Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HMIC Inspection Report

Thames Valley Police
Neighbourhood Policing
Developing Citizen Focus Policing

September 2008

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Findings

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 of both the Home Office and 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://inspectorates.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 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 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 more probing inspections of fewer topics. 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 is gathered, verified and then assessed against specific grading criteria (SGC) drawn from an agreed set of national (ACPO-developed) standards. 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.

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

HMIC's business plan (available at http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/business-plan/) reflects our continued focus on:

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents as phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;

- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;

- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and

- the embedding of Neighbourhood Policing.

HMIC's priorities for the coming year are set in the context of the wide range of strategic challenges that face both the police service and HMIC, including the need to increase service delivery against a backdrop of reduced resources. With this in mind, the business plan for 2008/09 includes for the first time a 'value for money' plan that relates to the current Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008–11).

Our intention is to move to a default position where we do not routinely carry out all-force inspections, except in exceptional circumstances; we expect to use a greater degree of risk assessment to target activity on those issues and areas where the most severe vulnerabilities exist, where most improvement is required or where the greatest benefit to the service can be gained through the identification of best practice.

The recent Green Paper on policing – *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together* – proposes major changes to the role of HMIC. We are currently working through the implications to chart a way forward, and it will not be until the late Autumn when we are able to communicate how this will impact on the future approach and inspection plans. In the meantime, we have now commenced work covering the areas of critical incident management, public order and civil contingencies/emergency planning – which will conclude in early 2009. In consultation with ACPO portfolio holders and a range of relevant bodies (such as the Cabinet Office in respect of civil contingency work) we have conducted an assessment of risk, threat and demand and, based on this, we will focus on those forces where we can add most value. We will also commence a series of police authority inspections in April 2009, which will follow a pilot process from November 2008 through to January 2009.

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime, Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing in each of the 43 forces of England and Wales.

This document includes the full graded report for the Neighbourhood Policing inspection and Developing Citizen Focus Policing inspection.

Neighbourhood Policing

The public expect and require a safe and secure society, and it is the role of the police, in partnership, to ensure provision of such a society. The HMIC inspection of Neighbourhood Policing implementation assesses the impact on neighbourhoods together with identified developments for the future.

The piloting of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) between April 2003 and 2005 led to the Neighbourhood Policing programme launch by ACPO in April 2005.

There has been considerable commitment and dedication from key partners, from those in neighbourhood teams and across communities to deliver Neighbourhood Policing in every area. This includes over £1,000 million of government investment (2003–09), although funding provision beyond 2009 is unclear.

The NRPP evaluation highlighted three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing, namely:

- the consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;

- intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and

- joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.

To date, the Neighbourhood Policing programme has recruited over 16,000 police community support officers (PCSOs), who, together with 13,000 constables and sergeants, are dedicated by forces to 3,600 neighbourhood teams across England and Wales.

This report further supports Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* (2008), which considers that community safety must be at the heart of local partnership working, bringing together different agencies in a wider neighbourhood management approach.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

Citizen Focus policing is about developing a culture where the needs and priorities of the citizen are understood by staff and are always taken into account when designing and delivering policing services.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan's *Review of Policing* emphasised the importance of focusing on the treatment of individuals during existing processes: this is one of the key determinants of satisfaction.

A sustained commitment to quality and customer need is essential to enhance satisfaction and confidence in policing, and to build trust and further opportunities for active engagement with individuals, thereby building safer and more secure communities.

This HMIC inspection of Developing Citizen Focus Policing is the first overall inspection of this agenda and provides a baseline for future progress. One of the key aims of the inspection was to identify those forces that are showing innovation in their approach, to share effective practice and emerging learning. A key challenge for the service is to drive effective practice more widely and consistently, thereby improving the experience for people in different areas.

Latest data reveals that, nationally, there have been improvements in satisfaction with the overall service provided. However, the potential exists to further enhance customer experience and the prospect of victims and other users of the policing service reporting consistently higher satisfaction levels. All the indications show that sustained effort is required over a period of years to deliver the highest levels of satisfaction; this inspection provides an insight into the key aspects to be addressed. It is published in the context of the recent Green Paper *From the Neighbourhood to the National – Policing our Communities Together* and other reports, which all highlight the priorities of being accountable and responsive to local people. The longer-term investment in Neighbourhood Policing and the benefits of Neighbourhood Management have provided an evidence base for the broad Citizen Focus agenda.

Statutory Performance Indicators and Key Diagnostic Indicators

In addition to the inspection of forces, HMIC has drawn on published data in the Policing Performance Assessment Frameworks (PPAFs) published between March 2005 and March 2008 as an indicator of outcomes for both Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing.

The statutory performance indicators (SPIs) and key diagnostic indicator (KDI) that are most appropriate to indicate outcomes for the public and are used to inform this inspection are set out below:

Neighbourhood Policing

- SPI 2a – the percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.

- KDI – the percentage of people who 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area'.

- SPI 10b – the percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

- SPI 1e – satisfaction of victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime and road traffic collisions with the overall service provided by the police.

- SPI 3b – a comparison of satisfaction rates for white users with those for users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

Forces are assessed in terms of their performance compared with the average for their most similar forces (MSF) and whether any difference is statistically significant. Statistical significance can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.' A more detailed description of how statistical significance has been used is included in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

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 (described as a 'strength') in the body of the report. In addition, each force is given the opportunity to submit more detailed examples of its good practice. HMIC has therefore, in some reports, selected suitable examples and included them in the 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.

The Grading Process

HMIC has moved to a new grading system based on the national standards; forces will be deemed to be meeting the standard, exceeding the standard or failing to meet the standard.

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the standards agreed with key stakeholders including ACPO, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Home Office as the basis for SGC. The standards for Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing are set out in those sections of this report, together with definitions for exceeding the standard and failing to meet the standard.

Force Overview and Context

Thames Valley Police has:

- 5 basic command units (BCUs);
- 254 Neighbourhood Policing teams (NPTs);
- 509 officers dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing; and
- 520 PCSOs dedicated to Neighbourhood Policing.

The force is a member of 16 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) that cover the force area.

Geographical description of Force area

Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in England & Wales covering the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, covering 2,200 square miles and serving a population of 2.1 million, with over 6 million visitors annually. It covers 16 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs), within the areas of two county councils (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire) and seven unitary authorities.

Demographic profile of Force area

The over arching economic position of the Force area is one of prosperity with low unemployment and above average earnings, although it must be acknowledged that there are some areas of deprivation. Steady and continued economic growth is predicted. In terms of demography, the Thames Valley area is experiencing continued population growth, most notably at Milton Keynes, Slough and Aylesbury. Some 6% of the population in Thames Valley are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities with a much higher proportion BME in the south east of the Force area, particularly within the major population centres of Reading, Slough and High Wycombe. Current trends suggest that the force will see considerable population growth in the coming years, with likely growth of virtually every ethnic group.

Structural description of force area

The chief officer team comprises the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constable (Local Policing), ACC (Crime & Criminal Justice), ACC (Operations) and the Director of Resources. The Force is divided into five basic command units, these are Berkshire West, Berkshire East, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. There are five operational command units, these are control rooms and enquiry department, (CR&ED) tactical support, crime support, roads policing and professional standards.

In terms of resources, the net revenue expenditure for 2008/9 is £356.10 million. Police officer strength has continued to increase during the past financial year and at 31 March 08 there were 4257 police officers (4185.8 full-time equivalent), 2956 (2779.6 FTE) police staff, 246 special constables and 529 (521.2 FTE) police community support officers (PCSOs), assisted by some 600 volunteers.

Key initiatives to improve performance during 2007/08

The following table provides a summary of performance achievements for the key strategic objectives and targets from the 2007/08 delivery plan.

Force Performance Summary for 2007- 08

Performance indicators	Target	2007-08 Outturn
Provide an effective and timely response focused on the needs of the citizen		
Increase satisfaction with overall service	**80%**	**78.3%**
Percentage of non-emergency calls received within the PECs to be answered within the national target of 40 seconds	**90%**	**90.4%**
Percentage of 999 calls answered within national target of 10 seconds	**90%**	**92.3%**
To conduct our policing in a neighbourhood policing style		
Increase the total number of PCSOs employed	**530**	**529**
Percentage of PCSO time to be available for front-line duties	**80%**	**81.0%**
Complete the roll out of neighbourhood policing - providing every neighbourhood in the Force with a neighbourhood Team	**265**	**265**
To equip our front line staff to deliver on our objectives		
The proportion of police officer time available for front- line policing	**64%**	**63.7%**
Percentage of all staff (excluding Student Officers) to have an initial PDR within three months of start of each financial year	**85%**	**88.2%**
Percentage of PDRs to contain four objectives linked to the Annual Plan or Three Year Strategy	**100%**	**71.7%**
To improve our performance – getting better at what we do		
Sanction detections	**51,000**	**49,028**
Offences brought to justice	**49,500**	**51,192**
Reduce BCS Comparator Crime	**- 3%**	**- 9.4%**
Achieve 3% efficiency savings, half of which to be cashable	**3%**	**5%**
Sanction detection rate for offences of non-domestic violence	**40%**	**33.8%**

involving injury		
To protect the public from the risk posed by predatory offenders		
Increase the number of sanction detections for Domestic Violence	**6,700**	**6485**
Increase the sanction detection rate for Hate Crime (racially/religiously aggravated offences, racist incidents and homophobic incidents)	**670**	**691**
To be ready and equipped to deal with major crime and critical incidents		
Minimum number of confiscation orders	**134**	**135**
Minimum value of confiscation orders	**3.044,504**	**43,048,810.43**

Note: Some figures are provisional pending ratification

Other key corporate initiatives

In addition to the seven strategic objectives, there are a number of other priorities that the force believes underpin all of the work they are doing to achieve their strategic objectives, these priorities are outlined below.

Leadership is key to developing individuals and teams. Investment in their leaders is therefore crucial to ensuring that all of their staff are given the opportunity to reach their full potential. The force has made a substantial investment in leadership, career development and learning initiatives to support current supervisors and to prepare the future leaders of Thames Valley Police.

The full roll out of neighbourhood policing teams made up of police officers, PCSOs, Special Constables and volunteers play a crucial role in providing greater visibility and reassurance in the local community.

By engaging more effectively with young people, the force ensures that they have a voice in the community and by listening to them, they are able to provide them with a more responsive service. They have worked with their partners to identify at an early stage those who are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or crime and help to divert them. They are helping to reduce persistent re-offending by making better use of restorative interventions for young offenders.

Through the force drugs strategy, they continue to proactively close down "crack houses" and cannabis factories and to tackle the drug dealers who prey on the vulnerable people in their community. They work with partners to ensure that they focus not only on punishing, but also on rehabilitating the most problematic drug misusers through early intervention and appropriate referral to drugs intervention programmes (DIPs).

The strategic roads policing strategy is delivering the safe drive stay alive (SDSA) theatre project, with partners, which is an educational initiative aimed at 16 to 18 year olds, highlighting circumstances that can lead to road traffic collisions and the tragic consequences which follow.

Through better resource management the force is ensuring that staff with specialist skills and expertise are appropriately matched to incidents and tasks. This has enabled police officers to get back to doing the job they are trained to do, concentrating on the areas of policing where they have the greatest impact. They are seeking further opportunities to

maximise the use of the extended police family and to develop the role of the police community support officer.

The force has developed and implemented a productivity plan to maximise the use of its resources by improving efficiency and delivering value for money. This on going process enables the force deploy its resources to where they are most needed by making savings and reinvesting in the priority areas.

Through Operation Quest they have secured improvements for by arrangement jobs that has resulted in improved customer satisfaction; tailoring resources to match victim requirements; increased timeliness in responding to incidents; increased opportunities for initial crime investigation; and greater focus on neighbourhood priorities for incident response.

