

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary



HMIC Inspection Report

West Mercia Constabulary Major Crime

July 2008



West Mercia Constabulary – HMIC Inspection Report

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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 of both the Home Office and the police service. HMIC's principal statutory duties are set out in the Police Act 1996. For more information, please visit HMIC's website at <http://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 thus created a rich evidence base of strengths and weaknesses across the country. However, it is now necessary for HMIC to focus its inspection effort on those areas of policing that are not data-rich and where qualitative assessment is the only feasible way of judging both current performance and the prospects for improvement. This, together with the critical factor that HMIC should concentrate its scrutiny on high-risk areas of policing – in terms of risk both to the public and to the service's reputation – pointed inexorably to a focus on what are known collectively as 'protective services'. In addition, there is a need to apply professional judgement to some key aspects of leadership and governance, where some quantitative measures exist but a more rounded assessment is appropriate.

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

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

HMIC Business Plan for 2008/09

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

- protective services – including the management of public order, civil contingencies and critical incidents phase 3 of the programme in autumn 2008/spring 2009;
- counter-terrorism – including all elements of the national CONTEST strategy;
- strategic services – such as information management and professional standards; and
- the embedding of neighbourhood policing.

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In addition, we are currently developing a scrutiny of strategic resource leverage, and are liaising with the Audit Commission on a methodology for the anticipated inspection of police authorities.

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

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

Programmed Frameworks

During phase 2 of HMIC's inspection programme, we examined force responses to major crime, serious and organised crime and neighbourhood policing in each of the 44 forces of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

While this document includes the full graded report for the major crime inspection, the inspection relating to serious and organised crime is detailed in a separate thematic report.

Major Crime

This framework covers the force effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with homicide and other major crimes that will normally require a force to set up a major incident room. There is only one statutory performance indicator at present, although other indicators shown in the report facilitate appropriate comparisons of performance between forces; the indicators suggested give some context regarding the volume of such crimes, success in detections and trends over time, but they need to be interpreted with care. The assessment is primarily qualitative, with a judgement as to the extent to which the force predicts and prevents major crime as opposed to solely discovering and reacting to such crime. Major crime includes any investigation that requires the deployment of a senior investigating officer and specialist assets.

The grading system has changed this year to allow for a single ACPO threshold standard against which forces will be assessed as compliant, not compliant or exceeding compliance. It is recognised that collaborative arrangements can be used where appropriate. At a high level, the ACPO lead summarises the threshold standard as set out below:

- Intelligence – Compliance with the 2005 ACPO National Intelligence Model guidance on the shared understanding of and response to the risks and demands of the major crime threat, with effective intelligence and data sharing internally, with neighbouring forces and with key partners.
- Prevention – Effective proactive partnerships to prevent major crime in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights; this includes precursor offending and options such as Osman warnings.
- Enforcement – Compliance with the 2006 ACPO *Murder Investigation Manual* and guidance in the 2005 ACPO major incident room standardised administrative

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procedures, having sufficient resources to meet and manage the predicted demand and contingency to meet extraordinary demand from major crime investigation and review.

- Performance management and resilience – Efficiency through robust performance measures linking costs/resources, inputs and outputs to goals (ie the outcomes of reduction and prevention, detection and conviction work).

Future Programmed Inspections

Following these serious and organised crime and major crime assessments, HMIC plans work in the following areas:

Inspection area	Dates
Neighbourhood policing	April 2008 – September 2008
Developing citizen focus	April 2008 – September 2008
Civil contingencies	September 2008 – May 2009
Public order	September 2008 – May 2009
Critical incidents	September 2008 – May 2009
Professional standards	June 2009 – December 2009
Information management	June 2009 – December 2009
Leadership	June 2009 – December 2009

The Grading Process

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

Meeting the standard

HMIC uses the ACPO agreed standards as the starting point for its SGC. The standards against which forces are measured are communicated to all forces and police authorities some time before the inspection starts. The standards are set at a level that ensures that risk to the public is identified, managed and mitigated as far as is feasible; all forces should find the standards achievable.

Exceeding the standard

Where a force can demonstrate capacity and capability that exceed the agreed national standards, it is expected that risk assessment and business cases justify the availability of 'additional' resources, and that they are deployed appropriately. For example, some forces require a higher level of capacity/capability to counter extraordinary threat levels or to discharge a regional or lead force remit. Without such a rationale, an over-investment would almost certainly represent poor value for money and thus attract criticism.

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Failing to meet the standard

This assessment is appropriate when a force cannot provide evidence that it meets a number of significant criteria that correlate with the ACPO national standards. Where evidence is provided to confirm that the particular issue has been properly risk assessed and the risk is being managed, then the report may not necessarily draw an adverse conclusion. The assessment may also give some credit in situations where a force has the ability to remedy any deficiencies promptly, in terms of time and investment levels needed.

Developing Practice

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

Force Overview and Context

Geographical Description of Force Area

West Mercia Constabulary (WMC) is responsible for policing an area of 7,428 square km, consisting of the counties of Shropshire and Worcestershire and the unitary authorities of Herefordshire and Telford & 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.

There are five territorial policing divisions: South Worcestershire, North Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Each of these is coterminous with its county council or unitary authority. The main headquarters (HQ) site is 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 Description of Force Area

The resident population is 1,185,215, 2.3% of whom are of black or minority ethnic (BME) origin. 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, and the director of finance, who holds the portfolio for administration and finance. The head of strategy and organisation manages the 4000+ strategic programme.

As of 1 April 2008, total police officer and police staff strength was 4,608, of which 1.6% were BME and 43.0% female. The detailed breakdown is 2,494 police officers (1.5% BME and 26.1% female); 2,114 police staff (1.8% BME and 62.9% female); and 251 special constables. The figure of 2,114 police staff includes 274 police community support officers (PCSOs). 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);

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

Both the Four Tracks of Policing and the Four Better Outcomes have been revised and updated for 2007/08 and 2008/09 to reflect the current focus of the force strategy. This holistic approach continues to build on existing good work already undertaken and to deliver continuous improvements where appropriate.

The force and police authority have recently taken a measured and balanced approach in agreeing upon 22 primary performance indicators for 2008/09 in line with the Assessments of Policing and Community Safety. The indicators seek to place increased emphasis on satisfaction and confidence, serious crime and protecting the public from threat, harm and risk.

Impact of Workforce Modernisation and Strategic Force Development

Workforce modernisation is managed via a corporate programme that 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 ensures that progress is linked to 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.

