



**HMIC Inspection Report  
West Mercia Constabulary**

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## Introduction to HMIC Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

### Programmed frameworks

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Risk-based frameworks**

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

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

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

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

## The grading process

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

### *Excellent*

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

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

### *Good*

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

### *Fair*

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

### *Poor*

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

## Developing practice

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

### Future HMIC inspection activity

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

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

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

## Force Overview and Context

### Geographical description of force area

West Mercia Constabulary (WMC) is responsible for policing an area of 7,428 sq. km, consisting of the counties of Shropshire and Worcestershire and the unitary authorities of Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin. Geographically it is the fourth largest force in England and Wales and is the largest land-locked force. There are 13,621 km of roads in the area, including sections of four motorways – the M5, M50, M42 and M54.

The five territorial policing divisions – South Worcestershire, North Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin – are each coterminous with the relevant county council or unitary authority. The main headquarters site is based at Hindlip, near Worcester.

Although predominantly rural, there are five large urban areas, namely Worcester, Redditch, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford. The area is a mixture of countryside, new and growing towns, manufacturing towns and prospering smaller towns. Areas of West Mercia are deemed 'sparse' in population terms; Herefordshire is particularly sparse, with over 50% of the people in the county living either in or within five miles of Hereford city centre.

There are 11 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) within the force area.

### Demographic profile of force area

The resident population is 1,185,215 (2.3% of whom are of black and minority ethnic (BME) origin), which equates to 488 residents to every officer. The five divisions and their respective policing challenges are diverse, both demographically and geographically. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, some of the most deprived wards in the country are to be found within the area served by WMC. These are mainly clustered around Telford, Kidderminster, Redditch, Worcester and Hereford.

### Structural description

The command team comprises the Chief Constable; the deputy chief constable (DCC), two assistant chief constables (ACCs), with responsibility for territorial operations and specialist operations respectively, and the director of finance, who holds the portfolio of administration and finance. The director of strategy and organisation manages the 4000+ strategic programme.

Total police officer and police staff strength is 4,437, of whom 1.5% are BME and 42.6% female. The detailed breakdown is 2,425 police officers, of whom 1.4% are BME and 24.7% are female; 2,012 police staff (1.7% BME and 64.1% female) and 271 special constables. The figure of 2,012 police staff includes 270 police community support officers (CSOs). The force estate consists of 59 police stations (Home Office definition) and uses or occupies a further 44 properties.

### Strategic priorities

Three years ago, WMC and the police authority adopted a new organisational strategy entitled '4000+, An Even Better Place'. This vision reflects the 4,000-plus police officers, police staff and volunteers working for the force, and brings together the force's:

- Four Tracks of Policing (local policing, responsive policing, intelligence-led policing and policing in partnership);

- Four Better Outcomes (tackling crime, promoting community safety, improving public satisfaction and confidence and protecting the public); and
- Four Key Principles (performance focus, integrity, quality people and embracing diversity).

Both the Four Tracks and the Four Better Outcomes have been revised and updated for 2007/08 to reflect the current focus of the force strategy. This holistic approach continues to build on existing good work already undertaken and aims to deliver continuous improvements where appropriate.

### **Impact of workforce modernisation and strategic force development**

Workforce modernisation is managed via a corporate programme, which is currently being reviewed in order to identify future developments upon which the force wishes to focus. The output from that review will be submitted to the people and integrity strategy group, which will ensure that progress is linked into the overall strategic aims of the force.

The strategic development of the force is managed via monthly chief officers' strategy day meetings and a well-embedded structure of strategy groups whose terms of reference link to the overall force strategy.

### **Major achievements**

#### ***Operation Barley***

The investigation into the double murder of two women in Shrewsbury on 1 July 2006 was a long and painstaking investigation, involving search teams, forensic investigators, a Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) team, multi-media liaison, CCTV teams, a scene guard, enquiry officers and administrative support staff. At the conclusion of the trial of the offender, both the QC and the trial judge complimented the force on the high standard of the investigation.

#### ***Building protective services***

The variable capacity and capability of forces across the country to deliver protective services formed the basis of the national argument for merging police forces. After consideration of the resources required to meet future demands in that area, the police authority approved the additional revenue investment of £2.9 million. The two-year programme to recruit 93.5 additional specialist staff commenced on 1 April 2006.

Following the baseline assessment grade of Poor for Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) in 2006, the force has embraced the challenge and undertaken a fundamental review of all its public protection arrangements. A focused force action plan has seen the force working closely with strategic partners, the police authority, and HMIC. The review has sought critically to examine levels of resources, workload, policy and procedure and how risk is currently managed. An extensive communications strategy has enhanced the awareness of this highly challenging area of policing.

The project has been underpinned by the leadership provided by the Chief Constable, who refined the Four Better Outcomes to include 'protecting the public'. PVP is now effectively a 'golden thread' throughout the policing plan for 2007–08. The policing activities covered in PVP have been inspected in detail in 2007, as covered in this report.

**Investment in force infrastructure – Defford**

In support of the significant investment of 95 posts for level 2 policing, a substantial capital investment of £3.4 million is being made to upgrade newly acquired facilities at Defford, which will accommodate key departments. This investment represents phase 1 of a longer-term plan to utilise the potential of Defford and was completed in July 2007. Phase 2 will focus on providing storage facilities, which can also be used by neighbouring forces as part of the shared services initiative, together with vehicle and radio maintenance facilities.

**Major challenges for the future**

In common with all forces, increasing budgetary pressures emphasise the need to be realistic regarding future financial arrangements and developments in the light of ever increasing operational pressures. Continued funding for police community support officers, on the cessation of the time-limited national funding, will present a particular challenge for the force.

## Findings

### National summary of judgements

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

### Force summary of judgements

<b>Neighbourhood Policing</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Neighbourhood Policing	<b>Good</b>
<b>Performance management</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Performance management	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Protecting vulnerable people</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Child abuse	<b>Good</b>
Domestic violence	<b>Good</b>
Public protection	<b>Fair</b>
Missing persons	<b>Good</b>

## Neighbourhood Policing

GRADE	GOOD
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	14	21	2

### National contextual factors

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

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

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

### Contextual factors

The ACC (territorial operations (TO)) is the chief officer lead for local policing, covering:

- 145 local policing areas, each with a local policing team;
- local policing inspectors responsible for several local policing sergeants;
- local policing sergeants responsible for several local policing teams (LPTs);
- LPTs consisting of:
  - local police officers – constable and team leader for CSOs, specials and volunteers responsible for community engagement activity and other local policing issues;

- CSOs;
- special constables; and
- volunteers.

The local policing support team, based at headquarters, promotes the continued roll-out and ongoing development of local policing across West Mercia. It supports divisions by providing guidance and advice from experienced staff, as well as maintaining the corporate approach.

## Strengths

- Strong and committed leadership of local policing is evident at chief officer and divisional commander levels. The ACC (TO) is enthusiastic and proactive in his approach to local policing, leading the force local policing project and chairing the steering group. He has attended all ACPO Neighbourhood Policing annual conferences, subsequently sharing innovative practice, and meets with the HQ support team weekly, divisional commanders monthly and those chief inspectors who are local policing champions bi-monthly, to drive activity, reinforce corporate messages and support implementation.
- Reports on the progress of local policing are regularly submitted to the police authority's inclusivity and community engagement panel. Performance is monitored at force, division, CDRP and local levels.
- The local policing project has been formally adopted by the force with clear objectives, milestones and timescales, and there is strong evidence that local policing is embedded within WMC. A local policing support team at HQ continues to improve the effectiveness of local policing through support, audit and developing best practice. Communication between HQ and BCUs is facilitated through support teams on each BCU and a local champions monthly meeting chaired by the ACC (TO).
- Following implementation of local policing on the pathfinder BCU, West Mercia Constabulary hosted visits from numerous forces and gave many presentations that sought to develop its own responses to the national Neighbourhood Policing agenda. Many aspects of the West Mercia model have been replicated in other forces – for example, engagement methods and terminology and the crime/worry matrix. Significant interest continues to be shown in developments from other forces, notably the local policing section of the intranet. Recent presentations and visits have been made by the LPT to forces in England and Northern Ireland and to visiting foreign delegations, including Swedish and Polish police officers. Good practice from WMC regularly features in the National Policing Improvement Agency's Neighbourhood Policing programme newsletters.
- A review of the implementation to date was conducted in January 2007; this has helped to define the interrelationships between local and response policing and other divisional activity and an improvement action plan has been developed. The force has fully engaged with the ACPO Neighbourhood Policing project team in the developmental assessment process, and the field officer attends all champions' and regional meetings. Each BCU has undertaken a self-inspection process, which has identified areas for development and achievements to date. The regional officer from the Neighbourhood Policing project team has been invited to review progress to

date. A further force-level review is planned.