Neighbourhood Policing

2007/08 Neighbourhood Policing Summary of judgement	**Meeting the standard**

Meeting the standard

During this inspection Thames Valley Police was assessed against specific grading criteria in a number of key areas of neighbourhood policing. To discern between forces, a moderation process has been applied to determine the grading of the force.

Following the moderation process, the force was assessed as meeting the standard. Neighbourhood policing has been implemented to a consistent standard across the force.

Neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed

Summary statement

The force is deploying across all its basic command units (BCUs), making sure the right people are in the right place at the right time to ensure that its neighbourhoods are appropriately staffed.

Strengths

- Neighbourhood boundaries have been developed using a variety of data and after consultation with community members and partners. Some minor amendments are still taking place to enable better service delivery. Some modifications to data gathering have been necessitated by the fact that some neighbourhoods are now aligned to census output areas rather than wards. Both the force and its partners consider this to be a practical solution. Ward boundaries tend to be a better solution within small towns and rural communities. In West Berkshire, some of the neighbourhood policing (NHP) areas were not coterminous with wards, and work is under way to realign some boundaries.

- The review of neighbourhood boundaries is taking place operationally (and incrementally) as neighbourhood action groups (NAGs) are developed and NHP teams become embedded. The intention is to formally review these boundaries in the future (after two years), but no exact date has been set. This process will involve the community, partners, the information and communication technology department and the mapping team.

- All neighbourhoods have a named police constable (PC) contact who is the neighbourhood specialist officer (NSO); in total, there are some 209 of these. There is good evidence that their names, photographs and contact details are being well publicised through a variety of media. Each has a personalised business card. The community and partners generally know who their local officers are, and often know the names of the NSO, the neighbourhood officer (NO) and police community support officers (PCSOs).

- Succession planning is managed locally and, although there are some limited vacancies at present, these are usually considered to be a priority and are quickly filled. Local resourcing issues are the responsibility of the BCU human resources (HR) lead, and this person sits on the monthly NHP BCU board chaired by the BCU

commander. BCU commanders have the autonomy to modify staffing levels within NHP teams where there is a change in the demand profile.

- Turnover rates for NSOs are low; however, there is a constant churn of PCSOs, as many move on to join the force as PCs. As a result, PCSO recruitment is a continuous process. There is no skills database for NOs. Vacancies are reported within performance meetings and the NHP project team has oversight.

- The force abstraction policy is rigorously monitored. The headquarters (HQ) business information unit collates data centrally. This data is included within performance documents. Abstraction targets are well understood and are publicised (5% abstraction for NSOs, 25% for neighbourhood sergeants and zero abstractions for PCSOs). NOs do not have abstraction targets and are frequently abstracted to other duties. There is evidence of abstraction of sergeants to fulfil custody duties, as there are resourcing pressures on the force due to the roll-out of the National Strategy for Police Information Systems information technology (IT) custody package. (Additionally, new sergeants do not undertake custody duties within the first 12 months of promotion.) It is suggested that email messages created within the control room and enquiry department (CR&ED) may, in future, be sent to sergeants' mailboxes to make sure that all emails are actioned. If this change goes ahead, there should be careful consideration of sergeants' abstractions.

- Call-handling staff and service delivery unit (SDU) managers understand the role of PCSOs, and there is only very limited abstraction (less than 2%). If PCSOs are used for traffic or cordon duties, this is invariably within their neighbourhood area.

- There is good evidence of local managerial guidance/directives and supervision of abstractions. In Crowthorne, a volunteer produces abstraction data.

- The force has a threshold target of 15% of all PCs to be allocated to NHP duties.

- The nature and aims of NHP are understood by staff across the force, as are the roles and responsibilities of PCSOs. Awareness inputs have been given to key staff, including CR&ED, roads policing and tactical support (although crime department officers stated that they needed more information). Probationer constables are now attached to NHP teams (for eight weeks) at the end of their theoretical training phase. This attracts positive comment from students.

- After the initial broad-brush posting of staff to NHP teams, a more considered approach is now being taken in filling vacancies. Language skills and ethnicity are now being considered, and there are some limited examples where these have been used to best effect.

- The force relies upon managerial intervention and performance development review (PDR) objectives to develop those staff currently in post and tailor their skills towards the needs of the community.

- The Knowzone section of the force intranet provides good information on NHP.

- Neighbourhoods are graded according to need and demand, and are allocated policing resources accordingly. This grading process takes into account crime, social and demographic data, and, as a result, each is graded as priority, enhanced or capable.

- Priority neighbourhoods are allocated two NSOs and two PCSOs, while those classed as enhanced are allocated one NSO and two PCSOs. Capable areas get one PCSO and a third share of an NSO. The allocation of NOs is subject to local management decision. There are no set ratios for sergeants and inspectors, but these will be allocated to a cluster of NHP areas. Overall, the force has agreed a corporate 15% threshold of all BCU PCs to be based in NHP teams.

- Neighbourhood profiles (demographic and social trends analysis (DSTA)) have been completed for every neighbourhood area, and these are often supported by environmental visual audits. Some of the audits have been jointly completed with partners and community members such as Scout groups. Local area intelligence team (AIT) members are aware of NHP team requirements and feed intelligence into NHP and local patrol plans.

- NHP sergeants and inspectors, together with their partnership equivalents, have been given a two-day NHP course. NOs have a one-day course, while NSOs have a five-day initial course with a three-day follow-up. These courses are delivered centrally.

- Some members of the Special Constabulary are attached to NHP areas, but the co-ordinated use of these resources on neighbourhood priorities varies considerably from one BCU to another. The force plans to increase the number of Special Constables from 245 at present to 300 by April 2009. Special Constables are attached to sectors, and the smaller NHP areas bid for their services; however, they are yet to receive ownership of NHP problems and have had only limited problem-solving training (a half-day input on NHP principles, which includes problem solving).

- The force has an ethnicity profile of its staff, and it seeks to recruit diverse members of the community into police employment. Recent recruiting events have accessed smaller-density black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The Special Constabulary currently has 8% BME representation.

- The force recognises that information sharing with education departments has traditionally been more challenging than with other statutory partners. Safer schools partnerships and dedicated schools officers are improving relationships and information exchange. Some officers are jointly funded. Each school is given a red/amber/green grading, and all those graded 'red' have a dedicated officer.

- Most NHP staff have received some problem-solving training – either through seminars, locally organised training events, or as part of the PCSO or NSO courses. Sergeants, inspectors and special constables have had access to some training, but this has tended to be ad hoc. Additional problem-solving training for all NHP teams commenced in April 2008 in Buckinghamshire BCU, and the intention is to replicate this across the remainder of the force.

- Partners and some community members have been included within training events delivered at both a force and a local level. Some locally organised training events or sessions received good reports from attendees. The provision of problem-solving training – with five places per NAG – commenced in March 2008 and was completed in July 2008. This totalled 54 sessions across the force; these were provided by the South East Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

- Thames Valley Police (TVP) is the only force to include NHP staff in the Skills for Justice accreditation pilot scheme, which has additional National Vocational Qualification units for partnership activity.

- There are numerous examples where good work by NHP staff has received recognition. Letters of thanks are attached to officers' files, managers send emails outlining good work and offering thanks, and NHP/NAG newsletters include articles outlining good service to the public. The force newspaper, *ThamesView*, also highlights good work.

- There are awards for the best community officer of the year on each BCU, and one for the force. Other awards include PCSO, special constable, volunteer and student officer of the year.

- Community members, schools, statutory partners and groups such as Neighbourhood Watch can make nominations using a form that is simple to fill in. An award for the best NHP team is planned, but no date has yet been set.

- Partners are invited to both BCU and force commendation ceremonies.

- NHP constables receive special priority payments that qualify for yearly increases, for a maximum of three years.

- NHP teams have been given priority for equipment such as BlackBerry devices and bicycles (1,200 BlackBerry devices are being supplied to all NHP team members).

- Officers who do not have time off for sickness receive letters of praise from the HR department.

- Volunteers receive a formal letter of appreciation after two years' service and a lapel badge in medal form after five years.

- PCSOs who act as tutors are paid £90 per student in recognition of their extra responsibilities.

Work in progress

- The force HR department is working to develop a skills database. It has visited Operation Flack (Metropolitan Police) in pursuit of best practice.

- The TVP website is currently being updated. This will link the intranet to a public-facing website. Consideration is being given to the inclusion of a postcode search facility. It would also benefit from a 'keyword search' facility and the expansion of 'frequently asked questions'.

- This should improve the search processes that are used by police enquiry centre (PEC) staff in order to identify the NSO for a particular area.

- The force's duty management IT system is being developed and should be better able to monitor NHP abstractions. The current roll-out of BlackBerry devices to NHP teams should enable immediate electronic data gathering of NHP activities.

- Local training managers are conducting a limited scoping of training needs (questions rather than a more formal training needs analysis), and will be holding a series of seminars for NHP officers starting in July 2008. NHP staff have had local briefings concerning community intelligence, engagement, etc.

- The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is currently running a training pilot at Milton Keynes concerning methods of improving community engagement (ICE package).

- The Bracknell local police area (LPA) is involved in the restorative approaches in neighbourhoods project.

- Representatives from the force have visited Hampshire Constabulary in order to seek best practice to improve the recruitment of volunteers within NHP teams.

- A questionnaire will shortly be sent to all volunteers, checking whether they feel involved and valued by the force.

Area(s) for improvement

- At 17%, PCSO turnover is currently high. The force needs to fully understand the reasons for this. As a minimum, exit interviews should be held in all cases.

- Data included on the NHP pages of the force website were found to be in need of some minor updating. It is recognised that these pages are updated centrally. Systems need to be reviewed so that NSO details and neighbourhood priority profiles (NPPs) are current. (Since the inspection, the force has developed plans to improve accuracy, including the employment of NHP administrative staff to update websites, improve the provision of timely information and free NHP officers from these tasks.)

- The skills and abilities of NOs to undertake joint problem solving is variable and would benefit from training needs analysis and urgent implementation of the NPIA NHP training package using seven workbooks provided by the National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT). Workbooks will be available within the force in July 2008. One-day workshops are planned for sergeants and inspectors in October 2008.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force reviews why there is a high turnover of PCSOs. This should also include exit interviews for all staff and that the force should put in place measures to minimize wastage of valuable resources.

Effective community engagement is taking place. Representative communities are being routinely consulted and are identifying local priorities and receiving feedback.

Summary statement
All neighbourhoods in the force area are actively engaging with their local police and its partners.

Strengths

- Community engagement extends beyond the more traditional evening meetings and includes meetings with community groups and statutory partners. Other examples include:

    - street surgeries;
    - schools visits;
    - parish council meetings;

- sports events and youth meetings;
- NHP surgeries in supermarkets, libraries, etc;
- local business meetings;
- Neighbourhood watch/farm watch;
- surveys of schoolchildren and youth (also carried out by the young people themselves);
- visits to places of worship.

- There is a force community engagement plan that is posted on the force intranet. This plan has minimum standards outlined within it.

- The force has invested resources to provide 17 multi-purpose vehicles that can be used as mobile police stations. Twelve additional cars have also been provided, and these are fitted with cycle racks to enable PCSOs to use cycles to access more remote rural areas.

- A large and varied quantity of bespoke NHP materials have been produced by the force's media department, with some of these materials being provided in languages spoken within the force area (see Areas for Improvement).

- At strategic level, the Chief Constable has quarterly meetings with all the partners' chief executive officers.

- Community engagement processes scope problems and develop NPPs that are then addressed through the 207 NAGs. NAGs consist of police, partners, councillors, community members and certain other interested parties (eg parish managers and youth representatives). The NAG meetings are closed to the general public, but there is clear information sharing and feedback regarding activities. Scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) plans/NPPs are recorded on police IT systems, but ownership is moving towards the NAGs. The development of NAGs is variable, and some are still embryonic. The frequency of NAG meetings varies according to the needs of the area. Some have actively sought representation by members of 'hard-to-reach' groups, particularly young people.