Force Performance Overview

There were 1.9% fewer crimes recorded in 2007/08 compared with 2006/07. This brings crime down to its lowest level for four years, a reduction of 24.8% during the period. The British Crime Survey focuses on the crimes that people worry about the most. These include robbery, burglary, criminal damage and vehicle crime. Across West Mercia, there were 3% fewer of these types of crimes recorded in 2007/08 compared with 2006/07. Recorded violent crime, a concern at national, force and local level, also fell by 0.6% year on year.

For the year 2007/08, WMC set a target of 82.8% for overall satisfaction with service received; this target was reached, with 83% of respondents reporting that they were completely or very satisfied with the service provided by the force. However, in 2008/09 WMC is committed to doing more to improve the follow-up service we provide to victims of crime.

Key Corporate Initiatives

The police authority has continued to invest to ensure that the force is able to meet the many and varied policing needs of the 21st century. During the course of 2007/08, WMC achieved record numbers of police officers, police staff, PCSOs and volunteers.

Protective Services

January 2008 also saw the successful completion of an ambitious two-year, £2.9 million investment programme aimed at strengthening the force's capability and capacity to respond effectively to the serious and resource-intensive challenges that pose a threat and cause harm to our communities. Delivered in early 2008 and ahead of time, the programme has significantly increased WMC's ability to meet the demands caused by major crime and

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critical incidents, serious and organised crime, civil contingencies and the threat of terrorism.

In August 2007, the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, opened new specialist crime facilities in Worcestershire. The £4 million investment has provided a new operational base for operational police officers and staff working in the force's serious and organised crime unit (SOCU), special branch and covert authorities bureau (CAB).

During early 2008, WMC developed its performance framework to more closely monitor the performance of HQ crime and force operations, which are primarily responsible for delivering protective services.

Key Initiatives to Improve Performance During 2007/08

The Policing Performance Assessment Framework acknowledged that significant progress has been achieved in the force's ability to protect vulnerable people. In 2006, together with many other forces, WMC's performance was assessed as Poor. Following significant investment, individual grades of Good for child abuse, domestic violence and missing persons, together with a Fair grading for public protection in 2007, reflect the commitment the force has made to improve its performance in these critical areas of business.

The recently published ACPO Protective Services Minimum Standards detail capacity and capability thresholds. Forces are required to achieve these standards, across all protective services, by 2011. WMC has benchmarked itself against the standards. As a consequence, a corporate programme has been established not only to manage the achievement of ACPO minimum standards by 2011, but also to take account of three separate internal reviews that seek to improve the quality of crime investigation.

Regional Collaboration

The four police forces in the West Midlands Police Region (Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands) have for many years pursued collaborative arrangements to improve effectiveness. While the national merger debate revealed some differing perspectives on the preferred future structure of policing, it also led to a great deal of joint working at all levels between the four forces. Building on this goodwill, chief officers from all four forces and chairs of the police authorities have produced a collaborative statement of purpose. This statement details some shared principles and promotes common understanding. It has been agreed that the principal aim of collaboration is the achievement of greater resilience, which in turn delivers improved outcomes for the people of the region.

The operational focus for regional collaboration is provided through the ACPO regional meeting structure and its subgroups, with governance issues being considered within the West Midlands Regional Group of Police Authority Chairs. Improvements have been made to regional tasking and co-ordination arrangements, providing increased focus and accountability.

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Major Crime

GRADE	Meets the standard
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Context

This element of the inspection report details West Mercia Constabulary's capacity and capability to identify and assess the risks from major crime, as well as the response in preventing and investigating these crime types, prioritising those which pose the greatest threat to individuals or communities.

As with serious and organised crime, skilful mapping and analysis have made it possible to determine more accurately the degree of risk posed and appropriate interventions to curtail the impact of such criminality.

	2006	2007	Change	MSF** group mean
Life-threatening & gun crime per 1,000 pop.	0.244	0.308	+26.23%	0.288
No. of abductions per 10,000 population	0.000	0.000	0.00%	0.000
% of abduction crimes detected/convicted	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
No. of attempted murders per 10,000 population	0.067	0.051	-23.88%	0.077
% of attempted murder crimes detected/convicted	87.50%	100.00%	+12.5pp*	82.18%
No. of blackmail offences per 10,000 population	0.202	0.118	-41.58%	0.114
% of blackmail offences detected/convicted	29.17%	57.14%	+27.97pp*	60.65%
No. of kidnappings per 10,000 population	0.270	0.211	-21.85%	0.212

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% of kidnapping crimes detected/convicted	56.25%	40.00%	-16.25pp*	67.97%
No. of manslaughter per 10,000 population	0.008	0.008	0.00%	0.019
% of manslaughter crimes detected/convicted	100.00%	100.00%	0pp*	Not Applicable
No. of murders per 10,000 population	0.084	0.110	+30.95%	0.097
% of murders detected/convicted	90.00%	69.23%	-20.77pp*	97.35%
No. of rapes per 10,000 population	1.873	1.873	0.00%	2.046
% of rapes detected/convicted	19.82%	20.72%	+0.9pp*	21.40%

***pp” is Percentage Points.*

***Most Similar Family (MSF) for West Mercia is: Cambridgeshire; Cheshire; Lincolnshire; Norfolk; Suffolk; Warwickshire and; Wiltshire.*

The SPI data in the table above indicates that life threatening and gun crime is a possible issue for West Mercia Constabulary. The rate of offences (per 1,000 population) rose significantly in 2007 and is above the MSF average. However the rate of offences is not high when considering the whole of England and Wales.

Serious and Organised Crime investigation in West Mercia appears to be less effective than the rest of the MSF group. This is evidenced in the table by the sanction detection rate for kidnapping being below the MSF average after a significant drop in 2007. The rate of class A drug offences brought to justice is marginally above the MSF average despite a significant fall in 2007.

The National Protective Services Analysis Tool (NPSAT) published in September 2007 indicated that West Mercia was facing either a low or medium demand with regard to Firearms, Life Threatening and Gun Crime, Cash in Transit, Blackmail and Problematic Drug User offences and as such no NPSAT charts have been included in this report.

While OCG mapping is in its infancy as a technique nationally, West Mercia Constabulary has made some inroads to the problem and its resident groups have been initially mapped. It is currently estimated that 64 OCGs impact the force area across five crime types.

The force strategic assessment reveals a limited understanding of the markets fed by serious and organised crime and the interventions required to tackle these.

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The force has identified terrorism, controlled drugs, life at risk and protecting vulnerable people and organised acquisitive crime as its serious, organised crime priorities within the force control strategy. The force strategic intelligence requirement has a clear focus on the continuous search for information on all the above areas.