- As part of the inspection process HMIC conducted a telephone survey of 100 randomly selected residents, asking six questions about their experience and view of how Neighbourhood Policing is being delivered. The responses did not deviate from the national average to a degree that is statistically significant, but were above the national average range for all questions – most notably that 'local people knew how to make contact with the police team who work in their area' and that 'local people believed that they had a lot of say over what the police do to tackle the problems in their area'.
- There is full coverage of LPTs across WMC. A total of 145 LPTs, comprising police officers and CSOs, are in place and aligned to local authority ward boundaries. Resources have been deployed using the Local Police Officer Allocation Model, which assessed and graded demand in each ward while retaining flexibility for discretionary additional staffing to be determined by the local command team. Each division has a chief inspector (local policing), who, as the divisional champion, attends bi-monthly meetings at HQ to share and help develop best practice.
- WMC has recruited its full proportion of funded CSO posts. Regular contact is made with those who met the recruitment requirement to become CSOs but are awaiting a vacant position, to keep them updated. This has resulted in fewer delays in recruitment when vacancies have arisen.
- Sustainable funding to support local policing and retain the current number of CSOs has been ring fenced to 2011.
- CSOs have targets for high visibility patrol and submit monthly returns in this regard. These are monitored as a local performance indicator, with a target of 80%.
- Representatives from partner agencies are involved in the selection of CSOs. During initial training all CSOs are seconded to local authorities for up to two days, to enhance their understanding of their work, and reciprocal arrangements are in place for appropriate post-holders. A number of CSO posts are funded by partners, including parish councils, the local authority, housing associations and a retail park.
- All LPT officers receive a two-week bespoke training course, which is transferable into a qualification in team leadership from the Chartered Institute of Management. A question and answer session with the Chief Constable or ACC is included in every course. Training is supplemented by joint police and partner practitioner problem-solving training events and good practice seminars. To ensure that new members of LPTs access training in a timely manner, future provision will be delivered in modules that are tailored to the needs of the recipient.
- CSOs undergo their first seven weeks' training alongside police officer recruits as part of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme, accredited by the University of Teesside. This is supplemented by a divisional familiarisation programme, including time spent in partner organisations. CSOs who subsequently join as police officers have their training recognised as accredited prior learning.
- Joint agency training has been provided to support the introduction of local policing – for example, in tackling anti-social behaviour and problem solving, including problem analysis triangle (PAT), scanning, analysis, response, assessment (SARA) and offender/victim/location tools. This has embraced representatives from statutory and voluntary partners and independent chairs of partners and communities together

(PACT) meetings.

- Partners attend tasking and co-ordinating meetings at divisional level.
- Strong links with Neighbourhood Watch and other watch schemes are evident and these are used proactively. For example, members of Business Watch receive twice-weekly bulletins, while Neighbourhood Watch packs have been hand delivered to all residents living in a priority area. As a result, three new schemes are being introduced and an increase in community and criminal intelligence is evident.
- The West Mercia internet site has a link to local policing that is searchable by postcode, enabling the public to obtain details of the appropriate LPT. Photographs and direct contact details of team members are available, together with details of PACT meetings and other community activities conducted by LPTs. A local policing communications officer has been employed for 2007/08.
- The local policing database, available to all LPT members, has been developed as a bespoke single IT solution that provides a one-stop shop for all local policing issues. It contains details of the locality, staffing and duties of LPT officers and CSOs, engagements with the public (including local priorities), crime and incident data, priority offenders, persistent young offenders, Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR) information and prison releases. Officers are able to update the site with progress against priorities, which in turn directly updates the external internet site. Submissions can be made directly into the intelligence system and future additions are planned, including information on persistent young offenders, anti-social behaviour orders, curfew and bail information. Direct access to all other operational systems is available using the Genie search tool.
- When members of LPTs log onto the intranet they are immediately directed to their local home page, which provides comprehensive local information and data specific to their local policing area. From the home page, staff can easily navigate the site for additional information.
- Call-handling and front-counter staff have received training in local policing, to reduce duplication, provide accurate information to callers at the first point of contact, and make proactive use of the local policing database. For example, if the call relates to a local issue, the handler will check the local policing database and inform the caller if the matter is currently a local priority. If it is, the handler tells the caller who is responsible for resolving the problem and, where applicable, gives them details of local community engagements and contacts, so that the caller can speak directly to members of LPTs. Call handlers use the direct email links to inform LPTs of issues raised where it is not appropriate to create an incident.
- A comprehensive community engagement strategy, based on the PACT menu of options, has been developed jointly by WMC and the police authority. A crime/worry matrix uses information from 22 indicators and is used to profile each local policing area according to its crime levels and community perceptions of crime. It suggests the type and frequency of engagement that will be the most effective, recognising that the approach taken needs to meet the needs of the community and 'one size does not fit all'. This approach has been adopted by other forces. The crime/worry matrix has recently been refreshed and an evaluation of the use of postcards and face-to-face surveys has been undertaken.
- Comprehensive booklets have been prepared on each engagement method (public meetings, surgeries, environmental visual audits, postcards and face-to-face

surveys) to assist LPTs. These encompass the national and local context, guides to staff and partners, explain how Neighbourhood Policing integrates with the National Intelligence Model (NIM), provide examples of how staff can implement improved service, and offer checklists for action.

- At least one PACT activity has taken place in each LPT area, supported by partners and local authority chief executives and managers. Over an eight-month period on the pathfinder division, 143 PACT meetings were attended by over 3,000 people, and 400 local priorities for action were agreed. Some 80% of these priorities have been successfully addressed, half by partners and half by police. There is a clear commitment to strengthen PACT meetings and adopt best practice identified locally and nationally.
- PACT meetings are supplemented by other engagement techniques to meet the needs of their neighbourhoods. Methods include visual audits, postcards and surgeries at locations to maximise the involvement of the community (for example, in elderly care establishments, youth clubs, schools and mosques). Some 80% of PACT-identified priorities are achieved by the time of the following meeting.
- In areas where partners have shown some reluctance to engage in the PACT process, steps have been taken at command and operational level to overcome and resolve the issues. This has resulted in different approaches across WMC to meet local circumstances.
- LPTs are responsible for entering details of key individual networks (KINs) onto the force database and ensuring that details remain current.
- Some 2,000 customer care booklets have been produced to provide the public with a reference guide as to how they can contact the police; the customer service principles that WMC works to, and the level of service that customers can expect. The booklet is widely available at community contact centres and on the internet, and has been distributed to all members of the force.
- A local policing communication plan has been designed for use by divisional command and LPTs, which will be supported by a newly-appointed local policing communications officer at HQ. Feedback is tailored to meet local need and there are many instances where this has been provided on a multi-agency basis – for example, through district and borough council newspapers, which are distributed to all households. Proactive use is made of the media (leaflet drops, the internet, newsletters and posters), Neighbourhood Watch and word of mouth to keep the public informed.
- Effective information-sharing protocols are in place between agencies, through the local strategic partnership and safer and stronger community partnerships. Successful local links have been developed. An example is the refining of the information-sharing protocol between the police and local authority housing provider, which has speeded up processes and removed bureaucracy.
- Local policing issues are embedded in tasking and co-ordinating processes. Multi-agency tasking is in place at a divisional level, while strategic issues are raised at CDRP forums and force-level meetings.
- The user experience workstream of the 4,000+ programme board identifies the links between the 'Speaks Quality' and local policing workstreams to reflect the quality of service commitment. The programme manager is responsible for ensuring that

inter-dependencies between projects are identified and opportunities to improve service delivery are maximised. It is intended to merge the local policing and citizen focus workstreams.