- The Police Authority (PA) does not have a community engagement committee but it is actively seeking skills and experience in this area when selecting independent members. It closely monitors the force engagement strategy and has recently audited it.

- Newly recruited police officers have attachments with community groups. Recently a series of meetings was held with these groups to evaluate results and develop the programme further. Positive comments and thanks were received from some of these community groups.

- Operation Lion Cub is a good example of wide community and partnership engagement that dynamically involves community members in information gathering. It has encouraged non-NHP attendance at hotspots and shop premises by recording the names of officers and then making formal entries on their PDRs. This operation has been promulgated as best practice through neighbourhood conferences held in force.

- Environmental scanning is done in partnership with communities; assistance has been provided by local authority teams such as street cleansing and in Bracknell some Scouts have completed work in partnership with NHP teams.

- There is a strong emphasis on the use of electronic voice messaging. When callers are not able to contact a member of staff direct and leave a message, that message can be accessed from any phone, and additionally a text message is sent to the staff member's mobile phone as a prompt.

- 'Mystery shopper' checks have been completed by sending e-mails and telephone messages to NHP teams and then measuring the speed and quality of response.

- The force completes joint strategic assessments with its partners and has a range of both formal and less formal arrangements for information sharing. Some of the formal arrangements were co-ordinated by Operation Impact and have resulted in a database containing wide-ranging information.

- The joint strategic assessments were independently reviewed using Government Office for the South East (GOSE) funding. The standards differed across the force area, but they are improving, and all timings have now been aligned within a corporate planning cycle. These strategic assessments are presented to the local criminal justice board.

- Each PA member has geographic responsibility for each LPA that includes more than one NAG. Their attendance is variable, but information is exchanged. There is a 'lead PA member' for NHP, and that member, together with the PA chair and finance officer, attends the NHP programme board. PA members attend BCU NHP committees. PA members have recently attended special constable recruitment events.

- A variety of methods are used for members of the community to inform police of their areas of concern. These include tear-off slips on leaflets and in publications, and local surveys.

- Community intelligence is submitted using the 5x5x5 electronic forms. Each of these is graded by the intelligence reader within the AIT to determine whether it should be included in the force intelligence system. If it does not meet the threshold, it will be added to the community information site, which is searchable using keywords.

- In some areas, local authority street wardens have conducted surveys both in partnership with and independently of NHP teams.

- The force, the PA and each BCU have community engagement plans.

- Fifteen locally employed community and diversity officers (CaDOs) prepare community profiles, develop contacts, complete community impact assessments (CIAs) and provide a clear community link that can assist NAGs, crime teams, NHP teams and the PA. The force's diversity unit has drawn together information from the CaDOs' community profiles and the NHP profiles in order to complete profiles of potentially vulnerable groups. These profiles have been quality assured with NHP teams, and there are plans to share them with the local authorities.

- NHP teams and partners are working together towards common objectives, and information is being exchanged. There are few examples of the sharing of analytical support; however, key examples include a jointly funded analyst working at the West Berkshire crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP), a jointly funded fire service analyst at Aylesbury and a jointly funded CDRP analyst at Reading.

- Partners are starting to employ analysts who link with the senior analysts employed at each BCU.

- At present, NHP teams can make bids for analytical work via tasking meetings.

- The force senior analysts will shortly hold a multi-agency meeting for analysts, in order to discuss lessons learnt during the recent process to write joint strategic assessments. This meeting is also intended to identify training needs.

- NPPs sit within the force IT system but can be assessed by partners where there is co- location. Partners can also have direct access to the force's community information database via the intranet (read only).

- The force engagement strategy clearly sets down minimum standards of engagement – eg there is a requirement for each CaDO to have a key individual network.

- Staff from the AIT have provided training inputs to NHP officers regarding the submission of intelligence reports.

Work in progress

- The knowledge and expertise of the NAGs are developing steadily. NAG chairs attend conferences, and LPA commanders hold regular meetings with them. There are a few NAGs where the chair is currently a police officer, but steps need to be taken to identify non police staff to fulfil this role. This will enable the police to be better and more impartially held to account for their activities.

- IT is being updated to allow NHP staff to use the new BlackBerry devices in order to receive and update WorkFlow requests. Functionality will include Police National Computer (PNC), calendar and photo capture. This allows more time to be spent away from police stations.

- The force is in the third year of a five-year adaptive build scheme plan. Some £3 million has been allocated over five years to establish bases within the community for NHP teams. There are in excess of 80 bids under consideration. So far, bases have been established at such sites as supermarkets, community centres and council buildings. Some 16 bases have been completed.

- Local area agreements are about to be signed off. These need to be authorised by the PA, and work has been undertaken to ensure that there is no conflict with the TVP policing plan.

- BCU commanders have been tasked with starting the identification and mapping of level 1 organised crime groups (OCGs) that are operating within their area.

- Following a pilot scheme across three BCUs, the force is rolling out a policy for 'all-crime attendance'. Together with officers from the SDU, NHP teams will be required to attend all crimes, including criminal damage and motor vehicle crimes, where there are few opportunities for arrests. This has been shown to enhance customer satisfaction and improve confidence. Care should be taken to monitor the time spent by NHP teams on these crimes, so that their other duties are not significantly affected. This is particularly important now that the scheme is progressing to busy conurbations.

- It is recognised by the force that arrangements for joint tasking vary considerably across the force. In some BCUs, there are joint tasking meetings attended by partners. In others, some partners attend the level 1 tasking meetings and, in a few cases, tasking focuses around the NAG meetings, which then rely on CDRPs for tasking around emerging themes. While these arrangements may be satisfactory at a local level, the force is seeking to establish common principles for the management of tasking with partners and NAGs, and BCUs will be expected to comply with these as a minimum.

- Each NHP area has been scoped according to perceived threat levels, and training will be completed in order of risk. NHP staff will be given very specific briefings in order to plug intelligence gaps. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 guidelines and issues of proportionality will always be considered. Eventually, some tasks concerning low-level 3, 4 and 5 packages will be allocated. These will be presented by the CTIO to the formal tasking meetings for resources to be allocated.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is a need for the force's website to be improved to provide access to users who do not have English as their first language.

- While some NAGs have received problem-solving training, mainly at a local level, there are still some knowledge gaps, especially within the more recently formed groups. While some NAGs are very effective, there is a tendency for NHP priorities to be rather generic, and so it is difficult to see the results of joint activities. Specific or targeted priorities may enhance community confidence, as results may be more achievable.

- While some potentially vulnerable groups have been identified and profiled, this process needs to be extended, and it should be made explicit why these groups are vulnerable to particular crimes or criminals. Virtual groups – such as schoolchildren, businesses or the elderly – should also be profiled. Data sources such as Mosaic should be considered. It is recognised that some data sources (eg DSTA) may be out of date due to a reliance on census data.

- There is a need to formally measure the quality and extent of engagement with communities and to identify any gaps that may exist.

- While the force has an ambition to devolve some targeting of OCGs down to NHP level, in practice this is still very embryonic.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should implement a formal process to measure the quality and extent of engagement in all its neighbourhoods to identify good practice and any areas for development, then putting in place systems and processes to address these.

Joint problem solving is established and included within performance regimes.

Summary statement
Joint problem solving involves the police with partners and communities across all neighbourhoods. Joint problem-solving activity has been partly evaluated, and the result demonstrates moderate problem resolution at neighbourhood level.

Strengths
- Joint problem-solving activity is clearly evident, but there is a need to improve co-ordination to ensure consistency (see Areas for improvement). The NHP joint problem-solving strategy (February 2008) is a detailed document, with practical guidance that will bring an effective and corporate approach to problem solving.

- Problem-solving best-practice advice is included on LiveLink, which archives NPPs.

- The force's NPP is a consistent and easy-to-use tool that enables NAGs to effectively tackle neighbourhood priorities. The assessment section could be broadened, however, and will be more effective once the new neighbourhood analyst posts have been filled. Supervisors are starting to use this section for quality assurance and for consideration of whether or not problems should be escalated to higher-level tasking meetings. NHP staff have some guidance within the Knowzone and NHP manual as to how they should review the results of their work.

- The NPIA has reviewed the NPP document and has approved it. The NHP manual is also recognised as a quality product. Hampshire Constabulary has partially adopted both products. The NPIA has posted these documents on its website as examples of good practice.

- NPIA neighbourhood improvement workshops have been held at Wokingham, Slough and Wycombe, and these have led to the formulation of high-quality local partnership action plans.

- Specialist roads policing officers with geographical responsibilities liaise with NHP teams and often attend local NHP meetings on speeding issues. These officers help in the 'scanning' phase of problem solving, often using technical solutions and equipment. They also have PDR objectives to liaise with NHP teams. NHP officers have been trained in the use of handheld speed detection devices, and PCSOs are able to use the speed indication devices.

- Force tasking does not include partners, as there are numerous councils etc involved. Partners are involved at a more local level – eg the LPA commander and the chief executive of the local authority jointly chair the West Berkshire tasking meeting.

- There is some co-location of NHP teams with partners and, as mentioned earlier in this report, there is funding for adaptive builds and with actions to be completed within the force delivery plan 2008/09. Examples include the Oakwood Centre at Wokingham, co-location with the anti-social behaviour team at High Wycombe, and accommodation within the primary care trust at Blackbird Leas (Oxford).

- The roads policing unit has its own tasking process where NHP tasks are considered. NPPs are routinely considered at level 1 tasking, and are also considered within morning management meetings at BCUs.

- NHP teams and, more recently, NAGs have negotiated local arrangements with partners, so that resources such as street cleansing are prioritised to areas where such problems as litter and graffiti feature as NPPs. As a result of NHP feedback, the force has changed the criteria regarding its call-response times for anti-social behaviour. These incidents are now attended much more swiftly, in line with the emphasis that NAGs and the community place on this crime type.

- The force recently hosted a meeting with other staff from its most similar forces (MSF), where the challenges and best practice concerning NHP performance monitoring and measurement were discussed.

- During the inspection fieldwork, both force and BCU performance meetings were attended. At the BCU performance group meeting, it was demonstrated that the group was undertaking various new developments in the quality of service (QoS) plan, including a pilot for personal contact with all victims of crime, a third-party reporting system, and a low-risk, high-volume domestic abuse reporting system. Additionally, the BCU visited has chosen to pilot the new neighbourhood management project.

Work in progress

- A new force geographical information system (GIS) strategy has received approval. This will enable the alignment of all NHP boundaries with beat codes, and will make data gathering more accurate.

- The force has advertised for an NHP performance and productivity manager, who will provide a corporate evaluation and overview of NHP activity.

- The force has acquired funding from GOSE in order to pilot a partnership support programme. This is a new initiative and is being trialled at Wokingham.

Area(s) for improvement

- As detailed above, while joint problem-solving activity is taking place across the force area, there is a need to co-ordinate the activity centrally in order to ensure a more consistent approach.

- While incident and crime data is produced down to NHP team level and some hotspot mapping is being undertaken, performance measures for NHP teams need to be further developed to provide meaningful information for managers.

- There is a facility on the NPP to state that an assessment of the problem-solving activity has been completed and feedback from the community has been sought; however, this is not completed on a regular basis. The formal sign-off for NPPs is done, in the main, by the NAGs and does not formally involve communities. Communities are consulted about the process, however, and may receive flyers or newsletters. Minutes of meetings are not regularly distributed to communities. The feedback process would benefit from a review and from improvements to ensure that communities are kept informed.

- While problem-solving training has taken place for teams and partners, there is a need to formalise the structure of this training.

- Formal evaluation of the problem-solving training for NHP teams, partners and NAGs should be carried out.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should develop improved neighbourhood policing performance measures to provide supervisors and managers with timely data in order that they can effectively manage their NHP teams.

The outcomes of Neighbourhood policing are being realised by the surveyed public.