Within the documentation overall, the issues have partially been identified and addressed.

The force has invested suitable resources in the interventions needed to maximise harm reduction, to minimise risks to the public and inhibit serious, organised crime.

This inspection assessment reveals that the force demonstrates a maturing process in its approach to tackling serious and organised criminality.

Intelligence

Summary – The force has sufficient dedicated analytical resources to meet the identified demands from major crime and to supply dynamic intelligence products that drive the energies of the force. The force has committed to its major crime investigations with the requisite staff, accommodation and equipment.

Strengths

- Some 38 analysts are deployed in divisions, specialist units and HQ crime support. Analysts in the FIB are aligned to crime types, mirroring the force control strategy priorities, and there are dedicated researchers and intelligence officers. The desk structure has the following streams: life at risk, protecting vulnerable people, hate crime, domestic abuse and sexual offences; organised and acquisitive crime; and drugs, firearms, guns and gangs. Ten researchers support the analytical capacity. Analysts contribute relevant information relating to their specialism to production of the FSA, using both open and closed source material, and the final document is collated and quality assured by the principal analyst.
- Three analysts and a researcher are dedicated to the MIU. In addition, the senior intelligence analyst has responsibility for 28-day major crime reviews and supports the MCRT as required.
- Analysis is conducted on all reported deaths to determine any patterns and trends in order to inform prevention activity, an overview of which is included in the FSA.
- The 24/7 ISU commenced work in November 2007, bringing together ANPR resources and intelligence officers to provide live, front-end evaluation and intelligence development to support the control room. This unit assesses data from ANPR hits in real time and interrogates force systems in respect of live incidents. The ISU is also responsible for ensuring that hits relating to abduction, kidnap, robbery, wounding, murder, manslaughter, serious sexual assault and vulnerable missing persons are actioned. Numerous examples have been provided of the benefits of the unit – for example, the early resolution of incidents, arrests of offenders and recovery of stolen property.

Work in progress

- Life at risk is one of the control strategy priorities and, to support this, a homicide prevention strategy is being prepared by the principal analyst, who reports to the head of crime. This strategy will include continuous monitoring of all domestic abuse, sexual offences, murder, attempted murder, hate crime, vulnerable missing persons and those offences or incidents identified as antecedents to major crime. Preparation of the full strategy has been delayed to allow production of rape and harassment and stalking problem profiles, which have been assessed to be a higher priority, but it is expected to be delivered by April 2008. Key trigger activities have been identified as intervention points for preventative action in harassment cases; this should result in a reduction in the number of partner- and ex-partner-related homicides.

Areas for improvement

- None identified.

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Summary – The force seeks and shares intelligence about level 2 and level 3 major crime types through partnerships. This work is assessed to be embryonic. The force’s community impact assessments (CIAs) to evaluate risk following major crime are adequate.

Strengths

- CDRP partners, divisional intelligence officers and analysts have developed strong links at divisional level. Where local policing teams (LPTs) are co-located with partners, intelligence sharing is dynamic.
- 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, one example being the amendment of the information-sharing protocol between the police and the local authority housing provider to speed up processes and remove bureaucracy.
- The strategic intelligence requirement encompasses priority areas of major crime, including controlled drugs.
- Intranet pages are bespoke for each LPT area and contain details of force-level intelligence requirements. Members of LPTs are measured on their performance in respect of the number and quality of intelligence products submitted against the requirement.
- Bi-monthly meetings are held with the financial and cash-in-transit industries. Regular contact is made with policing partners in the region and beyond, and with the RIU. Information sharing is effective at the RIG, chaired by the director of intelligence.
- The divisional commander on whose area major crime or critical incidents occur is responsible for the preparation of a CIA. In order to produce this, links are made with partners, the community and IAG members as appropriate.
- SIOs have good access to specialists; for example, on-call arrangements are in place to provide officers and staff with specialist skills for major crime incidents in the ‘golden hours’. Advice is frequently sought from external bodies such as the NPIA and the Forensic Science Service.
- SIOs are proactive in their use of specialist advice, which is sought in most investigations and cold case reviews. Some 317 enquiries were made with the NPIA specialist operations centre, placing West Mercia in the top quartile of contacts per 100 officers in England and Wales. For example, contact with the NPIA proved fruitful following a death by multiple stab wounds, as specialist advice and interpretation assisted in determining the circumstances of the death, and specialist scientific examination at the scene proved significant. The CATCHEM database has been consulted and advice obtained in the investigation of two ‘no body’ murder inquiries.
- A number of problem profiles have been prepared – for example, the criminal use of firearms (April 2007), distraction burglary (August 2007), harassment and stalking (August 2007) and rape (October 2007) – as a result of which PIER plans have been prepared. Partners were included in the preparation as

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appropriate.

- Established relationships exist with partners such as local strategic partnerships, CDRPs, drug and alcohol action teams, multi-agency public protection panels and safeguarding children boards.
- All information-sharing agreements are held and are searchable electronically. The IT system identifies the owner, author, reviewer, date of the agreement, parties to the agreement, GPMS marking, review and termination dates.

Work in progress

- The regional prison intelligence unit has recently been established. Early indications are that the relationships and intelligence sharing between prisons and regional forces have improved and are developing.
- An additional MAPPA co-ordinator has been appointed and the public protection unit is now co-located with probation staff, which should further enhance information sharing to reduce risk. These arrangements are new and widely supported, but the operational benefits are still to be realised.

Areas for improvement

- No innovative intelligence-sharing arrangements are in place with partners, such as anonymous third party reporting by health professionals of rapes or serious assaults.
- While established relationships with other agencies exist at divisional level, major crime intelligence is not effectively shared outside statutory arrangements.

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Summary – The FSA has analysed trends in relation to its major crime sufficiently. Consequently, the force control strategy has been found to be equally adequate. Problem profiles for harassment and stalking, firearms, distraction burglaries and rape have been completed, with limited links to force and BCU plans. There is some evidence that the force understands the threat posed by other life-threatening issues.

Strengths

- The FSA is produced to inform the force TTCG meeting of the following objectives:
 - current crime and incidents, in accordance with the force control strategy priorities, and with particular focus on cross-border crime trends and series, emerging hotspots, performance shortfalls and the selection of level 2 targets;
 - the impact of current law enforcement activity on crime and incident levels; and
 - current and emerging issues of exception, ie high risks that fall outside the force's control.

- Each division produces a strategic assessment, and this, together with information from local authorities, provides local detail that is fed into the FSA. FIB analysts complete the section of the FSA relating to their area of responsibility and the final document is prepared and owned by the principal analyst. The FSA is underpinned by a key findings document, which contains additional detail and inferences.

