around two weeks after the district launch, a more local level launch is arranged by each SNT to enable them to be available to their community and to make sure that the community is on board quickly with the SNT concept.

A community briefing takes place in each SNT area, adapted to suit local needs – eg teams covering a wide geographical area may find a series of smaller 'street meets' in different parishes to be more appropriate.

OUTCOME(S):

Expected outcomes:

- Increase awareness of Safer Neighbourhood model with partners
- Enhance partner contribution to the SNTs
- Increase public awareness of the new structure
- Increase public awareness of their own specific SNT
- Wide media coverage on Neighbourhood Policing in Suffolk
- Identifying local priorities
- Developing key links and networks on both a district and local SNT level.

FORCE CONTACT: Moira Bryan, Suffolk County Council Communications Manager – 01473 613500 / Moira Hurlock, Deputy Project Manager, Safer Neighbourhood Project Team – 01473 613853

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Role of Police Authority members with Safer Neighbourhood teams

PROBLEM:

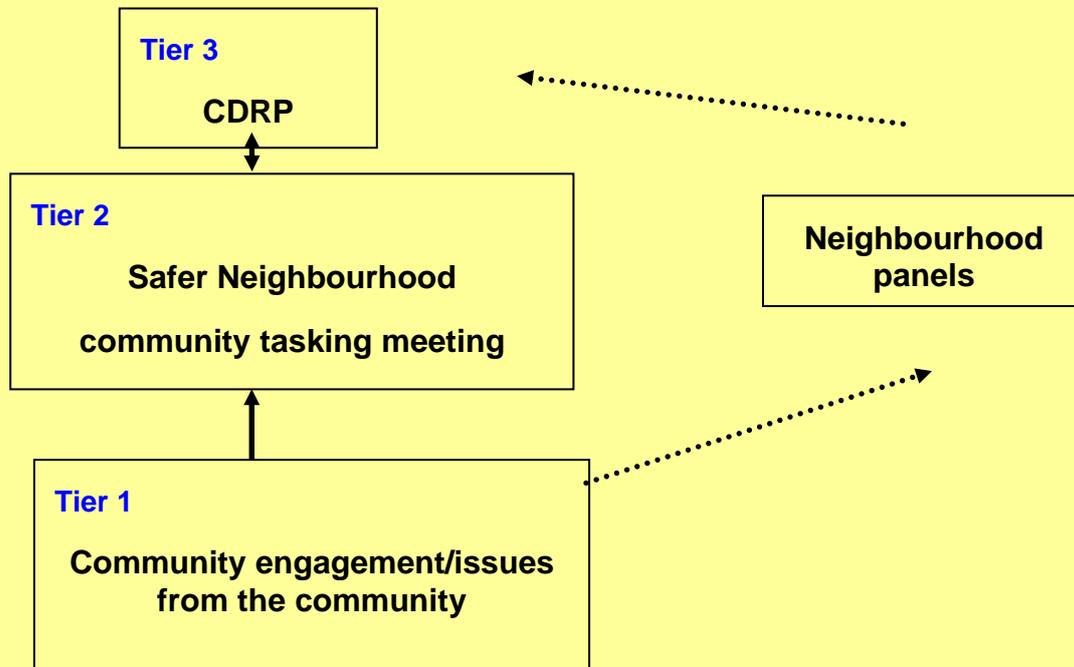
The implementation of Neighbourhood Policing has created a new policing structure in Suffolk. Existing sectors are being replaced with districts, each made up of a number of SNTs. Previously, PA members had links to sector commanders; PA members could enhance the effectiveness of the SNTs.

SOLUTION:

Aligning a PA member with an SNT inspector offers the opportunity for members to play a more proactive role in the delivery of the policing service to local communities.

The structure that has been set up avoids the need for an additional level of meetings. This aims to make use of the existing Safer Neighbourhood policing model and associated structures for working with local communities and partners. Partners are aware of this structure and in the SNT pilot sites this has proved successful.

The structure is shown below:



It is anticipated that the PA role would principally be based around tier 2 of the model, although this would not preclude members taking part in tier 1 as well. The Safer Neighbourhood community tasking meeting at tier 2 is essentially a regular meeting of all the SNT members, which will include partners and other agencies. It is at this meeting that the local issues and priorities are discussed and actions agreed and allocated to the

October 2007

appropriate partners/agencies. The model also includes a link to the role of the neighbourhood panels. Members are unlikely to be able to attend all the community tasking meetings for each SNT; however, it is anticipated that members will be able to commit to:

- attend at least one community tasking meeting per year; and/or
- attend a community tasking meeting where they can play a specific role or add support for the SNT inspector in addressing a local problem.

This arrangement will be formalised in an agreement similar to a service level agreement between the SNT inspector and member. This should also outline details such as methods and frequency of communication, commitment to attend community tasking meetings and specific links members may have, either in their PA role or councillor role. The latter will greatly assist in ensuring that specific problems and issues are given the appropriate priority by other agencies and partners to secure resolution.

It is envisaged that the SNT inspector and member will meet and/or communicate regularly to discuss specific issues as well as prioritising which community tasking meeting would benefit most from the member's attendance. In this way, the model ensures that members have a more targeted and proactive role in addressing local issues and problems.

OUTCOME(S):

Expected outcomes:

Support

- Members can offer support to district inspectors by taking on specific issues that require progression/attention of other agencies/partners. Members may also be able to address these at other meetings they may attend in their PA role. Elected members will be able to network with other partners to the benefit of the SNT(s).

Community engagement

- Members can monitor/dip-sample the community engagement process to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the local priorities.

Networking

- Members will be able to network on behalf of their designated SNT(s) by developing useful links that can also contribute at the level 2 community tasking meetings.

Good practice

- Members will be able to acknowledge and identify any particular good working practices in addressing local problems.

Promote links at Safer Neighbourhood team, district and basic command unit level in conjunction with crime and disorder reduction partnerships

- Through close links with the SNTs, members will gain a greater insight into the local level issues that most affect their quality of life. This will provide a balance against the force strategic priorities and may assist in managing public expectations of the police service.

FORCE CONTACT: Carey Godfrey, Suffolk Police Authority member – 01473 613500 or

October 2007

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October 2007

Performance Management

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

National contextual factors

There is no single accepted model of performance management across the police service but any such model or framework must be fit for purpose. Ideally, forces should demonstrate that individuals at every level of the organisation understand their contribution to converting resources into agreed delivery, and know how they will be held to account. On a daily basis, first-line supervisors monitor, support and quality assure the performance of their teams. At the other end of the spectrum, chief officer-led performance meetings – often based loosely on the American Compstat model – are a vehicle for accountability and improvement. Robust leadership, a commitment to improvement and reliable, real-time information systems are all critical factors in effective performance management.

There is no mechanistic link between overall force performance and the grade awarded in this framework. The grade is based on the quality of the force's processes that enable it to identify and react to changes in performance.

Contextual factors

The force is currently undertaking a strategic options review that will examine options for the future structure of the constabulary and identify potential savings from any changes that may be adopted.