- Public satisfaction and confidence in local policing are measured to gauge success for LPTs; it is recognised that visibility itself does not necessarily generate improved confidence in the public, but visibility *and* action do. A force project was managed at ACPO level to introduce the Victims' Code and compliance against the code is measured. WMC has engaged with the Home Office in the production of its revised guidance to forces.
- Specialist resources have been adjusted to support local policing – for example, the reactive burglary and car crime teams are aligned to LPT clusters, and divisional field intelligence officers have responsibilities for LPT areas. Multi-agency forums have been reviewed to mitigate the requirement to attend multiple meetings and streamline processes.
- A monthly performance newsletter is produced. This includes performance information on: CSO visible patrol hours; local interventions; user satisfaction; sickness; workforce diversity; performance development review (PDR) completion; crime performance (comparing performance against most similar forces on crime rates and detections); anti-social behaviour; anti-social behaviour offender management, and reducing road traffic collisions.
- All LPT officers receive a special priority payment to reflect the additional responsibilities and recognise the importance of the role. A West Mercia officer was awarded the 2007 British Association of Women in Policing Award for Community Service, for her achievements in working with the local community and pioneering the PACT initiative. Local awards are also presented by the force and authority.
- PDRs contain appropriate objectives. BCU commanders have local policing objectives, set in consultation with the ACC, which must be achieved to receive a competency-related threshold payment. These objectives include the requirement to continue to develop and improve local policing and links with other agencies.
- A robust abstraction policy for LPT members is part of the local policing policy. Abstractions are currently monitored through the force performance group meetings, and any non-urgent short-term abstraction requires authorisation by a member of the divisional command team.
- Special Branch has launched a database, accessible from neighbourhood pages on the intranet, for members of LPTs to gather information that contributes to the 'richer picture' on counter-terrorist work. Since the launch in July 2007, members of LPTs have provided a significant amount of information to populate the database. Training has been provided and feedback is given by Special Branch staff, who actively monitor submissions.

## Work in progress

- A three-month-long community intelligence (CI) project commenced in February 2007, to improve the collection and use of CI and to provide third-party direct access for submission of CI. Although the project had clear objectives and expected outcomes, these were not realised. A new project has been instigated to rectify

communication gaps and address process issues, using an incremental approach to find a sustainable solution that will improve the collection of multi-agency CI.

- To prevent prolonged absences from LPTs, officers are now restricted from further training for specialist roles, although many staff came into the role with skills such as those of HOLMES operators or family liaison officers.
- Shift patterns worked by police officers and CSOs in LPTs are currently being reviewed to ensure that their deployment meets demand.
- The force performance group meetings in 2007/08 will scrutinise local policing issues; key performance indicators for 2007/08 predominantly focus on promoting community safety and improving satisfaction and confidence.
- Eleven CSO posts are to be dedicated to providing a policing presence at school premises; supporting protocols are currently being prepared by the HQ local policing support team.
- Training has been provided to partners in problem-solving techniques and NIM processes. Joint strategic assessments will be prepared by the newly-appointed analyst, who has access to depersonalised data from a number of different agencies.
- There is evidence that partners contribute to, and attend, tasking and co-ordination meetings in some areas, but this is not consistent across the force. Planning has commenced for the production of a full joint strategic assessment.
- Volunteers are used effectively to support local policing and a full time co-ordinator is to be employed.
- A trial to collect activity analysis data of CSOs using the Airwave radio system is currently under way, running alongside paper records maintained by CSOs. It is important that the force maintains accurate records to quantify hours of visibility and that these are subject to audit inspection.
- Ten pilot sites have been identified as part of the safer communities strand of the 4000+ project to measure customer confidence and satisfaction at LPT level. The sites have been selected according to the 'crime worry' matrix and the differing communication needs of the chosen areas.
- While there has been a significant investment in training for local police officers and CSOs, no such training has yet been provided to local policing sergeants or inspectors. Training has been designed, with roll-out planned for September 2007.

### **Areas for improvement**

- All special constables have been assigned to LPTs to support local policing. Their training commitments have increased from three to seven weekends to equip them fully for this role. Despite this, there is evidence that their contribution is not always valued and they are not fully integrated into LPTs.
- Comprehensive geographic profiles have been prepared but these are not used or updated dynamically to inform the strategic assessment or tasking decisions; currently they are refreshed annually at headquarters. The introduction of additional

CDRP/police-funded analyst posts should help to make the profiles more relevant and timely. Consideration should be given to inclusion of local priorities and making the document available to the public.

- The requirement that LPT officers remain in post for at least two years is not widely known among these officers, and there is no evidence of active enforcement or consistent application of the policy.
- Recruitment vetting for CSOs is not consistent with the requirements for police officer vetting, as vetting takes place at a local level and does not encompass all checks made of potential officer recruits. Only those cases that are not considered to be clear-cut are referred to the security manager for decision.
- Limited availability of relevant equipment and training for officers is having a negative impact on tackling speeding vehicles, even where this has been identified as a PACT priority.
- The positions of LPT officers who are away from their posts for extended periods – for example, when seconded to major incident investigations, or on long-term sick or maternity leave – are not backfilled, and in such circumstances the supervision of CSOs is passed to a neighbouring officer. The impact of such long-term absences on local policing objectives should be monitored.

## Developing Practice

**INSPECTION AREA:** Neighbourhood (local) Policing

**TITLE:** Local policing training

**PROBLEM:**

To ensure that both new and existing staff working within local policing are:

- fully conversant with the requirements of local policing;
- provided with a clear structure and framework for the future;
- aware that being a local policing officer has much greater responsibilities and obligations than being a beat manager;
- able to adapt to the wider requirements of the community and the changing emphasis of service delivery in the public sector; and
- conversant with the changing needs of the organisation as workforce modernisation takes effect.

**SOLUTION:**

A two-week bespoke training schedule was devised to provide staff with sufficient training and support to undertake their role effectively, which has been recognised as critical to the successful implementation of local policing. Customised training has been delivered at three levels – local police officers, CSOs and local sergeants and inspectors – and future training events are being planned. Officers achieved a transferable qualification in team leadership from the Chartered Institute of Management to reflect their supervisory responsibilities towards CSOs, were trained in the principles of A1 assessment, and were examined in the purpose and requirements of the role. The CSO course is part of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme and those CSOs who subsequently become police officers can have their successful completion of this course recognised as accredited prior learning. Additionally, the force and the Government Office for the West Midlands have funded joint training events for local policing staff and partners. Training continues to be delivered down to divisional level, and the force fosters general awareness and familiarisation for all staff to promote the integration of local policing in the different functions of the organisation, in order to improve the delivery of local policing to the community at large.

**OUTCOME(S):**

The training undertaken and planned has had the following benefits:

- greater clarity and understanding among local policing staff of the importance of their role to WMC and the community;
- investment in transferable skills for local policing officers and CSOs;
- improved delivery of local policing to the community, owing to staff having a better understanding of their role and what the community requires of them;
- clear understanding by local policing staff of the greater demands of local policing compared with those of the previous beat manager structure; and
- honest developmental feedback about what has worked well and what needs improving within the local policing structure.

**FORCE CONTACT:** Inspector Mark Smith (HQ local policing support team) – 01905 331985 / Jo Nurse (local policing programme team) – 01905 338819

## Performance Management

GRADE	EXCELLENT
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
6	29	8	0

### National contextual factors

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

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

### Contextual factors

The DCC is the ACPO lead for performance. The performance team is headed by a superintendent and its role is to monitor performance against identified targets and manage emerging performance issues. The team supports and runs the force performance group, divisional quarterly reviews and departmental reviews. An audit team conducts audits and inspections, including crime recording, custody, stop/search and National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) compliance audits, while also facilitating external audit and inspection. WMC was graded Excellent in 2006 and again in 2007; nonetheless, opportunities to continuously improve and develop should be pursued to retain this level of performance.

### Strengths

- Effective performance management and a commitment to performance improvement are embedded in the force. Monthly force performance group meetings are chaired by the DCC and attended by all chief officers, divisional and departmental heads and key post-holders. They are held in community venues throughout the county and police authority members and invited observers are usually present. The standing agenda includes performance against the control strategy, including level two issues,

followed by a spotlight on a division, department or issue, when the relevant management team will attend the meeting. The spotlight themes have been published a year in advance to reflect the development of the Association for Payment Clearing Services, but remain flexible so that the DCC can change the focus to address emerging issues. The style of the meetings is challenging but supportive, with exception reporting where commanders and their teams account for their performance. An action database is populated, with each action attributed to an individual following the meeting, which is then monitored relentlessly.