- Current control strategy priorities are identified as terrorism (including domestic extremism), controlled drugs, organised acquisitive crime, life at risk and protecting vulnerable people, while monitored threats include the criminal use of firearms (including guns and gangs, cash in transit and armed offences), offences involving knives, immigration-related crime and organised disorder. The control strategy also contains a recommendation that the identification, profiling and analysis of OCGs linked to organised acquisitive crime should form part of the force intelligence requirement between May 2007 and June 2008; this is in progress. Links are made from these priorities to the force objectives of Four Better Outcomes:
 - tackling crime;
 - promoting community safety;
 - improving satisfaction and confidence; and
 - protecting the public

- The FSA is supported by a tactical assessment in which harm is assessed and from which the control strategy priorities are determined. The tactical assessment is refreshed on a six-monthly basis. An update is provided on threats and intelligence gaps at the monthly FPG meeting.

- The TTCG is provided with a monthly tactical assessment containing updates on control strategy priorities and monitored threats.

- Briefings have been held with divisional commanders and members of their management teams to improve awareness of the FSA, NIM products and

processes.

Work in progress

- Work is currently under way to ensure closer links between the organisational planning processes and the intelligence community. A chief superintendent has been appointed to lead the ODU and the principal analyst has been seconded to work with the head of performance for approximately four months to examine how the FSA can truly drive the force and be the focus for FPG scrutiny, thus aligning the NIM, planning and performance. It is intended that the findings of this work will be implemented in due course with the new FSA and included in the force strategic strategy.
- The region has recently adopted the ACPO harm matrix to replace the previous iteration, which had been based on work carried out by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Project Sleipnir, which looked at the physical, legal, economic, community, network and enforcement aspects of organised criminality. This model had been adopted by the region and was considered effective, but was superseded to comply with the national standard.

Areas for improvement

- Each division has developed its own strategic assessment and control strategy, which focus local effort on the division's crime problems. However, the alignment between the priorities in these documents and the FSA and control strategy is not always evident. The focus on volume crime performance and FPG actions is a significant constraint on divisional activity to reduce, disrupt and dismantle OCGs and major crime.
- The FSA was neither widely read nor challenged following its production in 2007 and does not dynamically drive force activity. It was presented at the FPG but the minutes do not reflect the decisions to ratify the control strategy or to monitor the suggested threats. Considerable support for and confidence at senior level in the analytical products and the FSA are evident, but there is a lack of operational challenge and subsequent buy-in to the final products. Monthly priorities are determined at the FPG, which is an effective management tool where performance against targets is scrutinised on a BCU and/or departmental level.
- The FSA is presented as a review or retrospective document to enable quality assurance of the control strategy, monitored threats and intelligence requirement. While senior officers and staff are confident in the capabilities of the analysts, there should be greater involvement and debate of the issues in the FSA prior to the adoption of the control strategy priorities, so that these can drive activity. Divisions and departments would then be more likely to identify with the issues.
- The FSA review cycle concludes in May, with sign-off at chief officer level. This is out of synchronisation both with recent guidance and with the cycles of regional partners, although positive feedback has been received from the NPIA. Consideration is being given to aligning the cycle to that of regional partners, to assist in the preparation of regional NIM products.

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Summary – Trend analysis and problem profiles are rarely shared with partners and BCUs. There is a trigger plan for ‘hot briefing’ either when there is a significant change in the major crime threat or where the nature of the analysis demands a fast-time response. Information-sharing protocols exist with key partners, such as the BSIA, the Identity and Passport Service, Trading Standards, local councils and CDRPs. The force can demonstrate that it is on track to reach full MoPI compliance by 2010.

Strengths

- The DCC chairs the information management programme board, attended by strategic leaders including the head of crime support and the PSD. Under this sits a MoPI implementation group. The IMTD manages the MoPI project; it has employed an external consultant as the project manager, who drives activity in support of a comprehensive action plan in which each risk has been assessed. In addition, a records manager has been appointed and the MIU has a good understanding of the implications of MoPI.
- Data-sharing protocols are in place with local councils and CDRPs. Information is also shared outside agreed protocols as required; for example, following a series of thefts from ATMs, an operation was planned with industry partners.
- In one division (over a three-month period), a MoPI assessment has been undertaken of a small number of nominal records – an extensive and analytical review covering 22 databases was completed against each record, to inform the approach to review, retention and deletion of records. The project team has been able to provide a list of key issues and has compared its technique with that being used by other forces. This comprehensive review has enabled the project team to submit to the chief officer group a number of risk-based options for it to consider, so that MoPI principles can be consistently initiated across the force.
- Serious crime analysis system (SCAS) data is submitted in a timely manner, with a 100% on-time submission rate in the third quarter of 2007/08, and an overall on-time submission rate of 83% in the 2007 calendar year. This exceeds the national average of 72%. Some 49 cases were submitted.

Work in progress

- MoPI training is being provided in the form of e-learning packages for all existing officers and staff as well as for those joining WMC.
- The FPG focuses largely on divisional performance, but the spotlight was on HQ crime in February 2008, when information from problem profiles and trend analysis was presented. Partners attend the FPG, providing an opportunity to identify and initiate the prevention and disruption of major crime.

Area for improvement

- Trend analysis and problem profiles are not routinely informed by, or shared with, partners at force level.

July 2008

Summary – In respect of major crime, the force profiling of vulnerable locations and communities is developing, with evidence that the impact of OCG activity is partially understood. As a result, future risks and threats across the force area are yet to be fully identified.

Strengths

- Comprehensive demographic community profiles have been prepared at LPT level and are accessible to LPTs and HQ staff via the intranet.
- Special branch has launched a database, accessible from the neighbourhood pages on the intranet, for members of LPTs to submit information to contribute 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.
- The FSA contains Mosaic mapping analysis profiling those communities at risk. In addition it contains information on serious and organised criminality and the impact on the force, for example immigration crime and clandestine entry, criminal use of firearms, organised acquisitive crime, Class A drugs and terrorism. Analysis in the FSA informed the control strategy and approved monitored threats.

Work in progress

- The HQ crime support risk register identifies 'failure to make operational and investigative decisions without detailed knowledge of community-related tension or issues' a risk assessed as moderate. An IT solution has been sought to enable all CIAs to be accessed electronically, and the diversity unit has assessed a potential solution. It is anticipated that this will be implemented in early 2008.