Strengths

- SF4U is embedded in the culture of the organisation and is clearly understood by staff at all levels. The programme receives widespread coverage across the force through literature and intranet activity. An SF4U delivery plan outlines how the vision and mission of SF4U will be delivered in the forthcoming year, while an SF4U magazine outlines the strategy of the force to internal staff and external customers. The SF4U leadership development programme identifies opportunities for individuals and teams to deliver improvements to policing across the force. SF4U workshops have been delivered to all members of staff, helping to drive a culture of learning and continuous development.
- Policing plan priorities are constructed around the SF4U framework and this has included a meeting with representatives from all seven CDRPs in the county. The national priorities for the police service are clearly articulated in the policing plan, along with actions to be undertaken locally to deliver against them. Area and departmental plans are circulated to all staff members and key community stakeholders.

October 2007

- The force and PA hold business breakfast meetings to consult with the local business community.
- The force uses Police Direct as a means of communicating key messages to the public. This is part-funded by the Police Information Technology Organisation and was initiated on Western BCU; it now has more than 25,000 people signed up, who receive force information by email or by way of a text message sent to their landline phone. Feedback from users indicates a very high satisfaction rate and increased feelings of reassurance.
- The HR costed plan and force efficiency plan are incorporated into the local policing plan.
- The SF4U performance accountability framework document details with great clarity the method by which the force holds individuals and teams to account at every level – force, area, district, unit, SNT, individual level – and details the frequency of meetings. Evidence from focus groups suggests that the framework is well known and understood throughout the force.
- The corporate development department has worked with the PA to establish a core compilation group, one of its specific purposes being the production of the 2008/09 local policing plan, and revising the rolling strategy plan. The changes to the strategic planning infrastructure and approach have ensured that the process is equipped to address national priorities in a local setting.
- The force maintains a strong emphasis on the quality of front-line supervision, as evidenced by its AIM guide for supervisors, which sets minimum standards and expectations of service.
- A comprehensive monthly performance pack is produced and analysed at FMB and operational delivery group, supplemented by more localised performance monitoring by BCU-based performance evaluators.
- The PA reports no difficulty in obtaining performance information from the forces and PA members play a prominent and active role in steering groups and project boards, most recently evidenced by their heavy involvement in the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing.
- A regular programme of staff surveys is conducted and results are fed back through the management structure. Examples of survey topics include staff views on paying for parking at force headquarters, the level of support that dispatchers receive from operational officers on resulting events, and officers' perceptions of the quality of service provided by the FOR and the patrol directory.
- A comprehensive programme of consultation was carried out during 2006/07 and is to be repeated in 2007/08. This includes a full policing performance assessment framework user satisfaction programme, a joint PA and force public survey, engagement through Suffolk Speaks (an outside body focusing on service provision), youth consultation and locally arranged events. Results are fed into monthly performance meetings as part of the operational delivery group and to the PA. This process has generated further research work into, for example, racist incidents and vehicle crime.
- The force has devised and implemented the Suffolk Integrated Inspection Programme, based upon HMIC methodology. The process involves departments

October 2007

completing self-assessment questionnaires and a number of documents are examined, including performance data and departmental plans. The inspection activity is followed up with a formal report and action plan for the relevant lead. A chief officer leads all such inspections and when districts are inspected, the BCU commander is involved with the headquarters inspection team. The programme for 2007 will incorporate nine SNTs, victim care centres (VCCs), detection disposals by offence taken into consideration and customer focus; all inspection activity is controlled and directed by the FMB.

- In late 2006, the force commissioned KPMG to develop a resource allocation model that would help to match resources more effectively to demand. This has resulted in a more sophisticated model that can be utilised on an ongoing basis as circumstances change. Workload and risk factors are built into the model.
- The force has developed a youth consultation programme, based around visits to high schools and conducting interactive consultation sessions with pupils as part of their citizenship curriculum. Local SNT officers attend the sessions and deal with issues raised at the time whenever possible.
- Suffolk is contributing fully to the Six Counties collaboration programme, exploring the potential to share resources on protective service and back office functions. A memorandum of understanding already exists between Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire on sharing resources to meet the demands of major and serious crime across the three force areas.
- Some 81.7% of victims of crime were satisfied with the overall service provided by the force, an improvement on the 78.9% satisfaction level during the same period the previous year. This current figure is above the most similar force average of 79.6%. A number of initiatives are in place that are designed to improve the level of support and quality of service provided to victims, in line with the victims code and the QoSC.

Work in progress

- The force is currently developing a comprehensive Suffolk Management Information and Performance System (SMIPS) that will provide real-time performance data at force, department, area, district and SNT level. This is due to go live in summer 2007.
- The PA has established an IAG that will cover training as a sub-group issue. Area representatives will be identified from the group to consider community impact assessments, where appropriate.
- The crime management department at headquarters has been restructured to take account of counter-terrorism and level 2 demands, with the creation of an OCD, and is currently developing protective service benchmarking templates. These were to be quality assured in May 2007 but work was temporarily halted in anticipation of national guidance.
- The PA is involved in performance monitoring through its monitoring and audit committee, which meets seven or eight times a year. The PA is now represented at the quarterly performance review meetings, chaired by the ACC. Furthermore, the authority is also represented at the force strategic tasking and co-ordination group.

October 2007

- The force is seeking to embark on wider data-sharing activity and eventually feed all data into one data warehouse, allowing it to incorporate partnership data in the planning process.
- The purchase of eFormMaster, a web-based software solution, will enable officers to complete activity analysis forms via the intranet, and enhance the data-gathering process by allowing more timely and frequent reporting.
- A customer call-back system was launched in May 2007, whereby supervisors contact callers reporting anti-social behaviour; an IT system records the information obtained and lessons learnt are fed back. There is considerable scope for more widespread usage of this system beyond front-line supervisors.

Areas for improvement

- Implementation of a duty management system would greatly assist with the management of resource allocation.
- Despite changes to the PDR system, a degree of doubt persists among front-line staff as to its value in career development, or reward and recognition processes.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

National contextual factors

The assessment framework for Protecting Vulnerable People was first developed in 2006 as part of HMIC's baseline assessment programme. It replaced two existing frameworks – Reducing/Investigating Hate Crime and Crimes against Vulnerable Victims – which focussed on hate crimes (predominantly racially motivated), domestic violence and child protection. Following consultation with practitioners and ACPO leads, a single framework was introduced with four components – domestic violence, the investigation and prevention of child abuse, the management of sex and dangerous offenders, and vulnerable missing persons. Although the four areas are discrete, they are also linked and share a common theme – they deal with vulnerable victims where there is a high risk that an incident can quickly become critical, and where a poor police response is both life-threatening and poses severe reputational risks for the force.

This year's inspection has been carried out using similar assessment standards as those in 2006. These highlight the importance of leadership and accountability; policy implementation; information management; staffing, workload and supervision; performance monitoring and management; training; the management of risk; and partnership working.

The work carried out by forces to protect the public, particularly those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm, is complex and challenging. No single agency, including the police, has the capacity to deliver the required response on its own. Success is therefore, dependent on effective multi-agency working and there are a number of established partnerships, involving a wide range of services and professionals, aimed at ensuring that an integrated approach is adopted to protecting those most vulnerable to risk of serious harm.

Contextual factors overview

Suffolk Constabulary received a Poor grade for PVP in the 2006 HMIC Baseline Assessment. Since that time the force has invested considerable effort in an attempt to make demonstrable improvement. The force has recently created a PPD, headed by a dedicated DCI who reports to the head of crime command. The PPD oversees the work of the now centralised public protection unit (PPU) and is the main point of strategic and policy reference for PVP. The head of the PPD is responsible for policy and planning in respect of domestic violence (DV), child abuse, vulnerable adults, missing persons, prostitution and human trafficking.