- Performance is monitored against three dimensions: (a) against targets as applicable; (b) against most similar forces and most similar CDRPs; and (c) continuous improvement. According to force standards, achievement of one represents the bronze standard, two the silver standard and three the gold standard.
- Following performance group meetings all chief officers 'starburst' and spend the remainder of the day with staff in the host division or department. This provides an opportunity to examine performance in greater detail and to demonstrate visible leadership. In addition, ACPO-led quarterly performance reviews are conducted on divisions and in departments half-yearly, while divisions and departments run performance meetings monthly. Chief officers hold strategy groups for their portfolios to task and monitor recommendations from audit and inspection.
- In February 2007 the spotlight at force performance board was on PVP. Detailed management information across all strands of PVP was presented, including staffing levels, workloads, data quality, abstractions, the management of risk, registered sex offender (RSO) visit compliance, performance and welfare. This raised awareness of key issues and vulnerabilities and generated significant activity at force and divisional level to tackle problems. This meeting was a significant turning point in the change process, and management teams now understand better the importance of this area. A quarterly review process is built into the performance group structure and performance improvement was scrutinised again in July 2007.
- There is proactive engagement with the police authority, which has restructured its approach following the publication of *Police Performance Management – Practical Guidance for Police Authorities*. The ten hallmarks outlined in the document have been adopted in the performance monitoring panel work programme. An external inspection of corporate governance was commissioned. This identified two 'excellent' and four 'good' gradings.
- Good practice and success are recognised at each performance group, with certificates awarded to those members of the 'spotlight division' or department who have made a significant contribution to improving performance. In addition, there are regular award ceremonies at divisional, departmental and force level, and specific awards supported by the police authority. Honoraria, accelerated increments and certificates of attendance are also awarded.
- WMC ensures that local and national priorities are fully considered in the planning process, and comparative data is widely used to benchmark, share and identify good practice. Trends and performance are reported on, but the focus is clearly upon policing plan priorities, which focus on the four key areas of tackling crime, promoting community safety, improving satisfaction and confidence and protecting the public. To achieve this, WMC is adopting four tracks of policing: local policing, policing in partnership, responsive policing and intelligence-led policing. Over half of the key performance indicators relate directly to public confidence and satisfaction. Staff are familiar with the vision and strategy.

- Partners and the community, including the independent advisory group and key individual networks, were consulted to develop the policing plan priorities. Consultative processes are well established but are to be further developed during 2007/08.
- Clear linkages exist between the force and divisional or departmental control strategies and personal performance, through the setting of SMART personal development objectives. WMC is accredited as an Investors in People organisation.
- Planning and NIM processes are fully integrated.
- The 4000+ programme board, chaired by the director of strategy and organisation, oversees progress and implementation of all force projects and compliance with NCEP doctrines. This process is both robust and effective, and drives improvements throughout WMC while preventing duplication and communicating progress. The police authority has senior representation on the board, reflecting its strategic importance.
- An innovative geographical information system-based analytical tool has been introduced. This enables analysis to be conducted on information and intelligence from various databases. It allows officers to identify interrelationships between data, and is increasingly being used at both a strategic and an operational level.
- Surveys are conducted using British Crime Survey methodology, to provide information that is more detailed and timely than that available nationally.
- The bespoke Speaks Quality programme – designed to embed changes in behaviour, attitude and language in order to improve customer service – has been delivered to all call management centre (CMC), front desk and public service desk staff. A significant financial investment was made in this programme, with 36 trained coaches able to provide staff with mentoring and guidance and reinforce learning.
- A 'Lessons Learned Group, comprising the heads of training, professional standards and personnel and the force solicitor, promotes continuous improvement and organisational learning. This group identifies a need for policy revision or additional training following complaints, disciplinary cases and tribunals. In addition, the police authority has established a complaints and surveys working group to consider specific issues and monitor improvements made.
- The training department uses activity-based costing (ABC) to map performance demands against resources. Arrangements are in hand to migrate to the new ABC national arrangements when these are implemented in 2008/9.
- WMC has agreed collaboration arrangements with forces in and beyond those in the West Midlands ACPO region on various level 2 activities.
- Performance data – including iQuanta – is compared with data for forces in the most similar force group. The aim is both to compare BCUs within WMC and to selectively examine what other forces are doing. The force also looks to examine performance issues in other countries, and has recently developed information sharing with police forces in Poland.

## Work in progress

- There are shared local criminal justice board and CDRP targets and performance meetings. Work is under way to develop common language and performance regimes with partners; a business plan has been prepared to employ a second performance analyst to support this joint initiative.
- Work is under way to standardise and automate performance information for divisional performance meetings.
- Shift patterns for operational officers are being reviewed to eliminate those bottlenecks at peak times which are having a detrimental impact on performance.
- Chief officers have commissioned work to develop a generic approach to abstractions, as a number of key roles are currently ring fenced. Opportunities to utilise shared skills and minimise risk are being explored.
- An inspection template is currently under development; this will focus on areas of vulnerability, through trends or emerging issues and enhanced analysis. This will allow the performance department to adopt a proactive and risk-based approach to audit and inspection, deploying the limited resources to where they are most needed. It will also promote the early identification of issues and the ability to prevent poor practices from becoming entrenched.
- Centrally managed audit and inspection processes for local policing and PVP activities are under development.

### **Areas for improvement**

- WMC has been accredited as an Investors in People organisation. However, the current PDR process is bureaucratic and time-consuming, and not substantially linked to selection or promotion processes. The ongoing promotion review should seek to address the links and clarify how PDR information is used in selection and promotion.
- All PDR objectives are required to be SMART and supportive of the local and force control strategies, but the generic nature of some mandatory objectives has resulted in a lack of universal support for the process. The completion of PDR meetings and regular reviews varies across the force, with some staff describing it as a 'once a year process'.
- As indicated above, the PDR process has some deficiencies; an answer may lie in a more selective, rather than an all-embracing, approach to PDRs.

## Developing Practice

**INSPECTION AREA:** Performance management

**TITLE:** Force inspection template

**PROBLEM:**

The performance department compared the structure and function of internal inspection arrangements in ten other forces. The findings demonstrated that WMC employs fewer staff, on lower grades, than the majority of the sampled forces and that inspection work undertaken by WMC is limited in comparison. Issues to address include the following.

- WMC needs to develop a more risk-based approach to inspection/audit and improve identification of vulnerabilities across the force.
- Divisions have developed local inspection/audit templates but these cannot provide consistency in the criteria inspected, the standards to which they are inspected, and interpretation of standards.
- Issues cannot be easily viewed or compared corporately.
- WMC needs to improve corporate insight into problems and weaknesses prior to external audit or inspection.
- Addressing the audit requirements of management of police information (MoPI) requires a more structured approach.

**SOLUTION:**

With no resources available to recruit new staff, the proposed solution is for WMC to:

- manage itself by monitoring skills, methods and resources and identifying shortfalls through front-line supervisors undertaking quality assurance checks;
- create a second check and safeguard, through objective evaluation against standards, using divisional and central audit;
- uncover areas of vulnerability by making judgements based on observation, measurement and testing by force thematic inspections; and
- promote the corporate application of standards and the use of a corporate memory.

This is being addressed by the introduction of the force inspection template (FIT), which is essentially a database administered centrally that holds all external and internal quality assurance audits and inspections to which WMC is subject.

The FIT is loaded with templates, which will be made available to departments and divisions so that they can undertake quality assurance checks against fully scoped standard criteria. They can also use the templates to undertake audits prior to any force or external audit. The templates and responses from all divisions and departments will be monitored centrally to identify areas for improvement and areas of effective practice.

The FIT will support other force performance processes, such as the balanced performance framework, which stores departmental goals and initiatives, and the actions database, which tracks actions and progress from performance meetings and supports force plans in a variety of ways. This will ensure a focus upon priorities and outcomes and provide an overview of force issues. It will also link to a number of other plans, such as the HR plan and the efficiency plan.

It is a complementary system that will enhance the current performance structure and support the Four Key Principles, the Four Tracks of Policing and the Four Better

Outcomes, all of which underpin the ethos and actions that drive WMC.

The FIT will be comprehensive and dynamic, continually updated by current work that supports continuous improvement. This aims to ensure that innovation and creativity are captured and shared.

**OUTCOME(S):**

The FIT will enable the centre to view corporate information and identify areas of vulnerability through trends or emerging issues and enhanced analysis. This will allow the performance department to adopt a proactive, risk-based approach to audit and inspection, deploying limited resources to where they are most needed. It will also promote the early identification of problems and help to prevent poor practices becoming entrenched.

Common minimum standards will be developed and quality assurance made more consistent across the force. Supervisors can take responsibility for their business areas with better information and standards to guide them as to acceptable levels of performance. Effective practice will be identified and 'what works' will be shared for the benefit of the force.

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## Protecting Vulnerable People – Overview

### National contextual factors

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

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

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

### Contextual factors overview

The force has a single ACPO lead, ACC (specialist operations (SO)), who holds the portfolio for PVP, supported by a detective superintendent, a detective chief inspector and strategic leads for each area. Members of the police authority have also been allocated to this vitally important area, and sit on the project steering group. The profile of this area of policing has risen significantly since the 2006 baseline assessment, and the priority to improve in this area is evident.