	SPI 2a Percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job		KDI Percentage of people who 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area'		SPI 10b Percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour	
	Difference from MSF (percentage point pp)	**2005/06 to 2007/08 change**	**Difference from MSF**	**2005/06 to 2007/08 change**	**Difference from MSF**	**2005/06 to 2007/08 change**
Thames Valley Police	+2.5 pp	+3.0 pp	+1.6 pp	+3.5 pp	+2.5 pp	+0.4 pp

Summary statement
The SPI/KDI data shows that force performance is not significantly different to the average for the MSF.

The SPI/KDI data also shows that force performance is not significantly different when compared with two years ago.

Context

The SPI and KDI statistics are obtained from the police performance assessment frameworks (PPAFs) to March 2008. These figures are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'The difference in force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of how statistical significance is used at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

As part of the British Crime Survey (BCS), approximately 1,000 interviews are undertaken in each force area in England and Wales. Included in the survey is the individual's assessment of whether the local police are doing a good job, whether the police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in their area, and whether anti-social behaviour in their area is a problem.

Strengths

- The force's QoS team has a 'quality of service database' that is used as a data repository to identify areas for improvement. This team scans force IT systems, emails to the force, letters and direction and control complaints.

- SPI data is fed into performance meetings, where it is discussed. This is mainly iQuanta data, but this is being supplemented by data from force surveys.

- The PA has set the force an overall satisfaction rate target of 80% (averaged across all SPIs) and this target is currently being achieved.

- The Chief Constable and the senior management team (SMT) now more regularly challenge BCU and LPA commanders about relevant satisfaction data.

- Members of staff can make suggestions for improvement via the 'simple solutions' scheme. The force creates opportunities – at the end of formal meetings or through frequent seminars and master classes – for areas for improvement to be highlighted.

SPI 2a – percentage of people who think that their local police do a good or excellent job.

- Some 56.7% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think that their local police do a good or excellent job, which whilst above, is not significantly different to the average for the MSF, and compares with 53.7% in the year ending March 2006.

KDI – percentage of people who 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area'.

- Some 53.1% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 'agree local police are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in this area', which whilst above, is not significantly different to the average for the MSF, and compares favourably with 49.6% in the year ending March 2006.

SPI 10b – percentage of people who think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour.

- Some 17.0% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour, which whilst above, is not significantly different to the average for the MSF, and this compares with 16.6% in the year ending March 2006.

Work in progress

- The force's survey team is being relocated within the QoS team. This should improve communication and result in an enhanced understanding of customer needs.

- A survey is currently being undertaken in order to try to understand the reasons behind the satisfaction disparity between white and BME victims of burglary. A stakeholder group has been set up to provide direction and governance, and the Thames Valley Police Black Police Association has been actively involved. Victims are telephoned and detailed surveys are completed.

- PCSOs have been directed to attend burglaries for follow-up visits, and the new 'all-crime attendance' scheme should improve victim contact.

Area(s) for improvement

- Satisfaction data is not routinely made available to NHP staff at BCUs, and reality checks found that there were significant gaps in their understanding of this issue.

Force-level and local satisfaction/confidence measures are used to inform service delivery.

Summary statement

The force partially understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are sometimes made to improve local service delivery.

Strengths

- At both force and BCU level, SPI data is considered within performance meetings. Data is not routinely broken down below this level, but some NHP teams have conducted very basic analysis of their area (so far as the data will allow) after they have carried out longer-term policing initiatives.

- CDRPs conduct surveys that include questions concerning NHP provision.

- In 2007, the force's diversity unit produced a document called *New and Emerging Communities*, which sought to understand the needs and expectations of the new customers.

Work in progress

- At Reading, two volunteers are currently being trained on the CEDAR crime-management system. Once trained, they will telephone victims of burglary to establish QoS and expectation gaps. Structured questions are being developed.

Area(s) for improvement

- At a force level, the reasons for changes in confidence and satisfaction data over time are not as yet fully understood.

The force demonstrates sustainable plans for Neighbourhood Policing.

Summary statement

The force and the PA have convincingly shown how they plan to ensure that NHP is sustained beyond April 2008.

Strengths

- There are currently 530 PCSOs, of whom 113 are jointly funded. The jointly funded posts are subject to change and modification as new sponsors are adopted and existing ones withdraw from the scheme. Where sponsors have withdrawn, this has been purely due to problems with cash flow. There is nothing to suggest that such funding will not extend into the future, and if all joint funding were to cease, the force has funds to maintain half of the sponsored posts.

- There has been a recent force agreement to recognise NSO skills as being transferable to the rank of sergeant. In practice, this allows PCs seeking promotion to be promoted to an NHP sergeant role without having to return to a response team for managerial experience. This provides greater continuity.

- NSO officers are given enhanced skills through their attendance on the leadership and PDR modules within the Core Leadership Development Programme. This is being extended to include the employees relations module. The force awaits the publication of the NPIA PCSO review; however, it has received feedback that its approach is in line with NPIA proposals.

- Since 31 April 2008 (when the project plan was closed), the force has maintained the force NHP strategy and delivery groups. The project plan has now changed into an NHP delivery plan. Local NHP champions and implementation boards have also been maintained at BCUs. The NHP project team has evolved into a permanent HQ team.

- The NHP delivery plan is owned ultimately by the local policing portfolio, under the leadership and direction of an assistant chief constable (ACC). Identified areas for improvement from previous in-force visits by HMIC and the NPIA have been built into this plan.

- The force delivery plan for 2008/09 has several objectives to drive NHP delivery. Internal departments, as well as BCUs and LPAs, have responsibility for delivery.

- NHP policing arrangements are dip-checked by the ACC (local policing) and are subject to audit by the force audit and inspection team. Some limited 'mystery shopper' exercises have been carried out, but more are planned.

- The force delivery plan has an action to 'encourage CDRPs to develop neighbourhood management in their area'.

- Some LPAs have provided NAGs with laptop computers and projectors, and these are used during meetings. Some limited funding to cover meeting expenses has also been provided.

- The force has the largest number of volunteers of all UK forces, and it is making an effort to recruit a total of 1,000 volunteers by 2010 (over 600 at present). Priority is being given to aligning these to NHP roles. Some 120 (25%) are currently allocated. Volunteers are given a limited introduction to NHP within their four-hour induction session. The volunteer newsletter provides additional information.

- The special constables' commandant attends the NHP implementation board meetings.

- There is clear personal commitment from the Chief Constable and her SMT to the principles and success of NHP. Neighbourhood policing is moving towards neighbourhood management, and has been renamed accordingly. There is strong leadership throughout the force towards this objective and it is clear that neighbourhood management is seen as a high priority.

- The first strategic priority within the force delivery plan is to 'strengthen neighbourhood policing to respond to local need and increase public confidence'.

- The PA is involved in the governance and scrutiny of NHP. There is a link member who has NHP as a portfolio and who attends the neighbourhood police programme board meeting (together with the PA chair and finance officer) and who then reports to the full PA meeting. All PA members have geographic responsibilities, and attend local management and NAG meetings (although this attendance is variable). The PA has BCU committees that are independent of the police and that consider such issues as stop and search. The PA provides suitable governance and oversight and is intrusive where necessary. There is a good working relationship between the force and the PA, and an almost tangible drive to advance the successes of NHP.

- The PA has rigorous scrutiny over the £3 million adaptive build project.

Work in progress

- The PA has recently given agreement and funding for 26 growth posts, and these are currently being recruited. The posts include:
  - nine administrative support and co-ordination posts for NHP teams. These will additionally provide administrative support to NAGs;

  - five intelligence readers to assist with community intelligence processes (some are already in post);

  - five analysts (one for each BCU) to provide NHP analysis;

  - a community information officer at HQ;

  - an NHP strategy manager post;

  - an NHP field officer post;

  - a business crime post;

  - two corporate communications posts; and

  - an NHP performance and business benefits development post.

Area(s) for improvement

None identified.

Developing Citizen Focus Policing

2007/08 Developing Citizen Focus Policing Summary of judgement	Meeting the standard

Meeting the standard

During this inspection the force was assessed against specific grading criteria in a number of key areas of developing citizen focus policing. To discern between forces, a moderation process has been applied to determine the grading of the force.

A citizen focus ethos is embedded across the force, establishing an initial baseline.

Summary statement

The force partially understands the needs of its communities. Identified service improvements are sometimes made to improve local service delivery. The force partially communicates the National Quality of Service Commitment standards, the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime standards, and the force corporate and accessibility standards to its communities.

Quality of service complaints are dealt with effectively

The force is monitoring its compliance with the National Quality of Service Commitment

Strengths
- The three-year strategic plan clearly outlines the key high-level business objectives of the QoS programme as: 1) to provide an effective, timely response focused on the needs of the citizen; 2) to conduct its policing in an NHP style; 3) to equip its front-line staff to deliver on their objectives; and 4) to improve its performance by getting better at what it does.

- Within the 2008/09 delivery plan there are three objectives that support the force's citizen focus agenda: objective 1 – to strengthen NHP to respond to local need and increase public confidence; objective 3 – to improve the service provided to victims, witnesses and the public; and objective 6 – to develop its people to give the best service.

- QoS is viewed as an integral part of the force's service delivery. The force has a detailed QoS programme-definition document, which clearly details how it intends to significantly improve the QoS that is provided to the communities it polices. The QoS programme intends to change the culture of the organisation so as to put the needs of customers (both internal and external) at the heart of everything it does. The ACC (operations) provides the strategic lead for QoS, with strong commitment and visible support from the Chief Constable's management team (CCMT).

- QoS is a standing agenda item at CCMT and BCU SMT meetings. Each BCU and department has a QoS plan with a supporting improvement action plan; in addition, each BCU and operational command unit (OCU) has a QoS champion, who ensures

that this business area is kept high on the agenda. The champions are mainly at detective chief inspector or superintendent level, or the police staff equivalent.

- There is a QoS programme board, which manages delivery of the citizen focus agenda. The programme board is chaired by the ACC (operations) with full PA engagement. The PA lead member sits as a member of the board. A number of supporting delivery groups sit under the QoS programme board; these include the counter service focus group, uniform and standards of dress working group, the National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) improvement board, and the crime attendance project board, and there are also clear links to the NHP programme board. The ACC (operations) is supported by a central QoS team based at force HQ.

- The force has effective performance-monitoring processes. The force performance group meets monthly, and each BCU has its own performance meetings. The force performance meeting is the forum at which commanders and departmental heads are held to account and where support and guidance are offered as necessary. Five key priority areas are analysed and monitored; QoS and NHP feature as two of these.

- All supervisors have been given a QoS PDR objective. This was checked and verified by the inspection team and supervisors were able to confirm that they had specified objectives, which they were actively seeking to achieve.

- During the inspection fieldwork, force and BCU performance groups were attended. In addition to the SPI data reviewed at force level, there was evidence from Milton Keynes BCU on how actions within its current QoS action plan were progressing. The evidence was presented in traffic-light format, showing that, of 13 actions, 11 were on target and activity was taking place in the other two. None of the actions was identified as not being on target or not being progressed. The BCU demonstrated that it was undertaking various new developments in the QoS plan, including a pilot for personal contact with all victims of crime, a third-party reporting system, and low-risk, high-volume domestic abuse reporting. Additionally, the BCU has been chosen to pilot the new neighbourhood management project.

- The force routinely uses a range of methods to identify users' views from such sources as customer satisfaction surveys, complaints, NHP surveys, call-management surveys, victim call backs and independent advisory groups (IAGs).

- The survey unit supervisor has analytical capability that allows some analysis and breakdown of data.

- The CR&ED has provided significant evidence of activities it has undertaken to improve service delivery. Call handling was graded as 'good' during the previous two baseline assessments. The force demonstrated how it manages and improves contact management with the public. Examples include 'beyond the call' principles adopted within the CRED delivery plan, the service provided by the PECs, e-services to identify and contact neighbourhood teams and the station desk training. The single non-emergency number has also proved effective and positive for customers who want to contact TVP. To the end of March 2008, 92.3% of 999 calls were answered within 10 seconds, and 90.4% of non-emergency calls were answered within 40 seconds.