Area for improvement

- Comprehensive geographic profiles have been prepared but are not used or updated dynamically to inform the strategic assessment or tasking decisions; currently, they are refreshed annually at HQ. They could assist with the profiling and identification of vulnerable communities, but are largely used as tools for LPTs. Consideration should be given to developing the use of these profiles to aid understanding of local threats from major and serious and organised criminality, and to map across geographical boundaries to determine the threats to vulnerable and emerging communities.

July 2008

Summary – Regarding elements of intelligence, the force strategic risk register is reviewed every quarter by the director of finance, who oversees the force risk committee. Each identified risk for major crime has a current action plan, although this is not proactively monitored at a local level outside the meeting schedules.

Strengths

- The force risk management group manages the strategic risk register and meets on a quarterly basis. Its approach is detailed in published policy and procedure. Each division and department head holds a register and only where identified risks cannot be resolved at local level are they escalated to force level. The appointment of a risk officer has led to a greater understanding and the identification of future significant issues, which have been considered in financial and strategic planning.
- The HQ crime support department maintains a risk register, managed by the DCI in the FIB. Risks identified are discussed at monthly management meetings and either resolved or placed on the departmental register. Risks currently held on the register that impact directly on the investigation of major crime include: insufficient trained specialists to support investigations; the inability to effectively house MIU enquiry staff; and the failure to make operational and investigative decisions without a detailed knowledge of community-related tension or issues. Each risk is being managed and the action plan identifies progress made, actions taken to mitigate the risk, impact, cause and risk score.
- The force security and risk manager has a personal objective relating to the performance of the risk management and risk register process. At the end of quarter three 2007/08, 85% of risk registers were accurate and up to date.
- The police authority audit committee requires regular briefings on the effectiveness of the force approach to risk management as a contributory factor to the authority's statement of internal control. In addition, the authority holds a separate risk register, the management of which has been amended in light of a PURE recommendation from the external auditor. Specific funds have been identified for risk management resolution.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Area for improvement

- The strategic risk register for crime is held by the FIB, with the DCI responsible for its updating and monitoring. While each risk has an identified owner and timescales, the register is not updated dynamically and relies on the DCI contacting staff and requesting them to update the plan. Some sections of HQ crime use the process proactively, but not all key risks are included in the register. More accountability for progressing solutions should be instigated.

July 2008

Summary – The force is collaborating with some forces in its region to provide the same level of access and interrogation of intelligence systems across the region. Most of the operational databases are searchable by analysts using i2 software. The recommendations from the Bichard Inquiry have been mostly implemented.

Strengths

- WMC collaborates in a range of ways with other forces, including those within the region and on its other borders. Partnerships with SOCA have developed through the seconded officer, and an officer is seconded to the BSIA with responsibility to co-ordinate PIER activity in respect of cash-in-transit offences. Partner information is used, in particular with CDRPs, where data-sharing agreements are in place.
- Cross-system searching is facilitated using the Genie tool, which enables officers to search nominal details in a number of different systems; this is considered to be a significant enabler. In addition, analysts use i2 to bridge stand-alone systems; this gives access to databases including stop and search, firearms, case preparation, crimes, intelligence, ECU, special branch and ANPR. Specified staff in West Midlands Police can access nominated West Mercia systems through the Genie search tool, while FIB staff access West Midlands data through its FLINTS system.
- The 24/7 ISU commenced work in November 2007, bringing together ANPR resources and intelligence officers to provide live, front-end evaluation and intelligence development to support the control room. This unit assesses data from ANPR hits in real time and interrogates force systems in respect of live incidents. The ISU is also responsible for ensuring that hits relating to abduction, kidnap, robbery, wounding, murder, manslaughter, serious sexual assault and vulnerable missing persons are actioned. Numerous examples have been provided of the benefits of the unit – for example, the early resolution of incidents, arrests of offenders and recovery of stolen property.
- APR is the direct responsibility of the director of intelligence. The strategic intelligence requirement includes the use of ANPR data as an intelligence tool specifically to tackle drugs and domestic extremism. The ANPR hit-and-read facility can search across both inputted crime and intelligence databases and is accessible to divisional staff through the intranet. Data is available for the preceding 90 days and is accessed on average 60 times a day.
- The FSA includes intelligence from internal, partner and other force assessments and acknowledges Home Office and SOCA publications, the British Crime Survey, local authority information and open source information.
- A 'Bichard officer' is appointed in most large-scale major crime inquiries when the HOLMES database is used. The officer is responsible for the conversion in real time of information and intelligence gathered in the investigation to the force intelligence system. The priority is to ensure that all threat-to-life issues are recorded as soon as practicable, and that officers on the MIU are aware of their requirement to submit intelligence as part of their core role. A recent independent review into a category B homicide investigation confirmed that this process was

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compliant with the murder investigation manual (MIM) and the 2005 major incident room standardised administrative procedures (MIRSAP).

- The work of the data quality team has been refocused from correcting data errors to auditing and improving the quality of data entered. This shift is improving the accuracy of data inputting at first entry.
- All personnel complete the mandatory e-learning data protection package, entitled 'Handle with care', within the first six weeks of employment in WMC. A data quality manager is responsible for proactively maintaining the standard of data in all IT systems and ensuring that all information is stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act. A three-year corporate programme of systems audit is in place and the findings contribute to continuous improvement.

Work in progress

- Analysts do not currently have access to HOLMES data, but a bridge is being installed that will facilitate this (this is expected to be in place by April 2008).

Areas for improvement

- Some interoperability of systems is in place, linking the West Midlands and West Mercia forces, but this has not been extended across the region or to other adjoining forces. Opportunities to share information across boundaries, in the absence of fully automated national systems, should be maximised.
- A number of projects have been undertaken to improve the submission, recording and use of community intelligence – including third party submissions – and while an overarching solution has not been implemented, local officers are aware of the importance of such submissions. The current IT system relies on intelligence linking to nominals, which results in difficulties in storing community intelligence. However, special branch has developed an intranet solution which enables officers and staff to submit information that falls outside the national (5x5x5) grading process to support the 'richer picture' work. Consideration should be given to extending the submission of community intelligence in this manner.

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Summary – The force has a case review policy that is generally applied, ensuring that current major crime cases are reviewed in accordance with ACPO guidance; the policy is largely effective. (This refers to organisational learning.)