### Strengths

- WMC has embarked upon a significant change process to improve the provision of each element of PVP. A thorough review has been undertaken and a comprehensive action plan produced to address the identified risks. PVP is a priority in the local policing plan for 2007/08 and protecting the public is one of the identified Four Better Outcomes. This is supported by published intentions, goals and initiatives. Significant drive, enthusiasm and commitment at strategic and tactical level have driven through improvements in short timescales. Additional resources have been provided to public protection units (PPUs) at headquarters and on divisions to implement change.
- Strategic responsibility for all strands of PVP has been rationalised and now sits

under the ACC (SO), supported by a dedicated team at headquarters led by a detective superintendent. Personal briefings have been delivered to all divisional commanders, detective chief inspectors (DCIs) and PPU staff based on divisions on PVP issues, to keep staff informed of the review and secure buy-in to the process. A force-level public protection awareness day has been held with internal and external speakers, together with a number of multi-agency focused training events, attended by members of WMC and other forces.

- In February 2007 the force performance group spotlight was on PVP. Detailed management information across all strands of PVP was presented, including staffing levels, workloads, data quality, abstractions, the management of risk, RSO visiting compliance, performance and welfare. This raised awareness of key issues and vulnerabilities and generated significant activity at force and divisional level to address problems. This meeting was a significant turning point in the change process, and management teams now understand better the importance of this area. A quarterly review process is built into the performance group structure and performance improvement was scrutinised again in July 2007.
- The police authority acts as a 'critical friend' to the PVP review and two police authority members sit on the project board. A series of presentations have been given to the police authority, whose members show a proactive interest in developments (some members attended the ACPO national child abuse investigation conference). Developments in PVP were featured in the April 2007 police authority newsletter.
- Each divisional PPU is required to have a dedicated detective inspector post, supported by specialist officers in the headquarters PPU. The introduction of this post – covering DV, child abuse investigation (CAI) and public protection – has had a positive impact on WMC's ability to provide an effective service in these areas.
- Key performance indicators for 2007/08 focus predominantly on promoting community safety and improving satisfaction and confidence.
- Reviews are conducted on a multi-agency basis to inform policy and procedure developments. The contribution and actions of each agency to a particular case study are discussed during such reviews and areas for improvement are identified, thus promoting continuous improvement.
- Specialist roles within PPUs are co-located on all divisions, which has improved communication and linkages between the different elements of the unit.
- Training has been provided in the application of Risk Matrix 2000 to all relevant PPU staff.
- A meeting structure has been implemented across all PVP disciplines to bring together HQ and BCU specialists and identify best practice. Terms of reference have been published and meetings include specialists from across the force and the HQ strategic PPU.
- An abstraction policy determines the circumstances in which officers and staff in the PPU can undertake other duties. Any such abstraction requires careful consideration, including prior consultation and approval from an ACC. The policy refers to the relevant sections from the Laming review.
- Significant research has been undertaken to develop robust welfare arrangements

for all PPU staff, which included visits to other forces, review and internal consultation. Four group therapy sessions per annum, provided by an external stress management company, are mandatory for all PPU staff, and additional one-to-one counselling is available. This regime is supported by the occupational health (OH) department and divisionally based OH staff.

## Work in progress

- Activity analysis has been conducted for all DV officers, child abuse investigators and public protection officers. Results of this work inform the force's future strategic direction and working practices – for example, by increasing the average time spent out of the station by officers across the force to match the levels of the best performing BCUs.
- An audit and inspection regime for divisional PPUs is currently being finalised for introduction in the summer of 2007.
- A monthly 'MOT' has been developed to provide consistency of supervision across WMC; this will require supervisors to conduct monthly one-to-one sessions with all staff, to review workload and caseload, PDR, welfare, etc. It is action plan based, with written records of each meeting retained, and intended to provide intrusive yet supportive supervision.
- All policies and procedures have been reviewed against NCPE standards, legislation and best practice with a target completion date of June 2007.
- Divisions hold internal promotion boards to the rank of sergeant, but HQ CID is not currently permitted to do so. On promotion, officers are expected to return to general duties. The promotion arrangements are currently under review and it is expected that the importance of retaining experience in specialist departments through career pathways – in, for example, the field of public protection – will be addressed.
- All job descriptions for members of the PPU have been reviewed and updated, and await ratification and revision as necessary by HR.
- All staff working in the PVP area are currently being vetted, including full Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and Police National Computer (PNC) and Crime Recording Information Management Enquiry System (CRIMES) searching.
- The responsibility for dealing with mental health issues and vulnerable adult referrals is inconsistent across divisions. One division is trialling the introduction of a specialist officer in this area, and a post profile has been developed for the role, while others have a nominated central point of contact.

## Areas for improvement

- The force is currently addressing the findings of a skills audit that found that divisionally based PPU staff and officers had not been trained to a consistent standard. While it is recognised that the training panel process identifies training need, the current system relies on individual applications through the PDR process, the provision of which is dependent on the support of the divisional or departmental management team.

- The introduction of dedicated detective inspectors (DIs) has added resilience to PPUs and is a significant investment; however, training needs analysis has not been completed for this post and consequently the knowledge and awareness of specialist PVP issues is inconsistent.

## Developing Practice

**INSPECTION AREA:** Protecting vulnerable people

**TITLE:** Managing risk within communities through local policing teams (the jigsaw effect)

**PROBLEM:**

The force needed to integrate PVP issues fully into LPTs. In simple terms, this meant informing LPTs where risk existed in the form of domestic violence victims and perpetrators; the identity, location and conditions of registered sex and other dangerous offenders and details of priority, prolific and persistent young offenders living within each the local policing area. These details needed to be provided in an easily accessible format which also addressed the sensitivity of such information.

**SOLUTION:**

The force intranet system encompasses all of the force's IT systems and is accessible by all staff from every desktop computer within the force. The intranet has a dedicated local policing site. A small project team – involving representatives from the HQ strategic PPU, LPT and practitioners – was put together to scope the barriers and work together to identify the information needed by LPTs on violent and sexual offenders resident within their district. This is available through the local policing page on the force intranet. Recognising the sensitivity of this information, which is sourced from warning markers on the local intelligence system, access controls have been put in place to restrict access so that only the relevant LPT can see it. Audit and tracking of access, in conjunction with a robust policy around access only for policing purposes, ensures that the information is appropriately used and protected. This innovative solution has enabled vital intelligence to be readily available to the LPTs and allowed them to contribute significantly towards identifying and managing risk.

The source information encompasses all intelligence and photographs of the offenders and, through hyperlinks, joins up all of the force's information and intelligence databases.

**OUTCOME(S):**

This provides an innovative solution that is easy to navigate and has clear instructions to direct staff on where they need to go. LPT members are able to view ViSOR nominals for the ward and district on which they work.

**FORCE CONTACT:** Detective Superintendent Martin Lakeman – 01905 747062

## Protecting Vulnerable People – Child Abuse

GRADE	GOOD
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
3	17	21	2

### National contextual factors

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

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

### Contextual factors

Within West Mercia each of the five divisions has an established PPU, accountable to and owned by the respective divisional commander. Each is line managed by a dedicated detective inspector with overarching responsibility for public protection. Each division also has dedicated detective sergeants managing day-to-day activity; two of the divisions have two sergeants in this specialist field. Each PPU has administrative support and comprises accredited detectives. This local structure is overseen and supported by the strategic force PPU, headed by a detective superintendent and team, with a force lead for child protection.

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

### Strengths

- WMC has embarked upon a significant change process to improve the provision of each element of PVP. A thorough review has been undertaken and a comprehensive action plan produced to address the identified risks. PVP is a priority in the local policing plan for 2007/08 and protecting the public is one of the identified Four Better

Outcomes. This is supported by published intentions, goals and initiatives. Significant drive, enthusiasm and commitment at strategic and tactical level has driven through improvements in short timescales. Additional resources have been provided to PPUs at headquarters and on divisions to implement change.