- The force has introduced the Home Office Quest project, (referred to as Operation Quest), which focuses on performance process improvement. Consultants work alongside officers and staff to examine operational processes in order to deliver

sustained benefits by refining processes and providing more intelligent use of resources. The improvement opportunities included call-grading guidelines, prioritisation and allocation of incidents and scheduling of appointments. The changes in working practices have tailored resources to match victim requirements by improving response, increasing investigative opportunities and supporting NHP by providing greater focus on neighbourhood priorities. (Full details are to be found in the 'developing practice' case study.)

- Following feedback from surveys, the force recognises that the area that requires improvement is in keeping victims of crimes informed. The SDUs are undertaking work in this area. SDUs prioritise and allocate resources to incidents, using a new incident-grading and resource-management database. Dedicated resources provide scheduled and police surgery appointments. The SDU reviews each incident and provides a customer-focused response, and it matches the most appropriate resource to the incident. In addition to allocation, the SDU provides victims with updates. Evidence was provided where SDUs in Berkshire East BCU are scheduling visits to victims of crime and to those who report incidents that require a non-urgent police response; a member of the relevant NHP team attends on a specified date and at a time that suits the caller. This initiative is being rolled out across the force.

- TVP has undertaken a persistent caller project, which has identified 120 'problem' callers. A monitoring system has been introduced to analyse the scale and nature of persistent and hoax callers, including who was calling and what action was possible. The force has used various methods to reduce the calls, including: the force anti-social behaviour officer assisting with drawing up acceptable behaviour contracts, NHP teams making contact with the individuals, liaison with service providers to terminate the service, and multi-agency responses where appropriate. The frequency of persistent and hoax callers has declined (for full details, see developing practice case study).

- The PEC has its quality and data team (QUADA), which monitors PEC staff members understanding of NHP and neighbourhood priorities. There are NHP champions within the PEC who are able to provide support and guidance to other PEC staff (see areas for improvement).

- As a result of community and customer feedback, the force has changed the criteria regarding its call-response times for anti-social behaviour. These incidents are now prioritised and attended much more swiftly, in line with the emphasis that neighbourhood priorities and the community place on this crime type.

- QUADA staff undertake paper-based surveys of both emergency and non-emergency calls. They also complete telephone surveys of 50 callers per month, in order to identify areas of poor performance and good practice. This process currently costs £1,100 per month, and the department has received funding for this for 2008/09.

- Staff within the QUADA unit complete audits of processes and standard operating procedures (SOPs) – eg domestic abuse, where the service provided is broken down into step stages, which are then matched against the needs of the victim. An improvement that came about as a result of this process was the development of a risk-assessment process, which considers scheduled appointments as opposed to blanket deployment. The department has the authority to change SOPs as required.

- There is strong emphasis on the need for call-management staff to record all QoS complaints received. They record the complaints on the force personal

correspondence database, which can then be managed by the relevant BCU or department, and be monitored by the QoS unit.

- Within the PEC, use is made of a software package (Primetime), which analyses current demand and allows some forward planning in order to match staffing levels to demand profiles. This initiative was originally part of a drive for efficiency, eg to reduce overtime, but is now starting to impact on customer satisfaction and reduced caller waiting times.

- The force has invested significantly in technical solutions to make it easier to contact staff and for staff to contact HQ departments. Officers can, and are actively encouraged to, report crime direct from crime scenes to the PEC, thus obviating the need for them to return to police premises for updates and providing more accurate and up-to-date information.

- Following a perceived lack of engagement (which led to problems at front counters), counter-services staff have developed improved engagement with community groups. Station duty officers (SDOs) established which communities would benefit from further engagement with the police, eg taxi drivers, a lesbian and gay group, Citizens Advice, etc. The SDOs then attended meetings with these groups to help break down some of the perceived barriers. This has resulted in SDOs being able to proactively and reactively solve problems presented at the front counter (see developing practice case study for additional details).

- The force recognises that information sharing with education departments has traditionally been more challenging than with some other statutory partners. Safer Schools partnerships and dedicated schools officers are improving relationships and information exchange. Some officers are jointly funded. In addition to improved relationships with the education department, this has made officers more accessible to young people, with increased visibility and regular contact leading to increased intelligence gathering, a reduction in crime, and restorative justice opportunities.

- There are 265 neighbourhoods with identified NHP teams that provide a local and bespoke policing service to their communities. The NHP teams have received training that is tailored to their specific roles, including problem solving and engagement (see work in progress).

- There are witness care units (WCUs) co-located with the Crown Prosecution Service, and joint management training has been delivered to promote a better understanding of, and improved service delivery to, witnesses and victims.

- The force is one of only five to have introduced the Witness Charter on time. This charter sets out the level of service that non-expert witnesses can expect to receive at every stage of the criminal justice process. This develops the improved service provided to victims under the Victims' Code of Practice (VCoP). The key areas are to provide a monthly update to certain witnesses and a commitment to provide information about arrest, charge, bail, bail conditions and remand to all witnesses who have provided statements. The Witness Charter was implemented in Oxfordshire BCU, as a beacon area, from 31 March 2008.

- A new statement form has been introduced in Oxfordshire BCU which support the introduction of the Witness Charter. This encourages officers to focus attention on the needs of witnesses, prior to taking a statement. Witnesses are handed a tear-off section from the witness statement, containing contact numbers and information

about 'what happens next'. Officers have been provided with training and guidance in how to complete the forms.

- Victims of serious sexual assault are supported by specially trained officers, who provide an enhanced service to these victims.

- Road traffic collision (RTC) victim satisfaction performance was falling, and the problem was identified as a process issue – specifically, the victim trying to ascertain which officer was dealing with their RTC. Service delivery has improved through the introduction of a help line and a 'frequently asked questions' leaflet, which explains what happens following an RTC. This gives victims the information they require and a point of contact. Initial findings – although not yet formally analysed – tend to suggest increased RTC victim satisfaction.

- The PA is actively involved in the governance and scrutiny of satisfaction and confidence performance. There is a dedicated PA lead for Citizen Focus, and she has support from the PA chair. The force and the PA have a joint community consultation strategy, and consultation findings are used to inform the police delivery plans.

- The PA has set the force a satisfaction target (overall aggregated data) of 80%. This target is currently being achieved.

- Citizen focus standards are communicated to the public by a variety of means – eg annual policing plan, internet, precept leaflet, letters to victims of crime, and through the WCU staff.

- In 2007, the force diversity unit produced a document entitled *New and Emerging Communities*, which sought to understand the needs and expectations of the new customers and to improve the level of service provided by individuals requiring police assistance.

- The QoS unit maintains the force's personal correspondence database, which incorporates direction and control complaints and contacts regarding satisfaction in service delivery; in the year 2008/09, some 4,170 entries were recorded. The database provides full details of the complainant/person raising the issue, complaint/issue raised, and a section outlining what action has been taken. The database co-ordinates BCU and HQ departments' correspondence, including with those people who are satisfied, dissatisfied or who have other enquiries, mainly by telephone, letter or – increasingly – email. In addition, the team completes a daily trawl of the command and control system, using a keyword search to pick up any incidents that record complaints. The database is recognised as leading in this area of work, and the force is proactive in seeking to identify complaints and to address issues concerning processes and people.

- The media team provides a weekly pack of media articles and letters, and this allows the QoS team to identify concerns or satisfaction (eg letters to a newspaper editor); wherever possible, it will make contact with the individuals to address any issues.

- The QoS unit has set up a service level agreement with BCU commanders, which governs the way it should manage the database. Clear guidelines are held on the force intranet.

- The database is used to monitor action against complaints and to provide a quarterly report that is sent to BCU/departmental commanders; it can be broken down to LPA

level, if required. This data is also arranged for different types of offence. Monthly reports are presented to the ACC, and the PA complaints committee receives reports every two months.

- The database has allowed detailed force-wide analysis of communications logged between April 2006 and December 2007. The database and the proactive scoping of QoS complaints by team members has led to a significant decrease in the level of complaints about visibility/level of resources (down by 30%) (which the force considers may be due to the effect of PCSOs and NHP) and about attitude (down by 26%) (which may be attributed to QoS initiatives and training).

- Where a complaint (or satisfaction) is identified, the QoS unit makes contact with the member of staff's supervisor. While it does hold discussions with the professional standards department, this remains an area for improvement.

- The force has recently started to record all penalty notices on the CEDAR crime-recording system. Some BCUs are using this data to search across the command and control system, in order to make sure that this method of judicial disposal matches complaints from community members or takes place within hotspot areas.

- Compliance with the VCoP and the Witness Charter is managed through the CEDAR system. Non-compliance results in feedback to supervisors, so that issues can be addressed with individual officers. Dip sampling of records from the pilot programme has identified full compliance by the roads policing and major crime teams.

- Performance monitoring of the Witness Charter and VCoP is integrated into force performance arrangements. The completion of the new witness statements is reviewed monthly at the BCU prosecution team performance meetings.

Work in progress

- The QoS programme board was relaunched in May 2008, following an improvement workshop that involved approximately 40 people. This resulted in a new QoS programme, which included some 27 actions, with identified owners and measurements of success. This will be underpinned by an improvement action plan, which will record progress against the actions and will be monitored by the QoS programme board.

- The force's survey unit, which consists of a supervisor and two administrators, is being relocated within the QoS team, in order to improve efficiency and communication.

- The survey unit has developed a detailed local survey questionnaire, which is being distributed (1,000 per CDRP area) in order to try to establish how community confidence levels are affected by NHP activities. It seeks to understand what makes people feel unsafe, what crimes affect them most, how often they would like to see police patrols, how they would like to be contacted, and how focused police activity is towards their needs.

- This survey will provide baseline data, and in future there will be a move to telephone surveys, in particular to check on NHP teams' effectiveness in managing low level crimes.

- This survey accesses 16,000 homes and is financed for the remainder of 2008 (£70,000).

- The survey team is currently designing a questionnaire survey on staff satisfaction. This survey is intended to be sent to each member of the force and will seek to scope staff attitudes and find out whether or not staff members feel valued.

- A survey on front-counter service standards (CoSe-CRAFT) has been completed by the survey team, but it has yet to analyse the data.

- The PA and the force would like to see 'mystery shopping' introduced. Though some work has been undertaken in the Milton Keynes BCU, there is a need to develop this further to test just how far citizen focus and service delivery has become embedded. A 'mystery shopping' policy has been drafted, and the force is looking to utilise volunteer agencies to assist in the process.

- Since February 2008, the QUADA has captured call satisfaction data through telephone surveys. This data has yet to be analysed, but the results will inform future team training.

- The force is reviewing methods of improving victim communication, and a multimedia system is due to be implemented in November 2008, for roll-out across the force in January 2009.

- The force made a successful bid for Home Office funding for mobile data equipment, and it is currently allocating BlackBerry devices to all NHP staff, up to and including inspectors. This will provide access to emails, community intelligence, the intranet (including the Knowzone) and other force IT systems.

- New NHP training is being introduced. This follows the NPIA Core Leadership Development Programme, which consists of seven workbooks and supporting workshops, including community engagement and partnership working.

- The Witness Charter and the new witness statement forms will have been rolled out across the force by the end of July 2008.

- Since November 2007, three rural LPAs – Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Chiltern – have been piloting an 'all-crime attendance' project. This project has three objectives: to improve customer satisfaction, increase detections and achieve reclassification of relevant crimes. This is aimed at meeting customer expectations and changing practices, so that victims receive a visit from a police officer or a PCSO, rather than a letter, a phone call or nothing at all. Though a full evaluation has not been completed, feedback on visits to pilot sites shows that victims do feel the police are showing an interest in what has been reported, as well as care and empathy, and that there is increased trust and relationship development. The attendance is also helping to develop key individual networks and to increase local knowledge.