The PPU incorporates public protection officers (PPOs) responsible for the management of registered sex offenders (RSOs) and potentially dangerous persons; the hi-tech crime unit, with force responsibility for data recovery and analysis in crime investigations; and the online investigation team, which has dedicated staff to investigate internet-related illicit child abuse imagery and offers advice and support to areas on related offences such as sexual grooming.

Child abuse and DV staff are the responsibility of BCU commanders and operate from one of three BCU-based VCCs across the county. The three VCCs each have two distinct teams: the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) and a separate victim care team. The latter consists of a police staff supervisor and five or six victim care officers (VCOs) who deal with victims of rape, serious sexual assault, DV, adult protection and hate crime. The VCCs were funded from a £2 million investment by the PA.

Strengths

- The ACC holds portfolio responsibility for each of the four areas of PVP and provides effective leadership in monitoring performance and driving it forward.
- The force has produced clear and consistent policies in respect of each aspect of PVP, which (where applicable) are fully compliant with ACPO/NCPE guidance.
- Strategic leadership for PVP has been strengthened with the appointment of a DCI as the head of the headquarters-based PPD.

Work in progress

- The force is currently undertaking internal inspection of the VCCs. It is envisaged that the findings of this work will act as a catalyst to review existing structures and process in key areas.

Areas for improvement

- PVP does not feature as a priority within the 2007/08 policing plan, nor does it feature in the force or BCU control strategies. Individual BCU plans for 2007/08 make little or no reference to PVP.
- There is no co-ordinated training plan across the four PVP disciplines.
- Some inconsistencies are evident in the day-to-day application of policy, with particular concerns surrounding child abuse and DV. Force policy is strong in these areas and should give officers appropriate direction, but resourcing and resilience constraints mean that the force now carries an unacceptable level of risk.

October 2007

Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE

POOR

National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

National contextual factors

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the police to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare of children’; safeguarding children, therefore, is a fundamental part of the duties of all police officers. All police forces, however, also have specialist units which, although they vary in structure, size and remit, normally take primary responsibility for investigating child abuse cases. Officers in these units work closely with other agencies, particularly Social Services, to ensure that co-ordinated action is taken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at risk of suffering, significant harm. The Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Membership of LSCBs includes representatives of the relevant local authority and its Board partners, notably the police, probation, youth offending teams, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts, NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, the Connexions service, Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service, Secure Training Centres and prisons.

Contextual factors

The force has recently created a PPD, headed by a dedicated DCI who reports to the head of crime command. The PPD oversees the work of the now centralised PPU and is the main point of strategic and policy reference for the other disciplines of child abuse investigation and DV. The head of the PPD is responsible for policy and planning in respect of DV, child abuse, vulnerable adults, missing persons, prostitution and human trafficking.

Child abuse and DV staff are the responsibility of BCU commanders and operate from one of three BCU-based VCCs across the county. The three VCCs each have two distinct teams, the CAIU and a separate victim care team. The latter consists of a police staff supervisor and five or six VCOs who deal with victims of rape, serious sexual assault, DV, adult protection and hate crime.

The CAIU core business is intra-familial abuse, namely allegations from children and young people against their parents, step-parents, grandparents, close family friends or neighbours. The units also deal with allegations against people in positions of trust, such as doctors and other health professionals, schoolteachers, scout leaders or prison staff. The CAIUs are BCU-based units with operational accountability and control devolved to BCU commanders, but with strategic and policy responsibility retained centrally.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The ACC holds portfolio responsibility for each of the four areas of PVP and provides effective leadership in monitoring performance and driving it forward.
- The force has produced clear and consistent policies in respect of each aspect of PVP, which (where applicable) are fully compliant with ACPO/NCPE guidance.
- Strategic leadership for PVP has been strengthened with the appointment of a DCI as the head of the headquarters-based PPD.
- The management and accountability structures within CAIU are clearly laid out, with policy centrally managed through the recently introduced PPD. Responsibility for operational delivery, however, rests with BCU commanders. The T/DCC holds the ACPO portfolio responsibility for child abuse and can raise any issues at regular performance meetings held with BCU commanders.
- The force has recently reviewed and republished the policy in respect of child abuse investigation. The policy is clear and well written, paying due regard to ACPO guidance. All senior managers at inspector level and above, together with all child abuse investigators, have been given a personal copy of the ACPO guidance, together with an explanatory brief prepared by the force.
- A joint protocol with Suffolk Social Care Services for the investigation of child abuse allegations sets clear thresholds for investigative standards and agency requirements. This document is dated July 2004 and is in the process of being rewritten.
- The force has included the VCCs in its internal inspection regime – drawing upon specialist support from the policing improvement unit (PIU) in its corporate development department – to scrutinise referred cases, crimes, investigations, adherence to policy, partnership working, data recording and staffing levels. The first inspection was carried out in April 2007, with plans to conduct the remaining inspections by the end of summer 2007. The PIU consists of an experienced retired officer and an inspector. It is responsible for managing all external inspection processes but also conducts a series of internal inspections each year, which are determined through FMB. These inspections are conducted through a framework known as the Suffolk integrated inspection model, which ensures that all inspection processes are linked and that there is meaningful follow-up to areas identified as requiring development.
- In accordance with the requirements of the Climbié Report, all CAIU officers are trained detectives and have completed the Initial Crime Investigators' Development Programme or equivalent.
- There is evidence of joint training being delivered through the Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) – eg a two-day child protection course.
- A programme of awareness training for front-line staff has been designed and carried out by a VCC detective inspector (VCC DI); the quality of input is notably high.
- The force uses a dedicated IT system (case administration tracking system (CATS))

October 2007

for tracking every joint investigation. Although the system is not linked to the force crime intelligence system (CIS), crimes entered on to the CIS are cross-referred to CATS entries.

- The force has developed a comprehensive CATS user guide, which has been circulated to a number of other forces and identified as good practice.
- The concept of VCCs is innovative, bringing together several closely linked disciplines under one roof, with good examples of partnership support. Considerable resources have been invested in VCCs, with strong support from the PA.
- The VCC DI attends the BCU daily management meeting at which issues pertaining to child abuse investigation can be raised.
- There is good representation across the sphere of local SCB (LSCB) work, from the strategic level where the head of crime is the force representative, to practitioner level where the DCI from the PPD sits on the sub-committee for victims and witnesses, and a DI on the professional advisers group. LSCB meetings are attended by the respective VCC DIs.

Work in progress

- The force is currently undertaking internal inspection of the VCCs. It is envisaged that the findings of this work will act as a catalyst to review existing structures and process in key areas.
- The suite of performance indicators used to assess the performance of individual staff and the VCCs is currently being reviewed as part of the internal inspection process.