- Strategic responsibility for all strands of PVP has been rationalised and now sits under the ACC (SO), supported by a dedicated team at HQ led by a detective superintendent. Personal briefings have been delivered to all divisional commanders, DCIs and PPU staff based on divisions on PVP issues, to keep staff informed of the review and secure buy-in to the process. A force-level public protection awareness day has been held with internal and external speakers, together with a number of multi-agency focused training events, attended by members of WMC and other forces.
- Each divisional PPU is required to have a dedicated detective inspector post, supported by specialist officers in the headquarters PPU. The introduction of this post – covering DV, CAI and public protection – has had a positive impact on WMC's ability to provide an effective service in these areas.
- Significant research has been undertaken to develop robust welfare arrangements for all PPU staff. This research included visits to other forces, review and internal consultation. Four group therapy sessions per annum, provided by an external stress management company, are mandatory for all PPU staff, and additional one-to-one counselling is available. This regime is supported by the OH department and divisionally based OH staff.
- Effective working arrangements are in place with other agencies, and partners have been consulted to elicit feedback that will help improve police practices. For example, multi-agency audits are used to identify cases in which agencies bring their files to the table and actions are reviewed to identify gaps and potential risks to future service delivery.
- Force procedures ensure that all cases of DV where a child has sustained an injury, or threat of injury, are brought to the attention of the child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) sergeant. Safeguards are in place to ensure that a referral is made, including reference on the DV report form, a requirement for the domestic violence unit to inform the CAIU, and flagging of incidents, which are then automatically brought to the attention of the CAIU.
- Force policy and procedures are consistent with the ACPO *Guidance on Investigating Child Abuse and Safeguarding Children*. The Safeguarding Children agenda is included in the annual policing plan.
- All child abuse investigators are required to be accredited or trainee detectives, recognising the need for competent investigators in this area. Trainees are provided with an experienced mentor and are supported through the trainee investigator scheme. All detective sergeants are trained as A1 qualified assessors.
- Research conducted into staffing levels in high performing forces in respect of PVP resulted in an increase in the force's staffing levels. Seven dedicated detective sergeants supervise 38.8 full time equivalent child abuse investigators, with an average of 5.5 officers to each sergeant.
- Supervision arrangements for child abuse investigations are robust, with monitoring of workload, proactive supervision of investigations by detective sergeants, and all

cases are reviewed by a detective inspector prior to closure.

- Dedicated detective sergeants on each division undertake all strategy discussions with social services.
- Resources were allocated to ensure that all child abuse paper records have been fully back-record converted onto the CRIMES system, making records searchable and accessible.
- Arrangements are in place with local schools for children to be interviewed during Achieving Best Evidence training, to add realism in a safe learning environment.
- The four local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) have signed up to a single set of guidance, which was written by an independent company. WMC is represented at meetings by the PPU headquarters detective superintendent and senior divisional representative.
- All finalised investigations are subject to a written report and supervisory review prior to closure.
- Investigations into missing children are subject to a strategy discussion, conducted between agencies after a seven-day duration, which are attended by the divisional crime manager and child abuse detective inspector.
- A strategic assessment for child abuse investigation has been completed. This includes analysis of crime data for child victims.

### **Work in progress**

- An audit and inspection regime for divisional PPUs is currently being finalised for introduction in the summer of 2007.
- A detailed caseload analysis has been undertaken for CAI. Its results will determine whether the capacity and capability of the units is wholly appropriate.
- A child death review group has been established and work is in progress to ensure a timely response, compliant with Working Together, by all necessary agencies.
- Child death investigations have historically been investigated by divisional CID officers. However, the need for specialist CAI knowledge in such investigations has been recognised and divisional PPU DIs and CAI staff will, in future, be responsible for the investigation of all child death and sudden unexplained death in infancy, subject to the completion of requisite training – for example, senior investigating officer (SIO) training for DIs.
- An e-learning package has been provided for all CAIU officers and new recruits to undertake 30 hours of accredited learning. Centrex specialist child abuse investigator development programme courses will be available in force from July 2007 for specialist officers, who also have access to LSCB multi-agency courses delivered locally.
- A suite of performance indicators related to child abuse work/PVP is currently being prepared by the HQ PPU.

- The use of IMPACT nominal index (INI) checks is inconsistent across the PPU's. While CAIU staff are aware of the benefits of INI, checks are not undertaken routinely in all child abuse investigations or in preparation for case conferences. An amendment has been made to the new CAI investigation booklet, requiring confirmation that INI checks have been completed and recorded in the booklet. This amendment is having a positive impact on performance. Additional training has been provided to increase access to INI in PPU's, and usage of the system is being monitored.
- A comprehensive review and audit template is completed on a quarterly basis by each CAIU. The template has been finalised at headquarters but has not yet been rolled out for completion on divisions.
- A review of attendance confirms good attendance (between 85% and 95%) at initial case conferences on all five divisions, although this high level of attendance is not replicated for review conferences. Data is being gathered to provide accurate information, which will feature as a standalone item in force performance group in October 2007.

### **Areas for improvement**

- While the headquarters detective superintendent sits on the LSCBs, providing strategic representation at a force level, senior officer attendance from divisional management teams varies from the superintendent in one division to detective inspector or no attendance from other areas. Local involvement at senior management team level at the LSCB and other multi-agency forums should be reviewed, and force expectations on attendance clarified.
- The force has completed a review of case conference attendance for Worcestershire, and has established that 95% of initial conferences and 82% of review conferences are attended. Data for conference attendance in other areas is not currently available, although mechanisms have been put in place to record this data and analyse levels of conference attendance.
- The approach taken by each CAIU to internet paedophilia and online abuse varies. WMC should consider the need for clearly documented corporate terms of reference for all CAIs to include such investigations
- Officers have limited administrative support, which can detract from their core investigative role.
- CAI staffing levels vary between divisions and the rationale for staffing levels is unclear. The actual number of operational staff in a number of divisions is significantly below the prescribed establishment, owing to absences, long-term vacancies and the impact of part-time working.
- Long-serving DCs have not had any training or updating in Achieving Best Evidence and rely on historic training based on the Memorandum of Good Practice. New staff appointed to CAI roles do not all have the necessary joint investigation training prior to, or soon after, joining the unit, and as a result are unable to conduct video interviews with children.

- Child abuse investigation is not consistently included in tasking and co-ordinating processes on divisions, nor does it feature specifically in the force control strategy.

## Protecting Vulnerable People – Domestic Violence

GRADE	GOOD
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	13	27	2

### National contextual factors

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

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

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

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

### Contextual factors

Within West Mercia each of the five divisions has an established PPU, accountable to and owned by the divisional commander. Each is line managed by a dedicated detective inspector with overarching responsibility for public protection work, with a dedicated detective sergeant managing day-to-day activity. Each unit has administrative support and all police officers are accredited detectives. This local structure is overseen and supported by the strategic force PPU, headed by a detective superintendent and team, with a force lead for DV.

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

## Strengths

- A detective sergeant co-ordinates the corporate approach to tackling DV from headquarters. Each divisional PPU has a dedicated detective sergeant, specialist detective officers who investigate allegations or reports of DV, and administrative support. Staffing in DV units has increased since the public protection review conducted in 2006. Dedicated divisional staff consist of five DSs, 15.5 DCs (full-time equivalent) and 3.5 (full-time equivalent) administrative staff.
- A comprehensive booklet has been prepared for completion by first attending officers. The booklet provides advice on initial action, the special cases risk assessment tool, risk identification questionnaires for child abuse and vulnerable adults, an injury identifier, a pro forma statement for the release of medical records, and information to be left with the victim. Booklets are also completed for cases of harassment, and guidance is included. Completed booklets are checked and signed by a supervisor prior to conclusion of duty, then passed to the specialist DV officers for risk assessment.
- Comprehensive care plans are prepared for victims identified as high risk or who are repeat victims; these are accessible to all officers but can only be updated by specialist staff. Where a care plan is in place there is a requirement for the victim to be visited at specified intervals and updates recorded. Packages are provided to the LPT sergeant, who arranges for visits to be conducted by members of the LPT. The frequency of such visits is determined by the specialist DV officer. Both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are informed of the requirement to visit.
- The intranet provides briefing information for LPTs, including details of DV cases, to ensure that officers are aware of incidents in their areas. Local officers and CSOs conduct care plan visits and are expected to submit intelligence reports on DV incidents and offenders.
- Domestic violence training has been provided to CMC staff and call takers, who have also been issued with guidance on their role, information to be obtained and resource deployment. CMC staff have electronic access to care plans and routinely access them while officers are en route to reported incidents.
- Details of the national domestic violence campaign, Home Truths, feature predominantly on the home page of the WMC internet site and include the definition of DV, what to expect from the police and contact details of other agencies. The campaign features on many posters and leaflets for use internally and externally, and is widely known.
- Target-hardening initiatives have been funded by partners to provide increased physical security at the homes of DV victims, including a secure room and an emergency pack of toiletries and basic personal items of clothing for victims forced to leave home at short notice.
- An HMIC audit was conducted in January 2007 into the data accuracy of SPI 8 data (the percentage of DV incidents where an arrest was made). The data was 100% accurate and data compliance management arrangements were graded as

Excellent. WMC generates a completely accurate DV return thanks to the effective implementation of a cross-platform IT solution, Oracle Discoverer, coupled with clear categorisation and recording of the roles of parties involved in particular incidents. This categorisation allows for the automated filtering of all DV incidents to identify only those involving parties aged over 18, which forms part of the required Home Office DV return. It removes cases of persons under 18 years who have been in an intimate relationship, as captured by the force DV policy.