Area(s) for improvement

- There is a need for the QoS unit to understand developing themes regarding activities for service improvement that are emerging from BCU and OCU QoS plans. This best-practice advice can then be fed into the QoS performance structure, chaired by the ACC. This analysis should allow better understanding of how changes in satisfaction data have been influenced by these plans.

- The force should seek to implement SOPs, supported by changes to the force website as appropriate, so that CRED staff can easily access NHP priorities as they deal with individual callers. This should ensure that the emphasis that is given to

NHP priorities is mirrored in the response and service provided by CRED staff. One way of assisting in this would be to introduce a postcode search facility.

- PEC members of staff currently self-brief, and in doing so have to potentially search across 19 geographically based briefing files. No duty time is set aside for this, and no summaries are made available. The force should seek creative ways in which to improve the knowledge and understanding of the PEC staff concerning local problems, issues and incidents, in order to improve the service they provide to callers.

- Consideration should be given to using the community to inform, develop and monitor the BCU QoS plans, using community forums or IAGs.

- It is acknowledged that the police correspondence database is providing the force with a clear method of recording direction and control complaints, areas of concern and satisfaction; however, there should be a more formal method of linking with the professional standards department to identify trends or individuals who are not delivering service to the required standards.

- Failure to meet the QoS commitment standards does not feature on the force strategic risk register or on any other risk register maintained by TVP.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should implement standard operating procedures in order that the force website is regularly updated with neighbourhood priorities and ready access is given to CR&ED staff in order that they can understand neighbourhood policing priorities and provide a bespoke response and service to callers.

The force has integrated Citizen Focus and operational activity, such as contact management, response, Neighbourhood Policing, investigation and through the criminal justice process.

Summary statement

The force has implemented corporate service standards expected of all staff when dealing with the public. Satisfaction and confidence performance is integrated into BCU and force performance-management processes.

The Force is partially striving to ensure it provides a positive experience to every person with whom it has contact

Performance processes include local satisfaction measures, and locally established priorities

Strengths

- By means of the VCoP and delivery of the QoS DVD, with associated discussion forums, the force has implemented corporate standards for the way in which staff are expected to deal with everyone with whom they have contact. Staff were aware of

dress codes, and generally stated that it was important to look professional and that appearances counted.

- There is limited evidence that customer focus objectives are now being included within staff PDRs – eg CR&ED and some supervisors.

- Supervisors carry out dip checking of the VCoP. The process requires BCU sergeants to conduct telephone interviews with victims to find out about the service they received from the force and, in particular, about the way officers kept them up to date with the progress of their case. There is an expectation that this will assist in checking the performance of team members, identify good work, collate evidence for PDRs and ensure that victims are receiving a good QoS from their officers (see areas for improvement and work in progress).

- The force has implemented corporate standards around staff accessibility, in particular for email management and group and department mailboxes. Guidance is provided through voicemail, direct dial and email policies.

- Every member of staff has a dedicated voicemail account. While the actual content of a message cannot be monitored, the number of messages and the dates the messages were accessed can be. This allows a limited amount of management of the system; each BCU has a nominated single point of contact, who has the authority to access the system in order to monitor compliance. All front-line staff have been issued with mobile phones, which have been programmed to supply a text message when a voicemail has been left.

- All employees have undertaken e-learning in both national QoS commitment standards and the VCoP. New staff and volunteers are required to complete both e-learning packages and to attend a staff induction day, which covers the expectations of the force.

- The force-wide project to raise the QoS provided to customers at police stations has been developed through bespoke front-counter management training known as CoSe-CRAFT (counter services craft training). This training is divided into three modular levels, including workbooks, and tier 1 has been delivered to all front-counter staff and volunteers. Tier 2 training is currently being rolled out. Staff generally felt that the training was assisting in improving the service delivered to customers. In addition to the training, there are aids to memory and a procedures manual to provide guidance to staff. The training provides a standardised process across the force area and has been recognised by the NPIA as good practice. The force aspiration is to achieve ISO 9001 status for front-counter service delivery. The training has attracted interest from other forces, namely Cheshire, the Metropolitan Police and Lothian and Borders (see developing practice).

- There are clear examples of NHP teams and other members of staff receiving formal reward and recognition for their roles in delivering a positive experience to the public – eg PS and PCs in receipt of special priority payments. Each BCU has a commander's commendation and award ceremony, where staff receive recognition for their work. The events include attendance of family and partners. The force newspaper *ThamesView* has regular articles celebrating the success of NHP teams; in addition, there is recognition of the work of NHP staff in local newspapers and parish magazines (see areas for improvement).

- *CoSe Corner* is a quarterly newsletter introduced for front-counter staff to keep them informed of good practice and developments in their business area. There is a

regular feature which recognises the good work of staff. Examples were provided of front-counter staff receiving commendations and letters for their contributions.

- Officers who do not have time off for sickness receive letters of praise from the HR department, and this practice was well received by staff in receipt of such letters.

- There is an annual TVP volunteer conference, attended by the Chief Constable, at which volunteers receive recognition. A TVP 'volunteer of the year' is selected by a panel (nominations come from area commanders) and is entered for the NPIA national 'volunteer of the year' awards. Volunteers receive a formal letter of appreciation after two years' service, and a lapel badge in medal form after five years, in recognition of their commitment to the force.

- Survey data is considered at both force and BCU performance meetings. It is evident that the force is focusing on keeping victims informed as a particular area for improvement, and there is a performance target. Currently, the force is not meeting this target.

- Within the annual policing plan 2008/09 there is a force objective to "improve the service provided to victims, witnesses and the public". Within this objective, there are force and BCU measures for sanctioned detections, satisfaction with aspects of experience (ease of contact, actions at scene, follow-up, treatment and satisfaction with the whole experience), victim satisfaction levels from surveys and call-handling measures. The inspection team observed force performance meetings, where satisfaction data is discussed and performance challenged (see areas for improvement).

- The force has set an annual policing plan target for 2008/09 of increasing satisfaction with the overall service provided by TVP to 80%. The current 12-month rolling position is 78.3%; however, data to the end of March 2008 shows an upturn in overall satisfaction to 81.7%.

- Call-handling performance data demonstrates that the proportion of non-999 calls at the PEC that are answered within 40 seconds has increased by 7.9% – from 87.4% between 1 April and 31 May 2007 to 95.3% for the same period in 2008. The force attributes this to its 'Primetime' resourcing structure, which is a flexible rostering system that helps ensure more staff are working during predicted times of high demand, and which is constantly updated throughout the year. There has been a slight increase in 999 calls answered within 10 seconds – from 91.85% to 92.35%.

Work in progress

- The survey unit is looking to introduce an improved VCoP survey, which would reduce the time taken by supervisors to conduct the telephone interview. This approach will incorporate behaviours, complaints and dip checking.

- Training procedures are being changed to incorporate the new Witness Charter procedures. The existing VCoP and 'No Witness No Justice' e-learning packages have been amended to encompass the Witness Charter. A replacement e-learning package is currently being designed, and objectives for the new package have been agreed with the learning and development department.

- New student officers will receive a revised Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) training session to ensure the improved management of witness expectations and to improve the service to victims and witnesses. From July

2008, this session will include a joint presentation by both victim support/witness service and witness care managers. This will highlight the importance of effective communication between agencies and with victims and witnesses. This revised training will be supported by enhanced briefings on the new procedures to the probationer development unit sergeants, who will oversee the student officers' development and performance. The force uses failure-of-service case studies for IPLDP modules 1 and 2 in order to disseminate organisational learning.

- A questionnaire has been developed and will be sent to all volunteers by September 2008 to check whether or not they feel involved and valued by the force.

- In order to establish why users are satisfied or dissatisfied, additional questions are being added to the victim satisfaction surveys.

Area(s) for improvement

- Notwithstanding the positive comments above, during group and individual interviews there did not appear to be a clear understanding of corporate standards and expectations of behaviour, and during the inspection fieldwork there was limited evidence of posters or other visual reminders on show.

- While there is a clear process for supervisor VCoP compliance checks, these are viewed by staff as bureaucratic, and while some do complete the checks, there is a need to make sure that this happens.

- There is a need for the force to ensure that NHP web pages are kept up to date, with relevant information and contact details. In particular, some public meeting dates had expired and no new dates were shown.

- It is recognised that the PEC staff have been given a one-hour training input in customer service delivery; however, this was focused on NHP issues. More bespoke training should be delivered to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.

- While the CoSe-CRAFT training is acknowledged as good practice, there is a need to introduce a general customer-care training package that can be delivered more widely across the force.

- It is evident from group and individual interviews that the 'customer focus' DVD has been widely viewed, and the subsequent facilitated training session conducted. However, no formal evaluation has taken place to measure the impact of this training initiative.

- The force should undertake a cultural audit, the better to understand the culture, values and significance of service orientation within its workforce.

- There was only limited understanding by staff members and partners of the additional emphasis that is being placed on citizen focus issues. It is recognised that the Chief Constable has briefed senior members of staff and some partners, but beyond this understanding is limited. Following the relaunch of the QoS programme board, there is a need to market the enhanced emphasis on citizen focus both internally and externally. The force intends to 'under-promise and over-deliver' in this area, and both the context of its work and the need for delivery must be communicated and emphasised if values and attitudes are to be changed.

- There is a need for the force to clearly brand its corporate standards for citizen focus, in order to ensure that there is a clear understanding and recognition by officers, staff and the public.

- While letters of satisfaction are displayed on notice boards and published in internal publications, consideration should be given to displaying and publishing depersonalised letters of complaint, to provide examples of the police service falling below expected standards.

- The force has focused on crime reduction and crime detection performance, which has resulted in improvements in these areas. Now that the force has identified customer focus as an area for increased activity, this should improve the qualitative aspect of performance, together with confidence and satisfaction. It was evident from group and individual interviews that crime reduction and crime detection are still the key performance priorities; if equal emphasis is given to customer focus, there should be significant improvements. While BCUs are now being challenged in respect of crime commission rates, detections and some outcome measures, more creative key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure quality would be beneficial. The inspection team found that lower-level performance indicators were still measurements of quantity not quality – eg within the PEC the measures were that call-timeliness standards were being achieved, with low call-abandon rates; however, the quality of the calls is not the subject of KPIs. SPI data, where it refers to call-centre staff, is broken down – eg data concerning sympathetic response and reassurance offered.

- Satisfaction data demonstrates that Thames Valley remains within the bottom half of the MSF position of eight forces. While there has been an improvement in the ease of contact, others have either not changed position or have slightly deteriorated between the third and fourth quarters.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force implements clear corporate standards and expectations of behaviour and service standards, and once agreed these should be marketed across the force to all officers and staff regardless of rank or position.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that customer service training is provided to all officers and staff in order that they have a better understanding of the need to deliver a quality service to internal and external customers.

The force can demonstrate that the relevant SPIs remain stable as a minimum.

	SPI 1e Satisfaction with the overall service provided		SPI 3b Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided	SPI 3b Gap – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided
	Difference from MSF	**2005/06 to 2007/08 change**	**2005/06 to 2007/08 change**	**+/-pp**
Thames Valley Police	**-2.6 pp**	**+0.8 pp**	**-0.6 pp**	**+4.2 pp**

Summary statement
The SPI data shows that force performance is significantly worse than the average for the MSF.

The SPI data also shows that force performance is unchanged compared with two years ago.

Satisfaction of users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided is unchanged.

There is a satisfaction gap between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided. Users from minority ethnic groups are 4.2 percentage points less satisfied, the force has evidenced that it is taking action to understand and narrow the gap.

Context

The SPI statistics are obtained from the Police Performance Assessment Frameworks (PPAFs) to March 2008. These statistics are survey based and have been analysed for statistical significance, which can be explained in lay terms as follows: 'The difference in performance between the force and the average for its MSF is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

Note: When comparing the force's performance with previous years, year-on-year statistical significance is explained as follows: 'the difference in the force performance between the years compared is unlikely to have occurred by chance.'