Areas for improvement

- Some inconsistencies are evident in the day-to-day application of policy, with particular concerns surrounding child abuse and DV. Force policy is strong in these areas and should give officers appropriate direction, but resourcing and resilience constraints mean that the force now carries an unacceptable level of risk.
- Child abuse investigation does not feature as a priority within the 2007/08 policing plan nor does it feature in the force or BCU control strategies. Individual BCU plans for 2007/08 make little or no reference to safeguarding children.
- Despite clear policy guidelines, the way in which referrals are handled varies considerably across the force. Threshold tests for joint agency investigations are often unilaterally reduced by VCC staff, due to inadequate staffing levels rather than because referral to social services is merited. In the South VCC, if there is no evidence of a definite criminal disclosure, child abuse investigators will not always participate in a joint investigation even if an injury is present. If a child reports to school staff that a parent has hit him or her, this is often classed as a family issue and social care services are asked to attend to make an initial assessment. Many of these cases are not updated by social care services and the VCC does not routinely follow them up. There is evidence of such CATS entries being allocated to the receiving officer. A potential consequence is that crimes are not being recorded, and investigations are carried out on a single agency basis when they should, if the policy was adhered to, be joint agency investigations.

October 2007

- Example checks are set out in the CATS user guide but there is inconsistency in how these referrals are handled in terms of initial checks. Each BCU conducts different levels of checks; in some cases, staff spoke of conducting no checks at all. Detective constables (DCs) handle referrals on South BCU, whereas in East BCU they are dealt with initially by administrative staff. West BCU administrative staff enter referrals on to CATS straightaway, but IMPACT nominal index and other checks are only done when there is a suspect in a joint investigation.
- A number of referrals are not being correctly recorded as crimes. A sample audit of CATS entries in one VCC revealed that, since 1 April 2007, 16 referrals had not been recorded as crimes. The force accepts that if such an audit were to be conducted elsewhere, the results would be replicated. Although there is an expectation that the force will be fully compliant with National Crime Recording Standard, there are concerns over the resilience to meet this requirement. The force cannot state how many referrals have not been crimed properly. The force faces challenges not only in recording issues, but in ascertaining how the problem arose in the first place.
- West VCC is not recording some 25% of referrals as crimes; the reason advanced being 'heavy workload'. Staff spoke of the process to enter a crime on the system taking up to 20 minutes. Administrative support staff are struggling to keep up to date in an eight-hour working day.
- Action on non-urgent referrals can sometimes be delayed for one to two days, with a consequent delay in the conduct of strategy discussions. This problem is compounded by the fact that supervisors often experience difficulty in tracking down the social care managers on duty.
- The rationale for staffing levels in the child abuse teams of the VCCs requires urgent review – the current working figures make the force vulnerable and the staff feel isolated and under pressure. The establishment figure of four was set when the VCCs were established two years ago, and then increased by one as a result of additional funding. There should therefore be five child abuse investigators in each VCC. However, at the time of inspection, staffing levels were:
 - East VCC has two full-time and three part-time officers, with the latter working between 20 and 30 hours per week. Abstractions are generally low.
 - West VCC has four full-time staff and one part-time officer working 30 hours a week. However, one of the full-time staff has never actually taken up post, having been seconded to a major enquiry, and is due to retire in October 2007. It was stated that the regular daily complement of child abuse investigators is two officers. One of these officers is currently performing acting sergeant duties, even though he is not qualified to do so. The detective sergeant has been seconded away from the VCC for a lengthy period either on major enquiries or project work; this officer is also the force lead in respect of CATS.
 - South VCC currently has a strength of just two officers, one of whom is called upon to perform acting sergeant duties but again is not qualified to do so. The other officer also has commitments as a family liaison officer on Operation Sumac. A part-time officer has been borrowed from the domestic abuse victim care team in the VCC and a part-time police constable is currently on attachment to the unit.

What should therefore be a staff complement of 15 officers is, in practice, closer to

October 2007

nine.

- The forum in which child abuse investigators can meet and share good practice and concerns has not taken place due to the demands of Operation Sumac (the Ipswich murders). Furthermore, child abuse supervisors (sergeant level) are no longer present at VCC management meetings.
- The levels of involvement in and support given to VCCs vary markedly across each BCU. VCC staff are line-managed by the crime managers (at DCI rank) on each BCU but most VCC staff rarely interact with senior managers. On one BCU, staff raised concerns with their own line managers by email regarding the imbalance of workload and vulnerability. The crime manager's response was to inform VCC managers to tell staff to 'knuckle down and get on with things'. VCC staff perceive that BCUs view them as an entirely specialist area distinct from the BCU focus on volume crime and detection targets.
- Problems of resilience are evident in child abuse investigation, both at constable and sergeant level. Staff feel overworked and routinely work overtime and weekends, with the inherent negative consequences on finance, staff welfare and work-life balance. Sergeants are unable to supervise in accordance with AIM because they have to routinely carry out administrative functions such as inputting referrals on CATS, conducting police checks for other agencies or collating statistics. Detective sergeants generally do not have the capacity to monitor or supervise suspect, victim or witness interviews, or put supervisory entries on CATS.
- The requirement for appointment to the CAIU is that an officer should be an accredited DC. This limits the pool of potential recruits primarily to criminal investigation department officers on BCUs, but many of these are reluctant to move to CAIUs.
- The provision and follow-up of training to child abuse investigators is inconsistent, with joint investigation training (JIT) cited as the main concern. One child abuse investigator had not received any training since undertaking the initial JIT course in 1999. The training co-ordinator for JIT is a member of social care services, and the programme includes a post-course assessment of a video/DVD interview as a prerequisite for accreditation. However, post-course evaluation does not appear to be the subject of follow-up, with the consequence that the force was unable to provide evidence of precisely how many officers are actually accredited – ie, have completed the post-course assessment. Furthermore, not all CAIU supervisors are JIT trained.
- The manner in which requests for police checks are dealt with is an area of concern. The CAIU sergeants are carrying out a large number of checks themselves and a backlog is building, although urgent requests are dealt with whenever possible. There is an inherent risk of children being placed in homes without the necessary background work being carried out on staff/carers. The whole process needs to be rationalised and guided by documented policy.
- A mandatory referral system to occupational health is in place, requiring every VCO to attend twice a year. However, at least one officer has only attended once since 2005. This issue has been raised with VCC managers by the occupational health nurse, but officers are still slipping through the net.
- Case conference attendance and management of minutes are inconsistent. On East, both a DC and the detective sergeant attend. On West, the detective sergeant will

October 2007

attend and occasionally a DC, whereas on South only a DC generally attends. Minutes of meetings are entered on CATS, except on South where paper copies only are retained.

Recommendation 1

The force should review, as a matter of priority, the manner in which it records, conducts checks, handles and investigates child abuse referrals; despite clear policy guidance, referrals are not dealt with consistently across the force.

Recommendation 2

The force should examine why a number of child abuse referrals are not being recorded as crimes. It has conducted an internal audit but cannot identify how many referrals have not been appropriately crimed. The force should address recording issues and ascertain how the problem arose in the first place.

October 2007

Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

National contextual factors

There is no statutory or common law offence as such of 'domestic violence'; the term is generally used to cover a range of abusive behaviour, not all of which is criminal. The definition of domestic violence adopted by ACPO does, however, take account of the full range of abusive behaviour as well as the different circumstances in which it can occur:

'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.

As with the investigation of child abuse, responding to and investigating domestic violence is the responsibility of all police officers. Again, however, forces have dedicated staff within this area of work, although their roles vary. In some forces staff undertake a support/liaison role, generally acting as a single point of contact for victims and signposting and liaising with other agencies and support services; in others, staff have responsibility for carrying out investigations.