- All DV incidents are recorded on the force CRIMES system, which is accessible by all staff through the force intranet. An automatically generated exception report is prepared for incidents that have been closed but where there is no corresponding CRIMES reference. Close supervision and audit ensure that data is accurate.
- High risk and very high risk cases are flagged on command and control. The force has introduced a coding system, which assists in the provision of management information, for example by monitoring key performance indicators.
- Initial risk assessment is completed by the first responding officer. A full risk assessment, using the Special Cases tool, is subsequently conducted by the DV specialist, based on the initial risk indicators and any additional information available. Although any officer can raise the risk grading, only an inspector or above can lower the risk.
- DV procedures have clear links to the other strands of PVP and vulnerable adult abuse, forced marriage, sexual offences and prostitution.
- A one-day programme of DV training is currently being provided to all officers and public contact staff, and is also available to Crown Prosecution Service lawyers. Centrex DV courses are being run in 2007 for specialist officers: the first has been completed and the second is due in October 2007. Additional training is given to supervisors. This is further supplemented by a number of seminars focused on DV and open to all members of the force.
- DV performance is subject to scrutiny through internal performance management processes as well as performance measures adopted by the local area agreements and by the LCJB. DV is a standing item on divisional tasking and co-ordinating meetings. Clear prevention, enforcement and intelligence priorities are apparent.
- DV is a specific force priority, with targets set to reduce the occurrence of repeat victims by 10%; to increase the calls to the Women's Aid helpline by 10%; to increase DV reports to the police by 10%; to increase arrests for DV by 10%; and increase sanction detections for DV by 5%.
- The probation service has provided help and advice on the use of risk assessment models in DV cases.
- A 'domestic violence car' has been introduced in Telford, tasked to specific geographical locations that are based on analysis of DV reports. The object is to provide specialist early intervention and evidence gathering. LPT officers are also deployed in response to identified trends, to provide increased reassurance and deterrence.
- There are joint arrangements for all DV incidents involving children to be notified to social services by the officer attending the incident. Where there is significant

concern, officers also notify the CAIU, either by tagging the command and control log or by completing a referral form.

- The use of risk markers in DV crimes has increased significantly. By July 2007 over 70% of such crimes had a risk marker, compared with less than 30% in April 2007. The markers attached with the greatest frequency are separation or child contact dispute, 'afraid of suspect' and controlling behaviour, jealousy and stalking.

### **Work in progress**

- Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) have been introduced in Shropshire and work is in progress to replicate these arrangements throughout the force area. A joint agreement between a large number of statutory and voluntary agencies supports the MARAC arrangements. Specialist DV courts have been established in Worcestershire and consideration is being given by criminal justice partners to their establishment across the force area.
- An extraordinary meeting – chaired by the lead detective superintendent – has been held to review the recording, auditing, allocation and investigation of DV. The prompt has been the increasing volume of work, in particular the significant demands of the risk assessment and care plan processes on specialist staff. As a result, one division piloted the use of retired police officers with specific skills to undertake many of the administrative processes, and this has since been adopted by a second division. An evaluation will take place and the approach, if successful, will be rolled out across the force.
- The requirement to use the expertise of specialist staff in homicide investigations has been raised at the force SIO meeting, and is to be documented in the revised serious and major crime policy, scheduled for October 2007.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Variation in working practices is evident across divisions. For instance, different approaches are taken to the completion of DV booklets: some are completed comprehensively, while others contain minimal detail but point to where the information can be found – for example, in the operational information system (OIS) log or crime report. This information is not entered into any electronic system, nor is intelligence extracted. The level of detail in review processes and in risk assessment conducted by the DV specialists is inconsistent.
- The review of recording, auditing, allocation and investigation of DV should include the documentation required to be completed by operational front line staff. Whilst the DV booklets are comprehensive they are also time consuming to complete.
- No policy is in place to ensure consistent arrangements for the storage and retention of DV booklets, and divisions vary significantly in this respect.
- The decision to limit the completion of booklets to cases where there is a recorded crime is not followed on all divisions: some still encourage officers to complete the booklet for all crime-related incidents. DV officers cited a number of cases where such information in booklets has enabled measures to be put in place to minimise

the risk to victims. Consideration should be given to reviewing and clarifying the circumstances in which booklets should be completed, to ensure consistency with the agreed procedure.

- The policy that DV booklets are no longer required to be completed in cases of emotional abuse is not consistently understood or followed on all divisions.
- In some divisions officers have limited capacity to investigate offences because they have to spend a significant amount of time on administrative functions and risk assessment. The provision and role of administrative support to DV officers should be reviewed.
- Domestic violence gazetteer warning flags are placed on the OIS system against the address of any person who is the subject of a care plan. However, the history of previous incidents and the existence of care plans are not identified when the incident takes place in a public place or at a different address.

## Protecting Vulnerable People – Public Protection

GRADE	FAIR
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2	16	23	2

### National contextual factors

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

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

Category 1 – Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs)

Category 2 – violent and other sex offenders

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Contextual factors**

Each of West Mercia's five divisions has an established PPU, accountable to and owned by the divisional commander. Each is line managed by a dedicated detective inspector with overarching responsibility for public protection. Each division is putting into place dedicated supervision arrangements to manage day-to-day activity. Each unit has administrative support and is made up of a mix of accredited detectives and experienced police staff performing the offender management role.

This local structure is overseen and supported by the strategic force PPU, headed by a detective superintendent and team, with a force lead for offender management and a ViSOR administrator.

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

### **Strengths**

- The ACC (SO) chairs the strategic management board and completed a distance learning package in public protection to equip him for this role.
- All ViSOR records were audited to provide detailed information for the special performance group meeting in February 2007. The information provided was comprehensive and raised awareness among senior managers of the risks and management requirements of RSOs and potentially dangerous persons. Further audits have highlighted compliance in respect of each offender manager; the results have been used to improve individual and organisational performance.
- Monthly management information on capacity and capability is provided by headquarters PPU to chief officers and divisional commanders. The information is risk assessed against local and national guidance.
- The HQ-based multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) co-ordinator acts as a gatekeeper for all offenders referred to MAPPA level 3 to ensure consistency of practice. The MAPPA co-ordinator provides a very strong lead for MAPPA meetings, ensuring that agencies with a duty to co-operate attend as required, the risk posed by the offender is assessed and the appropriate management level is determined. Specific actions and risk management plans are documented and appropriately reviewed at subsequent meetings, and agencies are held to account for their respective contributions.
- DI is the minimum rank for attendance at MAPPA level 3 meetings; if the DI is unavailable, the DCI attends.

- The force has been proactive in managing potentially dangerous persons who fall outside MAPPA. This reduces the potential risk of harm to the public. The MAPPA guidance, however, does not provide for such persons to be managed in accordance with these arrangements, and consideration should be given to identifying an alternative framework, such as a MARAC.
- The inability of ViSOR to generate performance management information on the completion of home visits has been identified by the force and raised at a national level. As a result the appropriate amendment to the ViSOR system has been developed, and will be rolled out nationally in the summer of 2007.
- Authority from a DI is required to input details of individuals who are not RSOs onto ViSOR.
- Twenty-four hour access to the ViSOR system is available via the PNC bureau, and staff have been appropriately trained.
- All ViSOR nominals are the subject of cross-referenced intelligence records.
- A high priority is given to public protection issues at level 2 tasking and co-ordinating meetings, and specialist resources are allocated to reduce risk.
- WMC has a formal procedure for missing sex offenders who have breached their notification requirements. Such persons are reviewed centrally and consideration is given to publishing information on the force 'Most Wanted' website or through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre's 'Most Wanted' site. In two cases the force has consulted its independent advisory group prior to publication, for help in assessing the impact of such publication on the individuals, their families and friends, the community and the force.
- Custody sergeants and detention staff have received training to ensure they understand the implications of a ViSOR flag on the PNC.
- The force policy on managing sex offenders, violent offenders and other potentially dangerous persons is complete and is consistent with the draft ACPO *Guidance on Public Protection*.
- A link on the LPT intranet page provides access to information – including photographs, licence or SOPO conditions and intelligence entries – about RSOs living in each LPT area. This facilitates the identification of incidents involving RSOs and notification of these incidents to the PPU. Access is limited and proactive audits for integrity are to be introduced.