There is a summary of the statistical analysis methodology at Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

Victims of crime and users of police services are surveyed using Thames Valley Police's own user satisfaction surveys, which comply with national standards and thus allow comparison with other forces. Surveys are based on a sample size of 600 interviews per BCU.

Strengths

- Performance over time indicates that the force has raised its game slightly, and shows a 0.8 percentage point increase in all user satisfaction – ie 77.8% to 78.6% when comparing March 2006 with March 2008; however, see Areas for improvement.

- User satisfaction measures feature in the monthly force performance profile and are discussed at force and BCU performance meetings.

SPI 3b – comparison of satisfaction for white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided.

- Force performance was unchanged in the year ending March 2008; 74.0% of users from minority ethnic groups were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared with 74.6% in the year ending March 2006.

Work in progress

- There is a gap in satisfaction for the SPI 1.2b between the satisfaction levels of white victims of burglary and those of BME victims. In order to try and understand the reasons behind this gap, the audit team has obtained relevant burglary data from the CEDAR crime system, and will analyse the quality of investigations, officer skill sets and desired outcomes. A stakeholder group has been set up and has just agreed the parameters for this survey; it will involve the Black Police Association completing follow-up contact with dissatisfied BME victims after the survey work by audit team members.

Area(s) for improvement

SPI 1e – satisfaction with the overall service provided.

78.6% of people surveyed in the year ending March 2008 were satisfied with the overall service provided, which is significantly worse than the average for the MSF, and compares with 77.8% of people surveyed who were satisfied in the year ending March 2006.

While there is some work in progress to survey BME burglary victims, the wider issues of disparity between white and BME victim satisfaction levels for other crimes are not fully understood.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force reviews why there is a high turnover of PCSOs. This should also include exit interviews for all staff and that the force should put in place measures to minimize wastage of valuable resources.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should implement a formal process to measure the quality and extent of engagement in all its neighbourhoods to identify good practice and any areas for development, then putting in place systems and processes to address these.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should develop improved neighbourhood policing performance measures to provide supervisors and managers with timely data in order that they can effectively manage their NHP teams.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force should implement standard operating procedures in order that the force website is regularly updated with neighbourhood priorities and ready access is given to CR&ED staff in order that they can understand neighbourhood policing priorities and provide a bespoke response and service to callers.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that the force implements clear corporate standards and expectations of behaviour and service standards, and once agreed these should be marketed across the force to all officers and staff regardless of rank or position.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Her Majesty's Inspector recommends that customer service training is provided to all officers and staff in order that they have a better understanding of the need to deliver a quality service to internal and external customers.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ABC   Acceptable Behaviour Contract

ACC   assistant chief constable

AIT   area intelligence team

B

BCU   basic command unit

BME   black and minority ethnic

C

CaDO   community and diversity officer

CCMT   Chief Constable's management team

CDRP   crime and disorder reduction partnership

CIA   community impact assessment

CoSe   counter services

CRED   control room and enquiry department

CTIO   counter-terrorism intelligence officers

D

DIPs   drug intervention programmes

DSTA   demographic social trends analysis

G

GOSE   Government Office for the South East

H

HMIC   Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HQ   headquarters

HR   human resources

I

IAG   independent advisory group

IPLDP   Initial Police Learning and Development Programme

| iQuanta | A web-based tool for policing performance information and analysis, developed by the police standards unit (PSU) of the Home Office |
| IT | information technology |

K

| KDI | key diagnostic indicator |
| KPI | key performance indicator |

L

| LPA | local police area |

M

| MSF | most similar force |

N

NAG	neighbourhood action group
NCALT	National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies
NHP	Neighbourhood Policing
NO	neighbourhood officer
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPP	neighbourhood priority profile
NSO	neighbourhood specialist officer

O

| OCG | organised crime group |
| OCU | operational command unit |

P

PA	police authority
PC	police constable
PCSO	police community support officer
PDR	performance development review
PEC	police enquiry centre

Q

| QoS | quality of service |

QUADA   quality and data team

R

RTC   road traffic collision

S

SDO   station duty officer

SDU   service delivery unit

SID   speed indication device

SLA   service level agreement

SMT   senior management team

SOP   standard operating procedures

SPI   statutory performance indicator

T

TVP   Thames Valley Police

U

URN   unique reference number

V

VCoP   Victims' Code of Practice

W

WCU   witness care unit

Appendix 2: Developing Practice

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing
TITLE: Dealing with anti-social behaviour as a NAG priority

PROBLEM:
 	
The Barton Bash is a community event in Oxford that is attended by many different agencies and community groups, and is held at the local community centre.
 	
The local PCSOs and street wardens undertook a consultation exercise at the event, and the results identified three key priorities that the NAG could focus on over the following period. The top identified priorities were:
 	
    1. Anti-social behaviour around Underhill Circus
    2. Use of mini motorcycles
    3. Drug dealing and drug use.

SOLUTION: The main aim was to prevent anti-social behaviour and identify why the area of the shops was attracting this type of anti-social behaviour. At the time of the consultation, regeneration of the shopping area was not due for completion for at least 15 months. The shopping area regeneration was intended to make the shops a more accommodating area for the local residents and to design an area that would not promote anti-social behaviour. The immediate action undertaken was an increase in high-visibility patrols by police officers, PCSOs and street wardens. The local shops were also visited and local licensees advised on the sale of alcohol to the young people. A medium-term strategy to educate local people in the Alcohol-Free Zone was initiated, and this included placing increased signage around the local area. There were a number of different forms of youth engagement, including a five-day football course for young people during the summer of 2006 that was funded by Oxford City Council. Other play schemes also took place over the summer, and these successfully reduced the number of young people who were enticed to 'hang out' at the shopping area. A local artist was funded to re-render a wall at the shopping area; this involved local young people in designing and assisting with the creation of the wall in an attempt to instil a sense of community in the young people.
EVALUATION: The NAG in the Barton area completed a community satisfaction survey, and the results were very positive. One hundred residents were randomly surveyed, and the majority stated that there had been an improvement in the way anti-social behaviour was tackled. For example, 45% of residents said that things had got better and that there had been a reduction in the number of teenagers hanging around the streets over the previous six months; only 2% said that the situation had got a lot worse. Some 34% of those surveyed stated that general vandalism had decreased; only 1% said it had got worse.
EXTERNAL VALIDATION: N/A

OUTCOMES:

All the above actions and projects – together with NAG actions to reduce the local usage of mini motorcycles and the formulation of a more robust way of dealing with drugs in the local area – have meant that collectively the whole area has improved, as has the quality of life for the local residents.

Overall, there were very few residents who stated that problems had become worse. There was also a general trend stating that there were now fewer drug problems in the area and a strong trend stating that the previous problems with mini motorcycles had now improved. These results prompted the local daily paper (*Oxford Mail*) to publish a very positive article spread over two pages.

During the second half of 2007, the NAG targeted the identified priorities even further, with many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders being issued and many Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) signed. Many of the prolific offenders have been targeted and arrested, and some of the main protagonists are in prison. The area will soon benefit even further, with the imminent opening of a police base right in the heart of the Barton estate, within the community centre, just metres from the Underhill Circus shopping area. This will mean that visibility is increased further, and abstractions of TVP personnel and/or Oxford Council street wardens away from the area will be reduced to minimal levels.

FORCE CONTACT:

Sergeant Yakoob Teladia (tel: 08458 505505)

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing

TITLE: Crime reduction partnership initiative – install alarms

PROBLEM:
In an attempt to address community safety issues, the problem of burglary in Slough was addressed by targeting offenders. To address the issue over the longer term, this was complemented by an initiative to install alarms in homes that were identified through crime analysis and 'hotspotting'.

SOLUTION:

The neighbourhood policing team conducted burglary hotspot analysis and identified six main streets that justified an investment in the installation of alarms as a crime prevention measure. Repeat victims were also factored into analysis of the problem.

A proposal was made to GOSE, which provided £25,000 funding to support the initiative. A collaborative venture with Dyno Secure, a British Gas subsidiary, was undertaken to supply and install 140 alarms. The alarms were provided at cost price through this arrangement.

Letters were delivered to all households in the six streets, offering free supply and fitting of alarms (equivalent to £1,000 each). The letter was worded carefully so as not to heighten the fear of crime.

In collaboration with Slough Borough Council, a spreadsheet was used to plan and monitor the installation of alarms, and householders were contacted to keep them informed of progress. A record was also kept of feedback and comments from householders.

EVALUATION:

The crime figures were reviewed, including a trend analysis of the target streets and surrounding areas. Feedback was sought from Dyno Secure and British Gas on the success of the initiative; this was favourable, and the initiative was viewed as a good partnership project.

Feedback elicited through the neighbourhood policing teams indicated that fear of crime had been reduced in the area.

The lead police inspector looked at other schemes nationally to identify success rates and lessons that could be learnt from other forces.

A few alarms were kept in reserve to cater for late bids by householders.

Regular daily communication with the partners was essential and proved valuable in conducting a smooth operation.

This presented further opportunities – eg plans to arrange for the delivery of 35,000 neighbourhood newsletters, tailored to each neighbourhood, at a cost of £1,500. The newsletters will have the Slough Borough Council, Dyno Secure and police logos included.

The initiative was reviewed by the force NHP implementation project team.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION:

There was peer review by partners.

The project was validated by GOSE to assess value for money and outcomes.

OUTCOMES:

Virtually zero burglary in the targeted area; the scheme took six months to implement and the review period for assessing burglary performance was 18 months.

Better integration between police, partners and the communities.

Sustainable solution to a local crime problem.

Greater reassurance offered to the community.

Enhanced engagement, improving two-way dialogue with the community.

Value for money by supplying alarms at cost price.

FORCE CONTACT:

Inspector John Goosey (tel: 08458 505505)

INSPECTION AREA: Neighbourhood Policing
TITLE: Road safety enforcement and awareness campaigning involving local schoolchildren
PROBLEM: The NAG identified speeding in a specific area as one of the three key priorities. A priority profile was produced to define and assess the problem. This coincided with a local authority review of speed limits and the National Road Safety Week.
SOLUTION: A report was produced that highlighted accident hotspots, data from speed enforcement activity and road usage. The community was surveyed by NAG members on the impact of speeding in the community. The decision to run a proactive speeding campaign was intended to complement the National Road Safety Week in schools. Road safety talks were delivered by the neighbourhood policing team at the schools in the area. A speed enforcement operation was organised, involving 11-year-old schoolchildren. Special constables worked alongside the neighbourhood policing team, which was deployed to use lasers to monitor vehicle speed at two designated sites. Offending vehicles were then stopped by officers and directed into a secure, sterile car park supplied by the Environment Agency free of charge. The schoolchildren were supervised by a member of staff and two PCSOs at all times, and were kept out of sight/hearing, in a cordoned-off, designated area of the car park. The children were also wearing high-visibility jackets provided by the school and T-shirts with speed-awareness literature printed on them, provided by the South Buckinghamshire District community safety team. Drivers were initially dealt with by police officers, either by way of a warning/fixed penalty notice or a summons; after the disposal, the officers assessed if any confrontation was likely to result. Drivers were asked if they would speak to the schoolchildren, and in every case the driver agreed to do so. A PCSO would then escort a child to the car. That child spoke to the driver, handed over speed-awareness leaflets (make a commitment to drive within the speed limit) and highlighted the impact of excessive speed on vulnerable road users and the community. This included: 'If you hit me at 40mph I have a 90% chance of being killed or seriously hurt.' The feedback received from drivers after they had spoken to the children was positive, and having schoolchildren deliver key messages about speeding proved very impactive. In order to gather further information and provide feedback to the community, drivers were asked about the purpose of their journey. The results of the operation were publicised in the monthly neighbourhood newsletter and local press. Schoolchildren managed stands outside the local supermarket as part of the road safety campaign. A competition was held between the two schools for the largest number of leaflets completed by parents/family, and the winners received a cheque. These costs were shared between South Buckinghamshire District Council and TVP. The supermarket donated confectionery to all schoolchildren involved in the campaign.