Irrespective of who carries out the investigation in domestic violence cases, an integral part of every stage is the identification of risk factors, followed by more detailed risk assessment and management. In 2004, HMIC, together with HMCPSI, published a joint thematic inspection report on the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence. At that time, risk identification, assessment and management were in the early stages of development throughout the service. Since then, there has been considerable progress in developing formal risk identification and assessment processes and - in a number of forces - the implementation of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs). Other improvements include the introduction of specialist domestic violence courts and the strengthening of joint working arrangements.

Contextual factors

The force has dedicated specialist staff (VCOs) for the co-ordination of DV. These officers, in VCCs, have responsibility for the co-ordination of support and specialist resources to victims of DV. The VCOs complete risk assessments using information provided by first responders, and engage with appropriate agencies to ensure that safety planning measures are put in place. In the main, DV investigations are carried out by front-line officers, supported by VCOs whose main responsibility is towards the victim and, in particular, high risk and repeat victims. However, VCOs support the investigation process by taking statements where appropriate and ensuring that any retraction statements are taken where possible by specialist officers. This helps to ensure that victims are aware of the

October 2007

consequences of withdrawing their statement and understand that appropriate support is available.

The VCCs are multi-disciplinary units – VCOs are co-located with child abuse investigators and vulnerable adult services; VCOs deal mainly with DV but also have responsibility for service provision to other vulnerable victims. The VCCs are part of the BCU criminal investigation department establishment and are therefore the management responsibility of BCU commanders, although policy and procedure lies centrally with the newly formed PPD.

The force has fully supported the international White Ribbon campaign to raise awareness of DV and has undertaken a number of related activities. A forthcoming campaign will focus on the pastoral support that can be provided by local churches to support and refer victims and perpetrators of DV to relevant agencies.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The concept of VCCs is innovative and potentially good practice, particularly in bringing together several closely linked disciplines under one roof, with good examples of partnership support. Considerable resources have been invested in VCCs with evident support from the PA.
- Front-line and control room staff knowledge of risk identification has been heightened through awareness training that is compliant with Centrex modules. This is also incorporated into the Independent Police Learning and Development Programme.
- The force has developed a strong model of risk identification, using a dedicated 'initial domestic violence risk indication form' (DVRI-2), supported by a risk assessment matrix for use by officers completing the DVRI-2. Attending officers complete the risk DVRI-2, which is then forwarded to VCOs to inform further risk assessment processes. The form is also used by custody staff when considering decisions regarding charge or bail.
- A guidance document assists VCOs to carry out the risk assessment process; it incorporates a table outlining the minimum requirements expected by the force in respect of each risk classification – namely standard, medium, high or very high.
- DV liaison officers are members of response teams located on each BCU. Although they have received little or no training in respect of risk assessment and safety plans, they deal with victims if no VCO is available, or if a victim is asking for particular support. They are a point of contact for front-line officers and used as points of reference.
- There is good awareness and application of the force positive arrest policy in respect of DV; supervisors routinely pursue failures to comply with policy.
- There is a facility to download 999 calls and send by web-file to interviewing officers to inform interview plans.
- If a DV offender is being dealt with in custody, the CIS requires custody staff to inform the victim of the outcome and make an appropriate entry on the CIS.

October 2007

- Processes are in place to identify and inform the VCC if children are present at DV incidents and to pass that information to social care services.
- The DCI in charge of the PPD sits on the multi-agency county DV forum and the DV strategy group; the force has contributed positively to the compilation of a joint strategy for tackling DV.
- DV protocols exist between the police and health agencies and social care; work is in progress to agree a protocol with the education service.
- Force DV policy is clear and well written, consistent with ACPO guidance and with electronic links to additional information and guidance.
- The management and accountability structures within the VCCs are clearly laid out, with policy centrally managed through the recently introduced PPD. Overall responsibility for operational delivery, however, rests with BCU commanders. The T/DCC holds ACPO portfolio responsibility for DV and can raise any issues at regular performance meetings held with BCU commanders.
- ACPO guidance in respect of police officers who commit DV offences has been incorporated into policy after consultation with the professional standards department. The force is also involved with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Constabularies in drawing up a regional protocol governing the investigation of such offences.
- Presentations have been given to a wide range of audiences to not only raise awareness of DV but to explain the role of the VCCs; recipients have ranged from GPs to school children.
- A standalone Excel spreadsheet is used by the VCCs to facilitate the management of DV victims and other vulnerable adults. Although not fully integrated with other force systems, it is nonetheless fit for purpose.
- Performance data in respect of DV is produced monthly by the corporate development department and repeat victim/offender data is generated by the community safety unit. The former informs the strategic management in respect of issues of service disparity and the latter informs responses to repeat victims. Local DV forums are provided with data from the force (via the DV co-ordinator) to assist with the development of local services.

Work in progress

- Multi-agency risk assessment conferences are to be implemented over the coming year. Pursuant to this, a protocol regarding the interaction with multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) will be required, which the force MAPPA co-ordinator is currently considering.
- A specialist DV court is being introduced in Ipswich in spring 2007.
- The SPARKS database, in respect of action planning and problem-solving, is being developed and provided free to organisations working on the DV issues.
- VCOs currently deal with victims only, although the force is considering whether to review this and broaden their role to include investigative work, because

October 2007

independent victim advocates will be taking on a larger share of the victim co-ordination and support role.

- Eastern area is piloting a menu of tactical options for use by VCOs in their safety planning for victims.
- An electronic risk matrix and version of the DVRI-2 form is currently being developed.

Areas for improvement

- DV investigation does not specifically feature as a priority within the 2007/08 policing plan, nor does it feature in the force or BCU control strategies. Individual BCU plans for 2007/08 make little or no reference to DV.
- Initial risk identification is undertaken at the time of receiving the call, and staff in the contact centre or control room often act on instinct to grade events. This approach places reliance upon the individual call taker's or dispatcher's experience in role. Control room staff have received DV awareness training as part of their induction course, but there has been little follow-up training and as such there is considerable scope for improvement.
- There is evidence of some initial VCO risk assessments being conducted over the telephone.
- Although guidance exists, no specific risk assessment training has been delivered to VCOs. As a consequence, they have furthered their own knowledge through experience and by attending a 'Tools for Practitioner Course' run by the county council DV and development officer. There are plans to secure training in risk assessment, which is to be delivered by an external company, and this should be considered a priority.
- The first formal risk assessment is undertaken when a VCO visits or telephones a victim, although by default the VCC supervisor carries out an informal risk assessment by allocating a high or very high risk referral to a DV officer to make contact with the victim. There does not, however, appear to be routine quality assurance or sign-off of risk assessment by VCC supervisors.
- No system is in place to require risk assessment to be reviewed after initial completion. No prompts are required from, or generated by, VCC supervisors and therefore the only point of review is at the discretion of the VCO if there is a change in circumstances.
- Originally it was planned that VCC staff should provide cover on a seven day per week basis, from 8am to 8pm, but this has not been possible because of reduced staffing levels.
- DVRI-2 forms are completed by officers attending incidents and forwarded to the VCC, where they are reviewed by a VCC supervisor each morning. The form contains a crime reference number, which can be cross-checked to obtain further details. However, the force has no way of ensuring that all relevant incidents result in the completion and submission of a DVRI-2.
- Supervisors are aware of welfare issues and workloads, but it is not clear that they

October 2007

are aware of the quality of support delivered by their staff – a perception exists that VCOs are more qualified than their supervisors. The VCOs in at least one VCC finalise their own visits and folders, with no supervisory input.