Strengths

- The dedicated MCRT consists of a DI, a DS and two DCs, who operate to a clear policy and procedure document. Current practice is that 100% of statements, documents and exhibits are examined in every case. Line management is by the force crime manager (a detective superintendent), thus ensuring independence from the MIU. The team is responsible for reviewing all undetected offences of murder and stranger rape after 28 days, in line with the MIM, and other cases as directed by the ACC (specialist operations). Reviews are conducted according to written terms of reference.
- The MCRT ensures that good practice and lessons learnt are disseminated, and hot debriefs are held with SIOs so that key issues are addressed quickly. This is supplemented by the quarterly major crime review panel, chaired by the ACC (specialist operations), which comprises the head of crime, the MIU detective superintendent, the head of MCRT, an SIO, the force solicitor and the relevant divisional commander.
- Since 2004, all homicides have been detected within 28 days, so full reviews have not been required. Early peer reviews are, however, conducted in all major investigations and, in appropriate cases, reviews have been initiated after charge at the instigation of the ACC. For example, a review by an ex-detective superintendent from another force was commissioned into the investigation of a double murder where the suspect was charged within the 28-day review period. This comprehensive review made 58 recommendations and identified 11 good practice issues.
- Monthly SIO forums are held with the head of crime support to share best practice, and meetings with DCIs take place quarterly. Good practice and new innovations are shared at seminars that are run annually for all senior detectives. There is an intention of increasing this to twice a year. Both internal and external speakers provide inputs.
- National good practice identified to the ACPO Homicide Working Group is considered for adoption in force, as the MIU detective superintendent is a member of the group.
- The MIU intranet site is used as a repository for best practice.

Work in progress

- Two further full-time and two part-time posts have been identified for the MCRT and these will be in place by April 2008. It is anticipated that these posts will be converted to police staff investigator posts in the following year.
- Arrangements are in hand to establish a domestic homicide review panel by April

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2008, in compliance with the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

- The line management of the MCRT is under review, following the establishment of the post of detective superintendent force crime manager. One option under consideration is that the team should be managed by the PSD. While both functions aim ultimately to raise standards and quality, the open culture that currently welcomes review will need to be closely monitored to ensure that the positive elements of the review culture are not lost.

Area for improvement

- Force policy requires that undetected rapes are submitted to the head of crime support for operational review. However, recent sampling of rape investigations found that this does not occur routinely and that accredited detectives do not investigate all allegations. The rape steering group should ensure that clear policy is circulated as a matter of urgency to guide the allocation, supervision and review of rape investigations.

July 2008

Summary – The force tasking and co-ordination process operates satisfactorily to deliver suitable responses to manage major crime threats. Documentation examined reveals a sound understanding of historical and current demand.

Strengths

- The force TTCG meetings, chaired by the ACC (specialist operations), are well attended by specialists operating at a strategic level and by divisional operational superintendents. The inclusion of divisional staff has resulted in improved understanding and buy-in to the needs of level 2 activities. All decisions to resource major crime investigations are recorded, as are outcomes of specialist policing activity. A confidential section of the meeting is held separately.
- The TTCG is informed by a tactical assessment, produced by FIB intelligence analysts, which covers current crime and incidents that reflect control strategy priorities, with particular focus on cross-border crime trends and series; emerging hotspots; performance shortfalls; the selection of level 2 targets; the impact of law enforcement activity on crime and incident levels; and the current and emerging issues of exception that are outside the control strategy priorities.

Work in progress

- Work is in progress to integrate performance and intelligence cycles, led by the ODU and principal analyst. WMC was graded as Excellent by HMIC for performance management in 2007, and the learning from this will transfer into NIM processes through the merging of the FPG with the TTCG. It is intended that this change will be replicated on divisions and will generate a more consistent approach to tasking and co-ordination locally. This alignment will ensure that the focus is on the performance of control strategy priorities.

Areas for improvement

- MIU resources deploy reactively to meet operational need in response to major crime. This occurs largely outside the TTCG, and the MIU acknowledges that NIM processes do not operate in the unit. The MIU has not had the capacity for proactive tasking or to operate the 'reverse precept' concept as intended - ie the return of staff to support divisions during quieter periods. Consideration should be given to including ongoing MIU commitments in the TTCG for review by the ACC.
- The skills of the SIOs on the MIU are respected and considered to be 'a safe pair of hands' for cases outside the MIU remit. If SIOs and MIU resources continue to be used in this manner, the terms of reference should be amended.
- Daily tasking meetings take place on each division, but there is no central oversight to resource dynamically or task between divisions and HQ to meet the greatest need. It is intended to introduce by April 2008 a force-level daily tasking and co-ordination process, to bring a greater strategic grip on central resourcing. It is anticipated that this will initially be conducted by telephone but will move to video-conferencing as soon as practicable.

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- The chair of the force TTCG does not have an operational budget to allocate at the TTCG for which he is held accountable. While the provision of funds to support operational activity has not yet been a barrier to success, greater visibility, accountability and clarity of budget provision would be beneficial.
- The TTCG seeks progress reports from department heads on operations but does not robustly hold staff to account, nor does it check progress against objectives. The head of crime support holds a weekly meeting where updates are provided on operations, but this does not challenge or robustly enquire into activity. Consideration should be given on how best to make HQ resource usage accountable to the TTCG.

July 2008

Summary – Due to appropriate training, the force’s awareness of diverse community needs during major crime investigations is consistent.

Strengths

- The director of intelligence is the diversity lead for HQ crime support and is a qualified assessor for the national occupational standards for diversity. All staff are required to complete an intranet-based questionnaire providing examples to demonstrate both knowledge and awareness of diversity, and HQ crime staff have been proactive in the completion of this questionnaire.
- A diversity action plan is in place for the MIU, with a DI as the unit champion.
- The force training department has delivered level 3 diversity training and all members of the MIU have either attended or are scheduled to do so by the end of 2007/08.
- IAGs are used proactively in support of major crime investigations and CIAs are routinely undertaken.
- Checks were made to ensure that all (300 plus) officers who took part in a recent proactive arrest operation on organised criminality had received recent diversity training and were briefed on the particular cultural and religious considerations.
- A local college is providing language courses in Urdu and Eastern European languages to officers, free of charge. Language Line is available to front-line staff through the Airwave terminal, providing translation services at the point of service delivery.
- Call management staff have access to Typetalk for hard-of-hearing groups and emergency texting facilities.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Area for improvement

- Specific training has not been given to SIOs to ensure that they are fully cognisant of the ACPO good practice guide for police response to racial incidents, or that they have knowledge and a good understanding of the ACPO definition of racially motivated and homophobically motivated incidents, as required by the MIM. In light of proactive training in the national occupational standards, consideration should be given as to whether any additional training or awareness is required.

Prevention

Summary – The force has three IAGs and they are frequently used to maximise the contribution of partners in the management of major crime investigations.