### **Work in progress**

- An independent review of risk assessments by probation staff was commissioned by the strategic management board to identify the reasons behind identified inconsistencies and promote greater accuracy in risk assessments. Lessons learnt and recommendations are currently being actioned.
- Cross-agency working will be further enhanced by the creation of a strategic multi-agency PPU at force headquarters, to be established in summer 2007 when

additional office space becomes available. This will co-locate resources and strengthen arrangements through the appointment of a MAPPA level 2 co-ordinator.

- The force has adopted an optimum guideline caseload of 50 cases per officer for all divisions. Although variations in caseload are apparent on an individual officer basis, all offender managers have a caseload compliant with policy. It has also adopted set timescales for the completion of home visits, dependent upon risk, and is monitoring compliance through close scrutiny at performance group meetings. Since performance information has been actively collected and discussed in this forum, compliance with the visiting policy has improved in all PPUs.
- Intelligence staff are being trained in the use of ViSOR.
- There is an expectation and belief among senior managers that local police officers and CSOs are all aware of the identities of RSOs living in their communities. Until the introduction of the intranet link in July 2007, LPT staff were not aware of, nor did they have access to, this information.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The current focus on the quantity/frequency of visits to RSOs may detract from the quality of the visits if it increases the proportion of these that are pre-arranged and/or made through telephone contact. Lone and pre-arranged visits are being undertaken by offender managers on a regular basis, although senior officers believe that these are only undertaken if there has been significant difficulty in contacting the offender.
- The majority of offender managers work office hours, which reduces the chances of finding RSOs at home and may devalue the quality of intelligence that is obtained from home visits. Over 30% of all visits on one division are negative visits – ie, the RSO is not on the premises.
- While the monitoring of workloads and the monthly health check are commended, the statistics do not take account of RSOs in custody. This impairs the validity of the data presented as a measure of capacity and capability.
- The current system of devolved level 2 MAPPA meetings creates a number of risks for the force. The practice of agencies other than the police, probation or prisons calling and chairing MAPPA level 2 meetings falls outside the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. While such agencies have a duty to co-operate, they are not responsible authorities under the Act. The practice may result in the police being unaware of offenders who are being managed at level 2 and are therefore not flagged on police systems as presenting a potential risk of harm to the public.
- A lack of consistency in the structure and timing of MAPPA meetings is evident between divisions. One division calls separate meetings for single offenders, while others arrange meetings at set intervals to consider a number of offenders. Some areas hold a monthly meeting, while others may hold four or five a week. In one area the frequency is determined on a case-by-case basis, with review dates determined at the meeting.
- There is a requirement for the agency raising an individual offender to a MAPPA level 2 meeting to chair and minute the meeting. As a result, some offender managers are reluctant to chair and arrange MAPPA level 2 meetings. This means that some RSOs are being managed on a single-agency basis, when a multi-agency

contribution would reduce the risk to the public. In other cases individuals are being unnecessarily escalated to level 3 creating undue pressure on resources.

- A considerable proportion of PPU officer time is taken up by administrative tasks associated with ViSOR. Although an administrative capacity exists in some PPUs, there is a lack of clarity about what administrative support they offer in relation to ViSOR. Consideration should be given to reviewing the administrator role and provision of administrative support to offender managers.
- Back-record conversion has not been completed for ViSOR records in respect of material in existence before ViSOR was implemented in 2005, and there is a lack of clarity about what information is important. For example, summaries of evidence for the index offence are held in the manual file and are not input into ViSOR as a matter of course.
- Offender managers are aware of the requirement to complete a risk management plan following visits to RSOs. However, dip sampling revealed that plans were being created but full details were not being completed consistently. Guidance on the practical use of plans is not covered in training, although the force intends to deliver bespoke training in the future.
- A robust policy details which persons should be entered on ViSOR, but this policy is not being applied consistently. The lack of administrative capacity is preventing the establishment of some nominal records.

## Protecting Vulnerable People – Missing Persons

GRADE	GOOD
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### National grade distribution

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	21	21	0

### National contextual factors

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

### Contextual factors

Each division within West Mercia deals with its own missing persons enquiries using the Community Policing and Case Tracking (COMPACT) database. Missing person enquiries are prioritised and overseen on a day-to-day basis by the duty inspector and reviewed in accordance with policy and procedure by a chief inspector. Missing persons are reviewed daily on each division through the daily tasking process. A nominated detective superintendent is the force lead and currently heads a force-wide project team, examining how the force deals with missing persons and in particular with children missing from care. The force has just established a missing persons working group to bring together key stakeholders and practitioners.

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

### Strengths

- There are clear links between the missing persons policy and procedures and those applying to critical incidents. Officers and CMC staff demonstrated sound understanding of these links, and investigations of missing persons clearly receive a high priority. A drop-down menu and aide-mémoire helps call-takers to obtain detailed information from the caller; this has been publicised by the NCPE as good practice.
- When officers are allocated a missing person enquiry they are normally removed from all other duties, including the response function, to ensure that the investigation is conducted thoroughly.

- Accountability for the investigation of missing persons is clear in both policy and practice. At the conclusion of each shift investigations are handed over at both sergeant and inspector ranks and the risk assessment is reviewed. This continues throughout the period that the person is missing. Reviews are conducted after 48 hours and by the HQ detective superintendent at monthly intervals.
- Missing persons are discussed at daily tasking and co-ordination meetings so that members of the senior management team are aware of, and can take a personal interest in, the progress of the investigation.
- The missing person policy and procedure is compliant with ACPO guidance. Even though additional training on implementation has not been provided, front-line staff are clear as to their role and responsibilities.
- All missing persons investigations are managed through COMPACT, which is updated by the central data unit. While COMPACT is not linked to OIS, the intranet does provide a link between the two systems and research in this manner is routinely undertaken.
- Return interviews are conducted for all missing persons and the COMPACT record is not finalised unless this has been completed. Officers were aware of the necessity for, and the purpose of, the interview.
- A dedicated missing person officer has been appointed on one division, working closely with care providers to minimise the impact of under-18-year-olds repeatedly reported to police as absent without authorisation or missing. Agreed protocols are in place and this work reinforces the responsibilities of care providers, clarifying the difference between a young person who is missing and one who is absent without authorisation. In the latter case, for example, the young person may be staying at a known location with a friend, or may have failed to return on time. The protocols have reduced the impact of repeat missing person reports. Similar negotiations with care providers are under way on other divisions. If successful, these could substantially reduce the demands made by reports of missing persons.

### **Areas for improvement**

- CMC and public service desk operatives use an 11-question guide to elicit detailed information from the individual who is reporting a person missing. Despite this detail, when incidents are passed to the duty sergeant who is responsible for the completion of the initial risk assessment, he or she makes personal contact with the caller before the enquiry is allocated. The need for double handling of information should be reviewed and standardised.
- The use of the guide for CMC and public service desk staff is not consistent across the force, and the relevance of some questions to all persons reported missing is unclear to some staff.
- The arrangements for review of missing persons are clear; however, detective officers are not routinely involved in protracted missing person enquiries, as 48-hour reviews are usually undertaken by uniformed chief inspectors on division. The reviews are good practice but the lack of early detective involvement is a potential weakness.

- A large number of nominal records have not been put onto COMPACT. Should these individuals become repeat missing persons, information would not be easily identified or retrieved.

## Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

### A

ABC	activity-based costing
ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers

### B

BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic

### C

CAI	child abuse investigation
CAIU	child abuse investigation unit
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CI	community intelligence
CMC	call management centre
COMPACT	Community Policing and Case Tracking
CRIMES	Crime Recording Information Management Enquiry System
CSO	police community support officer

### D

DCC	deputy chief constable
DCI	detective chief inspector
DV	domestic violence

### H

HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOLMES	Home Office Large Major Enquiry System

HR Human Resources

**K**

KIN key individual network

**L**

LPT local policing team

LCJB local criminal justice board

LSCB local safeguarding children board

**M**

MAPPA multi-agency public protection arrangements

MARAC multi-agency risk assessment conference

**N**

NCPE National Centre for Policing Excellence

NIM National Intelligence Model

**P**

PACT partners and communities together

PDR performance development review

PNC Police National Computer

PPU public protection unit

**R**

RSO registered sex offender

**S**

SARA scanning, analysis, response, assessment

SIO senior investigating officer

SOCA Serious and Organised Crime Agency

SPG strategic performance group

SPI statutory performance indicator

**V**

ViSOR Violent and Sex Offenders Register