- The level of administrative support available to VCOs is variable. VCOs tend to do their own administrative work in at least two VCCs, whereas the other VCC receives some support.
- Staff in both VCCs and SNTs spoke of an insufficient number of panic alarms being available on areas. This results in staff having to remove the alarm from one victim in order to service another.
- There is little or no training in formulating exit strategies to ensure a staged and appropriate distancing by the VCOs from victims, and thus minimise the likelihood of dependency.
- Wide variations in VCO workload are evident. However, in all VCCs there was evidence of a number of victims awaiting first contact (and therefore risk assessment), ranging from three to ten.
- The rationale for staffing DV investigation requires urgent review, as the current in-post strength carries a degree of risk. The establishment figure is five VCOs per VCC. However, at the point of inspection, at least three vacancies existed and a number of officers were seconded to other duties, including long-term abstraction to major enquiries.
- There is no means to ensure that all DV-related incidents are being captured, classified and closed appropriately.
- High or very high risk cases should result in a strategy meeting with the VCC DI but this is not happening consistently across the VCCs.
- Witness care units inform VCOs if an offender has received court bail but on occasion this information is not received by the VCOs until the end of the day or even the next day.
- DV incidents and enquiries are currently managed through CIS and a standalone victim database maintained by the VCC. There are concerns that very high risk, and some high or standard risk, victims are known only to those with access to the VCC database. It would be beneficial for control room staff and custody staff to have routine access to this information.
- Control room staff are not informed of injunctions or bail conditions that may be in force against a particular offender, relying instead on asking the victim or caller.
- The establishment figures are three victim care supervisors and seventeen VCOs, although at the time of inspection there were a total of three vacant posts with a further two officers deployed to major enquiries on a long-term basis.

Recommendation 3

The rationale for staffing domestic violence investigations requires urgent review, as the current in-post strength carries a degree of risk. The establishment figure, set when the victim care centres were established two years ago, is five victim care officers per victim care centre. However, at the point of inspection, at least three vacancies existed and a

number of officers were seconded to other duties.

Recommendation 4

The force should examine the current structure for child abuse and domestic violence investigations to ensure that this work is adequately resourced.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

National contextual factors

The Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 led to the formation of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, commonly known as MAPPA, requiring the police and probation services to work together as the Responsible Authority in each area of England and Wales to establish and review the arrangements for the assessment and management of sexual and violent offenders. Subsequent legislation brought the Prison Service into the Responsible Authority arrangements and also requires a range of social care agencies to co-operate with the Responsible Authority in the delivery of the assessment and management of risk in this area. These agencies include health, housing, education, social services, youth offending teams, Jobcentre Plus, and electronic monitoring services.

Under MAPPA, there are three categories of offender who are considered to pose a risk of serious harm:

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

Category 3 – other offenders (with convictions that indicate they are capable of causing, and pose a risk of, serious harm).

To be managed under MAPPA, offenders must have received a conviction or caution. However, there are some people who have not been convicted or cautioned for any offence, and thus fall outside these categories, but whose behaviour nonetheless gives reasonable ground for believing a present likelihood of them committing an offence that will cause serious harm. These people are termed Potentially Dangerous Persons (PDPs).

Following risk assessment, risk management involves the use of strategies by various agencies to reduce the risk, at three levels:

- Level 1 offenders can be managed by one agency;
- Level 2 offenders require the active involvement of more than one agency;
- Level 3 offenders – the ‘critical few’ – are generally deemed to pose a high or very high risk and are managed by a multi-agency public protection panel (MAPPP).

In 2003, the Home Secretary issued MAPPA guidance to consolidate what has already been achieved since the introduction of the MAPPA in 2001 and to address a need for greater consistency in MAPPA practice. The guidance outlines four considerations that are key to the delivery of effective public protection.

October 2007

- defensible decisions;
- rigorous risk assessment;
- the delivery of risk management plans which match the identified public protection need; and,
- the evaluation of performance to improve delivery.

Contextual factors

The recently established (April 2007) PPD, headed by a DCI, has seen the move from BCU-controlled PPOs to a centralised system. A paper submitted by the DCI through the force operational delivery group and on to the FMB in 2006 led to significant changes in the management of public protection, with a growth in establishment at all levels in a new PPU. Staffing changes included a dedicated inspector and sergeant, together with an additional constable and administrator post.

The DI in charge of the PPU manages the hi-tech crime unit, the online investigation team and the PPOs, who are responsible for the management of RSOs and potentially dangerous persons. There are now nine constables working as PPOs.

The new post of detective sergeant (PPU) is based in the probation offices in Ipswich and supervises the PPOs. He is co-located with the force MAPPA manager and is supported by the newly appointed PPU administrator, who acts as the central point of contact for the Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR); three additional administrative staff, based in police stations, support the local PPOs who work from three operational police stations across the county.

Given that RSOs are managed on three BCUs, the three area intelligence units (AIUs) have a responsibility to support the PPOs on the management of intelligence. Therefore DIs from the AIUs attend MAPPA meetings and, where necessary, can bid for resources at daily tasking meetings and area tactical tasking and co-ordination groups.

Visits to RSOs are carried out on the following basis: low risk offenders are visited at least once every 12 months; medium risk visits are every 6 months; high risk every 3 months and very high risk at least monthly. These visit intervals are kept under regular review and amended in response to any changes in the level of risk.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- Since the HMIC Baseline Assessment 2006, the force has developed and implemented a public protection action plan, which covers various elements of public protection work.
- The force has invested considerable effort and resources in the PPU in the last 12 months and this is evident in the improvements observed throughout the inspection.
- All MAPPA category 1, 2 and 3 offenders are recorded and managed using the ViSOR system.

October 2007

- The MAPPA co-ordinator, although independent of the police, is included in all PPU team meetings and was on the public protection restructuring working group and implementation team.
- PPOs were managing 520 sex/violent offenders as at 1 April 2007. When the current PPU vacancy is filled, officer workload will average between 50 and 60 offenders each. This figure is consistent for all officers working across the county. In determining staffing levels, consideration has been given to using part-time officers, geography (distance) issues and the location of approved premises. An equitable spread of high and very high risk cases has also been achieved and is regularly monitored by PPU supervisors. This redistribution of workloads is indicative of the considered approach adopted by the force in respect of public protection work.
- An increase in establishment, and the appointment of a dedicated supervisor, is already generating identifiable improvements in public protection work.
- Force policy has been rewritten and is now a clear, comprehensive document. Lines of accountability are set out, along with procedures in respect of public protection work that are useful not only for dedicated PPU staff but also front-line officers.
- MAPPA is working well at all levels and there is evidence of consistent attendance, including BCU representatives.
- All ViSOR back-record conversion work has now been completed.
- The PPU supervisor and administrative officer are based in the probation service building in Central Ipswich; this has assisted with partnership working and improved working relationships with the probation service.
- Some visits to RSOs are undertaken jointly with probation service offender managers.
- Procedures are in place to randomly dip-sample ten cases per month from the very high or high risk ViSOR records. In addition, the PPU DI audits 50 ViSOR records per month.
- There is clear support for PPU work at ACPO level – the T/DCC sits on the strategic management board of MAPPA.
- MAPPA administrative staff prepare MAPPA minutes, which are stored on to CDs and sent or emailed to the force. The minutes are copied and pasted into ViSOR (risk management plans). The establishment of a supervisor post in the PPU allows greater supervision and control of actions arising from MAPPA minutes. As an extra control measure, the DCI/DI PPD also receive all MAPPA minutes.
- Seven PPOs have attended the national course on the management of high risk offenders in the community, delivered by Lancashire Police and incorporating some Risk Matrix 2000 training, Part 2 Sex Offenders Orders and other related subjects. New members of staff will complete these courses during 2007.
- All PPD job descriptions have been reviewed, updated and, if necessary, rewritten to take into account the new structure of PPD.
- Management information from ViSOR is carefully monitored. An example of its effectiveness was evident when a developing backlog of visits to RSOs was identified in 2006 – an action plan was immediately put in place that resulted in a

October 2007

substantial improvement within six weeks. Management information is downloaded on the last working day of each month to ensure performance is monitored and any action required is taken swiftly.