Strengths

- Three force-level IAGs operate, each with 12 members; a BME IAG, a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender IAG, and a disability forum, the members of which act in an IAG capacity. IAG members are routinely consulted on both reactive and proactive major crime investigations, and are accessed through the HQ diversity unit superintendent. Examples were provided where advice from IAG members resulted in new or amended lines of enquiry being introduced in a number of investigations, for example during the homicide investigation of an elderly woman and following the death of a gay man. Equality forums based on each division are contacted for support if specific advice is required outside the specialisms of the IAGs.
- An additional 12 IAG members have recently been recruited. The DCI from the MIU provided a briefing to explain how the unit works, and the diversity champion in HQ crime support has delivered training to IAG members.
- Members of IAGs are vetted to the same level as officers and the superintendent from the diversity unit interacts regularly with the members.
- IAG representatives are invited onto gold groups where appropriate.
- During the planning phase for a sensitive operation involving members of the BME community, a scenario-based, paper-feed exercise was undertaken with an IAG from another force with similar demographics. This resulted in a 28-point action plan that helped inform the SIO strategy. Prior to the strike, the head of the diversity unit briefed the West Mercia IAG and outlined the rationale for going out of force for independent advice, which was supported.
- Officers at local level and in HQ crime support are aware of the key individual network online database, which is regularly updated by LPTs.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Areas for improvement

- None identified.

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Summary – Effective contingency plans are in place to minimise the impact of any escalation of a major crime incident. The inspection teams found that ‘golden hour’ principles were sufficiently understood by call management staff and first responders.

Strengths

- Each division has a DI or DCI on call for critical incidents and major crime, supported by an all-call command team member. In addition, a 24/7 SIO on-call rota operates, which includes the nominated force SIOs and other trained senior detectives and an MIU DS and three DCs on duty each weekend and bank holiday. These arrangements have been frequently tested and provide a resilient response. The initial response to such an incident is controlled by the force duty inspector (FDI), who arranges for additional support and call-outs as required; between 8 am and 1 am daily the FDI is supplemented by the force silver car. A senior police constable provides additional resilience to call-takers and dispatchers and is available for advice and support in addition to the FDI. These arrangements ensure that access to specialist services and staff with specialist skills to provide the initial response and advice for predicted levels of major crime demand is good.
- First responders and control room staff are confident that the training they have received equips them to deal with golden hour principles. To guide their initial response, control room staff use contingency plans and supporting information, which are available both electronically and in paper format, and they felt supported by the structure in the room and by their managers.
- The 24/7 ISU commenced work in November 2007, bringing together ANPR resources and intelligence officers into one unit to provide live-time, front-end evaluation and intelligence development to support the control room. This unit assesses data from ANPR hits in real time and interrogates force systems for live incidents. The ISU is also responsible for ensuring that hits relating to abduction, kidnap, robbery, wounding, murder, manslaughter, serious sexual assault and vulnerable missing persons are actioned. Numerous examples have been provided of the benefits of the unit – for example, the early resolution of incidents, arrests of offenders and recovery of stolen property.
- The MIU has dedicated resources to deal with major crime and is supported by specialists from other units such as the hi-tech crime unit, forensic investigators, search-trained officers and family liaison officers (FLOs).
- A uniformed supervisor attends the scene of all unexplained deaths as a minimum level of response. Where specialist advice is required, a DS is called to the scene.
- Call-handlers are able to search across force systems using the Genie search engine, which covers custody, crimes, intelligence, firearms and property systems.

Work in progress

- A review into major crime resources and the MIU was commissioned by the force and undertaken by an ex-detective superintendent and experienced SIO, who reported in early 2008 and made 17 recommendations. A comprehensive review

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of criminal investigation has also been undertaken internally, reporting in December 2007 with 114 recommendations. The recommendations from these reviews have been collated for consideration by the ACC (specialist operations), but six 'quick wins' have been identified for early adoption:

- the introduction of a force crime manager;
 - the development of standard operating procedures for 14 priority crimes;
 - a cohesive daily management process;
 - the creation of a suite of level 2 performance indicators;
 - a project management approach to change; and
 - consideration of the implementation of a night crime car.
- Additional staff are being recruited to support the dispatch process in the control room, which will improve performance in the medium term. Until such time as these new staff are operationally competent, the short-term demands of mentoring, training and support provided by experienced operators continue to detract from performance.
 - A PowerPoint presentation on the new message-logging protocol has been prepared for delivery to call-takers, in response to recommendation 3 of the HMIC rape thematic report *Without Consent*. Some standard questions have been prepared to assist call-takers in providing a consistent approach to the initial recording and response to rape and serious sexual assault, and call-handlers will receive training in the requirements in February/March 2008.
 - Recorded offences of rape that are subsequently reclassified as 'no crime' must now be reviewed by the MCRT. This requirement was introduced in January 2008 in response to concerns over the number of such disposals.
 - The absence of a duty management system, or similar facility to show when officers and staff are at work, means that there is no strategic oversight of the numbers of staff or the specialisms available to react to a critical incident or immediate need to respond. Project Grapevine is a major force project, started in autumn 2007, to replace the existing personnel, training and duty planning system with a single integrated human resource system.

Area for improvement

- Out-of-hours access to trained sexual offences liaison officers (SOLOs) is extremely poor and means that many victims of such offences are not allocated an officer who has received specialist training. Many first responders to such crimes are inexperienced and untrained to perform this vital role. This situation has developed over a number of years as the majority of trained and experienced officers have moved to specialist units that do not work 24-hour shifts; also, training courses have not been filled or were subsequently cancelled. Analysis shows that most rape offences occur at weekends and, across the five divisions, only seven of the 59 trained officers are currently in response roles. The role of a SOLO is not widely understood; there is no co-ordination or specialist supervision of SOLOs, no welfare support and no refresher training. Current practice is for criminal investigation department (CID) officers to be used as hybrid SOLOs in some cases, but this presents a significant risk. It is acknowledged that a rape steering group has been set up under the chair of the ACC (specialist operations), with a dedicated DS appointed, but urgent steps should be taken to redress this situation and ensure that victims have acceptable access to trained officers at the time of reporting a sexual assault, to secure and preserve evidence

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and to provide the specialist advice necessary to the victim and investigating officers. Each recommendation in the action plan should have clear milestones, and implementation should be rigorously monitored and prioritised against risk.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Urgent steps should be taken to ensure that victims of rape and serious sexual assault have acceptable and timely access to trained officers at the time of initial reporting, and effective co-ordination and supervision of SOLOs should be implemented.