EVALUATION:

It was important to involve partners in the planning and assessment of potential risks. A full standard risk assessment was produced, and a copy was given to the school. A letter was sent to parents explaining the operation, addressing welfare concerns and obtaining parental consent. The school insurance covered the schoolchildren for the operation at no extra cost.

The operation was recognised as good practice by a personal email from the Chief Constable to the neighbourhood policing team.

Agreement was secured beforehand with roads policing to deal in slow time with any drivers who were without insurance or were using a vehicle illegally.

The leaflets distributed throughout the campaign were produced at no cost to the police.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION:

Peer review by local authorities and local schools.

Feedback from the NAG was very positive.

Press releases in the local newspaper promoting the operation and results.

OUTCOMES:
- A repeat of the speed enforcement operation focusing on one road showed a reduced incidence of speeding.

- Opportunity to educate drivers in speed awareness and the impact on the local community.

- Better integration between police, partners and the communities in addressing a local issue.

- Increased police visibility while tackling a local problem.

- Greater reassurance offered to the community by addressing a specific local priority.

- Further opportunity to engage with passers-by and equestrians during the operation.

FORCE CONTACT:

PC Trevor Walker and PCSO Angela O'Connell (tel: 08458 505505)

INSPECTION AREA: Citizen Focus
TITLE: Incident-grading and resource-management model (Operation Quest)
PROBLEM: Operation Quest conducted performance process improvement on the way we grade, manage and resource incidents. A number of issues were identified that were having a negative impact on efficiency, productivity and QoS. Issues included over-restrictive call-grading guidelines, inability to effectively prioritise and allocate resources to incidents and limited capability to see the public at a specified time.
SOLUTION: Amended call-grading guidelines. Greater emphasis on grading based on the nature of the call and needs of the caller. Greater Citizen Focus at first point of contact. Non-time-critical calls dealt with by the BCU-based SDUs, by way of a scheduled appointment. This enables fewer time-critical calls to be managed and resourced more effectively. Greater focus on time-critical anti-social behaviour to support NHP, address NAG priorities and ensure an integrated approach to policing. A review and closure policy has been introduced to ensure that incidents are managed and quality assured at regular intervals. Management of URN is QoS driven. The closure aspect of policy reduces the disproportionate amount of time spent chasing people who are obstructive or who do not want our help, at the expense of people who do. Revised SDU model. Non-time-critical calls managed by BCU staff. Prioritise and allocate resources to incidents using a new incident-grading and resource-management database. Dedicated resources service a system of scheduled and police surgery appointments. This provides the capability to see the public at a fixed and agreed time. The SDU reviews each incident and provides a customer-focused response. Neighbourhood priority profiles are considered in the decision-making process. Greater focus on making best use of all available resources and matching the most appropriate resource to the incident. Expanded use of PCSOs, supported by changes to their deployment guidelines.
EVALUATION: **How was the process evaluated?** SDU performance metrics introduced to measure and monitor performance. Fortnightly performance data provided to the BCU SMT and the CCMT. Metrics includes iQuanta customer satisfaction data. This data will eventually be incorporated within the BCU performance group. A full review of the pilot in Berkshire East is in the process of being produced. A force review will be conducted once the force-wide implementation of this work stream is complete (September 2008). **Lessons learnt throughout the process** Local management of incidents provides significant opportunities to improve QoS. Decision making around service and response can be considered with regard to local priorities.

More efficient management of resources can have a positive impact on resourcing and service delivery.

There is an opportunity for student officers to improve statement taking, interviewing and victim contact skills while they are on attachment.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION:

Operation Quest has been facilitated by external management consultants; this is part of a national business improvement project.

Fortnightly performance data sent to the Home Office.

Flanagan review team visit. Included interviews of Quest central team and workshops with front-line staff to get direct feedback on changes.

OUTCOMES:

Favourable results from the twelve-week implementation pilot include the following:

- number of un-resourced URNs decreased by over 50%;
- 10,808 URNs dealt with – 52% attended;
- 5,382 incidents attended – over 90% by way of a scheduled appointment;
- 15% of attended incidents dealt with at a police station;
- only 1% of appointments not kept by the police and 3% by the public;
- increased customer satisfaction – 65% of respondents stated the service was better than expected; 35% as expected;
- 60% of by-arrangement incidents dealt with within 24 hours;
- only 6% of control-room incidents more than 24 hours old;
- incident attendance breakdown – SDU 71%, NHP 16%, PCSO 10%, reactive 3%;
- reactive/SDU staff freed up for other duties.

In respect of increased customer satisfaction, results can be summarised thus:

- scheduled appointment system;
- tailored resources to match victim requirements;
- increased timeliness in responding to incidents;
- good impression made – throughout the service chain;
- increased opportunities for initial crime investigation;
- greater focus on neighbourhood priorities for incident response.

The figures for victims updated within five days of reporting an incident and for victims updated on the outcome have improved from 30% to over 65% for both indicators.

Improved position in MSF (eighth to sixth) with regard to satisfaction with treatment.

FORCE CONTACT:

Inspector Christian Bunt (tel: 08458 505505)

INSPECTION AREA: Citizen Focus
TITLE: Persistent caller system
PROBLEM: In common with other police forces and emergency services, TVP has a number of persistent and hoax callers to the 999 service. Since commencing the system two years ago, we have identified 120 'problem' callers. These have included 'vulnerable adults', people dependent on drink and/or drugs and anonymous callers. With the increased use of mobile phones, there has also been an increase in hoax calls from unregistered mobile phones. The 999 system can, at times, be blocked by these callers, stopping genuine emergency calls from getting through.
SOLUTION: A monitoring system was introduced to analyse the scale and nature of persistent or hoax callers. This included who was calling and what action was possible, if any. In appropriate cases, an acceptable behaviour contract was drawn up and an agreed action plan produced with the force's anti-social behaviour officer. A Crystal IT search facility was created to search our contact-management system for calls made from a single telephone number. This produces a chronological list of calls made by that number. Landline callers are identified as soon as possible. The NHP teams then make contact with the individuals and establish the best course of action, taking account of other local information available. This may involve multi-agency partnership meetings to agree which agency is best suited to deal the problem. In cases involving mobile phones that are registered with the service provider, we proceed as per landlines. If the mobile phone is unregistered and we are unable to establish the identity of the caller, and if there is no genuine fear for welfare, termination of the service is requested from the service providers. It is a subjective test in identifying who is and who is not a persistent caller. It not only depends on the volume of calls, but also on the nature of the calls. The incident log gives an outline of the nature of the issues associated with a call, and particular emphasis is placed on calls that are very abusive towards the staff taking those calls.
EVALUATION: The volume of reports of persistent callers has dropped since this system was first introduced. This may be due to the actions of the NHP team or it may simply be that the message about hoax calls is being conveyed successfully. **EXTERNAL VALIDATION:** We have started joint services talks about hoax callers, sharing details with both the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and South Central Ambulance Service.

OUTCOMES:

The frequency of persistent and hoax calls has declined. The frequency of reporting to the PEC has dropped:

- 26 mobile phones have been disconnected;
- 46 have ceased to call us;
- five are being monitored;
- 26 are being dealt with by the BCUs;
- two have been to court after being served with the ABC and now have conditions imposed upon them.

FORCE CONTACT:

Chief Inspector Russ Wootton (tel: 08458 505505)

INSPECTION AREA: Citizen Focus
TITLE: CoSe in the community – Counter-services staff engaging with community groups.
PROBLEM: There was a perceived lack of engagement between certain community groups and the police. This led to a number of problems, which usually manifested themselves at front counters, where frustrations were aired. The initiative looked to tackle this perceived lack of engagement by involving counter-services staff with the various community groups.
SOLUTION: The SDOs worked together to establish which community groups would benefit from further engagement with the police. These included taxi drivers, a lesbian and gay group, mental health groups, Citizens Advice and Trading Standards. The SDOs began attending meetings with these various groups to help break down some of the barriers.
EVALUATION: At first, some of the community groups were suspicious of the involvement of the police; however, using their interpersonal skills, the SDOs worked quickly to overcome this and the system now works well. The interaction between the SDOs and the community groups is very much a two-way process. Often the groups may be upset or angered by the police response to an incident or problem; however, by sitting down and explaining the processes followed and answering any questions that arise, the impact of the original problem is significantly reduced. A good example involved the local taxi driver group. The taxi drivers, upset by the fact that one of their colleagues had been arrested, staged a protest outside the police station, with their taxis blocking the road in both directions. The SDO who attended the taxi drivers' meetings happened to be on duty, and within a few minutes of talking with the group the taxis had dispersed. **EXTERNAL VALIDATION:** N/A
OUTCOMES: By engaging with the community on local issues, the SDOs are able to proactively and reactively solve problems that present themselves at the front counter. The practice, which originally started on the Berkshire West BCU, has now been replicated at Milton Keynes BCU, where the SDOs are attending local council meetings. There are plans to develop this initiative later this year by involving more BCUs.
FORCE CONTACT: Kelly Axtell, Force Counter Services Manager (tel: 08458 505505)

Appendix 3: Assessment of Outcomes Using Statutory Performance Indicator Data

Context

The HMIC grading of Neighbourhood Policing and Citizen Focus for each force takes performance on the key SPIs as a starting point. These are derived from the PPAF and are survey based.

The survey results come from two different sources:

- **Neighbourhood Policing**
  Results come from the BCS, which questions the general population. The annual sample size for the BCS is usually 1,000 interviews per force.

- **Developing Citizen Focus Policing**
  Results come from forces' own user satisfaction surveys. The annual sample size for these user satisfaction surveys is 600 interviews per BCU.

Understanding survey results

The percentage shown for each force represents an estimate of the result if the whole relevant population had been surveyed. Around the estimate there is a margin of error based on the size of the sample surveyed (not on the size of the population).

This margin is known as a **confidence interval** and it will narrow or widen depending on how confident we want to be that the estimate reflects the views of the whole population (a common standard is 95% confident) and therefore how many people have to be interviewed. For example, if we have a survey estimate of 81% from a sample of approximately 1,000 people, the confidence interval would be plus or minus 3 and the appropriate statement would be that we can be 95% confident that the real figure in the population lies between 78% and 84%.

Having more interviewees – a larger sample – means that the estimate will be more precise and the confidence interval will be correspondingly narrower. Generally, user satisfaction surveys will provide a greater degree of precision in their answers than the BCS because the sample size is greater (1,000 for the **whole force** for the BCS, as opposed to 600 **for each BCU** for user satisfaction).

HMIC grading using survey results

In order to **meet the standard**, forces need to show no 'significant' difference between their score and the average for their MSF or against their own data from previous years. Consequently, force performance could be considered to be 'exceeding the standard' or 'failing to meet the standard' if it shows a 'significant' difference from the MSF average or from previous years' data.

HMIC would not consider force performance as 'exceeding the standard' if SPI data were travelling in the wrong direction, ie deteriorating. Likewise, credit has been given for an upward direction in SPI data even if performance falls below the MSF average.

Understanding significant difference

The calculation that determines whether a difference is statistically significant takes into account the force's confidence interval and the confidence interval of its MSF.[1] The results of the calculation indicate, with a specified degree of certainty, whether the result shows a real difference or could have been achieved by chance.

This greater level of precision is the reason why a difference of approximately two percentage points is statistically significant[2] in the case of the user satisfaction indicator, whereas a difference of around four percentage points is required for the BCS indicators. If the sample size is small, the calculation is still able to show a statistically significant difference but the gap will have to be larger.

[Produced by HMIC based on guidance from the NPIA Research, Analysis and Information Unit, Victoria Street, London.]

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[1] The BCS results are also corrected to take account of intentional 'under-sampling' or 'over-sampling' of different groups in the force area.

[2] It is likely that there is a real, underlying difference between data taken at two different times or between two populations. If sufficient data is collected, the difference may not have to be large to be statistically significant.