Work in progress

- Some PPOs have also attended national courses in subjects such as interviewing sex offenders, internet offending, risk assessment of offenders in the community, provisions of the Sex Offenders Act and understanding sex offenders. Those members of staff who have not undertaken this training will complete their outstanding Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre courses during 2007.
- Joint training with the probation service will take place during 2007 on motivational interviewing.
- Given the number of new staff joining the PPU, not all staff are yet trained in respect of ViSOR. As a consequence, the force has arranged ViSOR training for all staff, scheduled for May, June and July 2007. The training is not restricted to new officers – existing PPU staff will be invited, not only to share their knowledge but to ensure that ViSOR is being operated in a consistent manner across the force.
- The majority of the backlog of visits to RSOs has now been cleared.
- Management processes for potentially dangerous people are currently under review but are similar to those for RSOs. To ensure legitimacy of process, however, these offenders are not managed under MAPPA, and separate, local inter-agency protocols and risk assessment and management procedures are in place.
- The new PPU structure has allowed all staff to meet together on six days a year, for networking and professional development. Arrangements are in hand for an accredited risk assessment trainer to attend one of the days to provide more training in this area. The probation service will also be invited to join these sessions.
- Historically, there has been little or no supervisory input to risk assessments or risk management plans on ViSOR. This was identified as a major area of weakness in the Baseline Assessment 2006 and was a principal argument for the formation of the PPD, with a dedicated DS to oversee the PPU. Examination of ViSOR records still shows minimal supervisory input to initial risk assessment and risk management plans, but it is acknowledged that the appointment of a dedicated supervisor will alleviate this problem.
- New appointees to the PPU are formally vetted but those officers already in post have not been subject to any vetting procedure. The force has recognised this need and is planning to address it during 2007.
- Evidence of the auditing of MAPPA cases with partner agencies is beginning to emerge, undertaken via members of the joint agency strategic management board on a needs basis, to ensure the quality of service provided by the MAPPA process and its attendees is appropriate and consistent.

Areas for improvement

- Public protection does not specifically feature as a priority within the 2007/08 policing plan (although reference is made to PPU work), nor does public protection feature in

October 2007

the force or BCU control strategies. Individual BCU plans for 2007/08 make little or no reference to public protection.

- The force is seeking to monitor the number of joint visits to RSOs, but was unable to provide a rationale for such monitoring other than merely quantitative recording. Consideration should be given to the development of a joint protocol with the probation service to co-ordinate activity around joint visits.
- The force has yet to evaluate the success of co-locating the PPU/VisOR officers with the probation service, to ensure that value is being obtained.
- Senior investigating officers (SIOs) and other specialists in force have a general awareness of VisOR, and its existence is outlined in internal Force Orders and bulletins to promote greater knowledge and usage of the system. The force could usefully raise awareness of SIOs on what VisOR can contribute to the investigation of major crime.
- Some inconsistency in the nature of checks carried out in advance of a visit to an RSO was observed. Examination of force policy reveals that there is no agreed checklist to assist PPU officers.
- The AIU automatically alerts PPOs by email of any intelligence received that is linked to VisOR nominals. However, there are often time delays in this process. Furthermore, PPOs are not routinely made aware of the arrest of a VisOR nominal.
- Other than work conducted to assist with the creation of the PPD, there has been little, if any, use of problem profiles or other analytical products.
- Inconsistency surrounds the housing of intelligence on VisOR, with some officers creating intelligence logs and others recording it in activity logs. It is acknowledged that a VisOR training day planned for early July should resolve these differences in approach.
- A mentoring and shadowing system is in place for new PPU staff but this process is not structured or documented.
- PPOs are located at police stations but often struggle to gain access to vehicles, and are reliant on pool vehicles. If no car is available then RSO visits are cancelled.
- PPOs do not routinely inform the force control room of visits to RSOs. This has worrying implications for PPO safety and the force is urged to ensure that supervisors and colleagues are aware of each PPO's plans regarding the location and, as far as possible, the timing of visits.
- Targets and performance indicators have not yet been set for the PPU or individual PPOs.
- A level 2 daily tasking meeting is chaired by the director of intelligence, and includes conference call attendees. However, the PPD is not represented at this meeting.
- The response to PPU requests for intelligence on specific RSOs is reported as variable; the force should consider ways to improve the intelligence flow to and from PPD.
- A facility exists on the CIS whereby any officer can identify all the RSOs in any given area. There does not appear to be any means of flagging to the professional

October 2007

standards department if a blanket check on RSOs is carried out on the force intelligence system.

- Updates to ViSOR are the responsibility of individual PPOs but no timescales are laid down as to when updates have to be entered. Administrative support staff do not routinely update ViSOR following PPO visits, as PPOs prefer to enter their own updates to ensure accuracy.
- No formal or structured monitoring process is in place to check that RSO visits have been conducted.
- As PPU staff have now moved away from VCCs, there is a recognised need to promote effective communication links between staff operating across the PVP disciplines, particularly child abuse and DV. The current approach is very much ad hoc and needs based.

Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	GOOD
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National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

National contextual factors

Each year, thousands of people are reported to police as missing. Many have done so voluntarily and are safe from harm, whether or not they return home. But a number are vulnerable, because of age or health concerns, and the police service has developed well-honed systems to respond swiftly and effectively to such cases. For obvious reasons, missing children arouse particular concern, and many forces deploy 'Child Rescue Alert' to engage the media in publicising such cases. Key good practice in this framework are early recognition of critical incident potential, effective supervision of enquiries, the use of NIM problem profiles and other intelligence techniques to analyse repeat locations (eg, children's homes), and the use of an IT-based investigation tracking system such as COMPACT.

Contextual factors

Responsibility for policy in respect of missing persons has recently moved from the detective superintendent to the DCI in charge of the PPD.

The specific comments in this section should be read in conjunction with those contained in the generic protecting vulnerable people section of the report.

Strengths

- The ACC holds portfolio responsibility for each of the four areas of PVP and provides effective leadership in monitoring performance and driving it forward.
- Force policy sets clear lines of accountability in terms of initial and subsequent management of missing person enquiries. The policy documents the expectations of various roles (eg supervisor, district commander and SIO) and gives clear guidance in respect of timescales for reviews.
- The force utilises the dedicated IT system, COMPACT (Community Policing and Case Tracking), for the management of missing persons. This not only ensures that correct investigative procedures are carried out but provides a framework for audit to ensure data quality and compliance with policy.
- A full training package on COMPACT has been delivered to staff at all levels.
- Force policy and procedure in respect of missing persons is clear and well written, consistent with ACPO guidance. It incorporates a formal review process, including

October 2007

daily reviews of high risk cases and others also at 7 and 28 days, all of which are supported by 'prompts' on the COMPACT system. Further reviews are built in at 3, 6 and 12 months, with cold case reviews conducted every 2 years. Review processes are unambiguous and awareness of policy among staff is good.

- Force policy dictates that a full risk assessment is completed in respect of all missing persons and, following this, system-generated tasks are assigned dependent on the identified risk level. All risk assessments are reviewed by a supervisor.
- Quarterly audits of COMPACT are carried out by the crime management department and the force contributes nationally to improvements in the COMPACT system through active participation at the national COMPACT user group.
- The force COMPACT system has a direct link to the national missing persons helpline to enable direct data transfer.
- The force COMPACT user group, chaired by the detective superintendent (Operations), ensures consistency in the use of COMPACT, and makes and communicates strategic decisions. These meetings are minuted and actions are generated and allocated to named owners. Information of relevance to staff is passed on through Force Orders, the intranet or area missing persons champions.
- The COMPACT system provides management information on the number of people missing at any given time, along with outstanding or overdue tasks. Data is collated by the force community safety unit and used to inform operational decisions in respect of looked-after children, as it highlights repeat missing persons.
- Missing persons enquiries are discussed at daily tasking meetings and also raised at the tactical tasking and co-ordination group when appropriate.
- The force has developed a joint agency protocol with social care services for dealing with children missing from care. The benefits of this work are already being realised through a reduction in calls for service in respect of looked-after children who persistently go missing.
- In conjunction with regional partners, the force was one of the earliest in the country to launch Child Rescue Alert.
- The force requires officers to adopt a thorough approach to the investigation of missing persons and strives to ensure an appropriate response in every case. Perhaps the strongest evidence of the force's performance and professionalism is that the disappearance in December 2006 of two female sex workers in Ipswich was declared a critical incident, prior to the discovery of any body. Once a murder investigation was under way, the force received a number of missing person reports of potentially vulnerable women – a trained SIO was appointed to each case (all those reported missing were located safe and well).
- Force policy is clear about the procedure to be adopted in all cases. A full record will be created on the dedicated IT system, COMPACT; a risk assessment is carried out, the outcome of which will inform the police response and the nature and scale of enquiries to be undertaken. A link to the national missing persons helpline allows for the timely transfer of information.

October 2007

- The positive action taken in respect of repeat missing persons has resulted in a substantial reduction. Work is ongoing in respect of this, including close liaison with social care services and mental health trusts.

Work in progress

- The force is examining the potential to integrate COMPACT with the force command and control system (POLARIS).
- Building on the work carried out with social care services, the force is seeking to expand this and develop a similar protocol with mental health trusts.

Areas for improvement

- Awareness training on the prompt identification of critical incidents arising from missing persons enquiries is not formally delivered below inspector rank, although awareness of the likelihood of a missing person enquiry escalating into a critical incident is high.
- In the event of a missing person being reported, a COMPACT log is created and allocated by the control room to a sergeant, who should ensure that enquiries are allocated. However, sergeants do not always add updates to the COMPACT log prior to handing over to the next shift.
- Risk assessments are completed using a drop-down menu on COMPACT. The officer on the case then has to justify his/her reasoning to a supervisor, who will review the suitability of the assessment. However, this does not happen in all cases because some sergeants do not have the capacity to review risk assessments.
- Not all staff appreciate the value and significance of return interviews (ie debriefing a missing person who subsequently turns up).
- Some staff report not receiving any input in respect of COMPACT for more than two years. A number of officers have not been trained in the use of the system and there was evidence of some sergeants completing COMPACT entries on behalf of untrained colleagues.

October 2007

Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Protecting vulnerable people – missing persons

TITLE:

- (1) **COMPACT**
- (2) **Managing repeat missing persons (Mountains to Molehills)**

PROBLEM:

- (1) How to improve the management of missing persons and record a clear audit trail of the investigation.
- (2) To work with Children and Young Persons Services to reduce the number of repeat missing persons (commonly from care homes), resulting in police time being used more effectively.

SOLUTION:

- (1) An electronic solution was implemented in October 2004 to manage missing persons so as to professionalise the investigation process. There was a staged implementation throughout the force, and COMPACT has been fully operational in Suffolk since June 2005. At the same time, force procedures were rewritten in accordance with the NCPE guidance on the management, recording and investigation of missing persons.
- (2) A number of joint agency seminars were held to agree a joint protocol, resulting in some important changes in the way that care homes report children as missing. There are now a number of stages completed before they are reported as missing and subsequently recorded on COMPACT.

OUTCOME(S):

Both initiatives have improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the force and, it is hoped, enhanced service provision for victims of crime and vulnerable persons in Suffolk.

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Recommendations

Protecting vulnerable people

Recommendation 1

The force should review, as a matter of priority, the manner in which it records, conducts checks, handles and investigates child abuse referrals; despite clear policy guidance, referrals are not dealt with consistently across the force.

Recommendation 2

The force should examine why a number of child abuse referrals are not being recorded as crimes. It has conducted an internal audit but cannot identify how many referrals have not been appropriately crimed. The force should address recording issues and ascertain how the problem arose in the first place.

Recommendation 3

The rationale for staffing domestic violence investigations requires urgent review, as the current in-post strength carries a degree of risk. The establishment figure, set when the victim care centres were established two years ago, is five victim care officers per victim care centre. However, at the point of inspection, at least three vacancies existed and a number of officers were seconded to other duties.

Recommendation 4

The force should examine the current structure for child abuse and domestic violence investigations to ensure that this work is adequately resourced.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AIM	active intrusive management
AIU	area intelligence unit
APA	Association of Police Authorities

B

BCU	basic command unit
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C

CATS	case administration tracking system
CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CIS	crime intelligence system
COMPACT	Community Policing and Case Tracking

D

DC	detective constable
DCC	deputy chief constable
DCI	detective chief inspector
DV	domestic violence

F

FMB	force management board
FOR	force operations room

H

HMIC Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HR human resources

I

IAG independent advisory group

J

JIT joint investigation training

L

L&D learning and development

LSCB local safeguarding children board

M

MAPPA multi-agency public protection arrangements

MIT major investigation team

N

NCPE National Centre for Policing Excellence

NIM National Intelligence Model

O

OCD organised crime directorate

P

PA police authority

PCSO police community support officer

PDR performance development review

PIU policing improvement unit

PPD	public protection directorate
PPO	public protection officer
PPU	public protection unit
PSU	police standards unit
PVP	protecting vulnerable people

Q

QoSC	Quality of Service Commitment
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R

RIU	regional intelligence unit
RSO	registered sex offender

S

SGC	specific grading criteria
SIO	senior investigating officer
SMIPS	Suffolk Management Information and Performance System
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood team
SPI	statutory performance indicator

V

VCC	victim care centre
VCO	victim care officer
ViSOR	Violent and Sex Offenders Register

W

WPU	witness protection unit
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