- Force policy stipulates that DIs must supervise all rape cases. In practice, DSs undertake this role and there is little evidence of intrusive management or oversight of investigations by DIs; nor are they routinely called out to manage the 'golden hours' following receipt of such an allegation, despite expressing a willingness to take early command and investigative ownership.
- Accommodation for the MIU to run major incident rooms (MIRs) has improved with the provision of refurbished facilities at Stourport, which were described in a recent independent review as 'ideal'. There are small satellite bases at all divisions that are used as MIRs, but the facilities are limited and in one location they are used by other officers as their working base. The requirement for MIR premises in the south-west has been identified but potential sites have been allocated to other departments. While the rationale for these decisions may be sound, it has not been effectively communicated to the MIU or HQ crime support, nor have alternative short- to medium-term proposed facilities been delivered. A longer-term estates plan is under development but will not have an impact until 2009/10 at the earliest.
- The decision to run an investigation on HOLMES is made by the SIO on a case-by-case basis, depending on the complexities of the case and the availability of resources. Some cases use 'mini-HOLMES', where documents are typed onto HOLMES and a document manager and indexer are appointed. Consideration should be given to developing minimum standards for each category of incident.
- Responses to calls for assistance from the public are not assessed against harm or risk. Matrices have been developed by other forces which, if adopted, would aid in the prioritisation of response.

Summary – The threats from precursors to major crime offending are analysed adequately.

Strengths

- The domestic abuse policy has been informed by an analysis of the typology of every homicide since 1997, building on techniques developed in the Metropolitan Police and West Yorkshire forces.
- The Chief Constable has recently assumed the ACPO public protection portfolio, a strand of the overall violent crime portfolio. Significant additional resources have been provided to the protecting vulnerable people area of work and to reduce harm and manage risk.
- A monthly threat assessment is conducted for divisions, detailing work on the management of sex offenders and compliance with the registered sex offender (RSO) visit schedule by the public protection unit.
- Since the publication of the HMIC baseline assessment in 2006, where WMC was assessed as Poor in protecting vulnerable people, significant investment has been made in staff resources and improvements in working practices. The potential links between child abuse, domestic abuse, public protection and missing persons and major crime are now widely understood, and analytical support has been provided to target the most serious offenders. The level 2 TTCG includes monitoring of sex offenders.
- Analysis of the demand profile for major crime is contained within the FSA and supplemented by comprehensive problem profiles, for example those of rape and harassment and stalking.
- Comprehensive care plans are prepared for victims of domestic abuse who are identified as high risk or are repeat victims; these are accessible to all officers. Where a care plan is in place, there is a requirement to visit the victim at specified intervals and updates are recorded. Both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are informed of the requirement to visit.
- A link on the LPT intranet page provides access to information – including photographs, the conditions of licences or sexual offences prevention orders (SOPOs) and intelligence entries – about RSOs living in each LPT area. This facilitates the identification of incidents involving RSOs and the notification of these incidents and intelligence to the public protection unit.

Work in progress

- Operation Cosmos flows from a case in Derbyshire where a woman was subjected to repeated incidents of harassment by an ex-partner, which culminated in her murder in 2004. WMC's DCC subsequently chaired a discipline panel to examine the adequacy of the police response to precursor events. This provided an ideal opportunity to distil and disseminate learning to WMC, with a review of all force policies and procedures. This review cumulated in 24 recommendations and six suggestions, under the headings of leadership and supervision; managing the quality of investigations; management of vulnerable persons; identification of risk; and recognising mistakes and learning the lessons.

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The recommendations are being considered alongside those from other recent reviews – a proposal to manage implementation through a formal project plan is under discussion with chief officers.

- Life at risk is one of the control strategy priorities and, to support this, a homicide prevention strategy is being prepared by the principal analyst, who reports to the head of crime. This strategy will promote continuous monitoring of all incidents of domestic abuse, sexual offences, murder, attempted murder, hate crime, vulnerable missing persons and those offences or incidents identified as antecedents to major crime. Preparation of the full strategy has been delayed by the production of the rape and harassment and stalking problem profiles for Operation Cosmos, which were assessed as being of higher priority, but it is expected to be delivered by April 2008. Key trigger activities have been identified as intervention points for preventative action in harassment cases; this should result in a reduction in the number of partner- and ex-partner-related homicides.

Area for improvement

- MIU SIOs generally consider future homicide prevention opportunities during the investigative process, but no formal process or corporate approach requires this. The current reactive workload of the MIU inhibits significant homicide reduction work.

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Summary – The policy covering threat to life is accessible to staff and partially understood and is in the early stages of implementation, having been ratified in January 2008 for a three-month trial. There are many examples of cross-border operations.

Strengths

- Proactive use has been made of Osman warnings and reverse Osman warnings, examples of which include warnings where a member of a gang was to be the victim of a revenge attack, a dispute between drug suppliers involving firearms and threat of kidnap, criminal vendettas crossing county boundaries, potential witness protection issues, and warnings issued as part of domestic abuse care plans. During 2007, the ratio of validated threat-to-kill crimes to Osman warnings was 2:1 (103:52) and there are many examples of cross-border operations where Osman warnings have been used (13 of the 52).
- Staff working in the MIU and the SOCU demonstrated good awareness of Osman warnings and the tactics that can be deployed in cases where there is a threat to life.
- The FSA includes a section on violent crime, guns and gangs, and Class A drugs including cocaine and heroin. The FSA states that criminal use of firearms relating to gang use/involvement is not evident at the time of this report. The detective superintendent represents the region on the ACPO group for firearms prevention. The threat is monitored in the tactical assessment and information is input to the national intelligence programme.

Work in progress

- Despite good evidence to show that tactics have been used proactively to protect life, there is no force policy in this regard. The threat-to-life policy was introduced in January 2008, initially for a three-month trial period. The responsibility for managing all threat-to-life issues lies with divisional DCIs, while the responsibility for review and monitoring lies with the force crime manager, who must inform the ACC (specialist operations) of all cases where the risk is assessed as high. The DCI FIB manages a database of all referrals of life-at-risk incidents and ensures that appropriate entries are added to the intelligence system.
- The threat-to-life policy includes guidance on anonymous reports, reports from evaluated sources that cannot be proved evidentially, and reports from unevaluated sources.
- The intelligence system has been amended in light of the introduction of the threat-to-life policy, and a category of Osman enables searches to be made.
- Osman warnings are used in appropriate cases following incidents of domestic abuse, and an amendment is being made to the domestic abuse policy to include the requirement for all level 3 care plans to consider whether such a warning would be appropriate. A pilot will commence in March 2008 in one division, where information and advice on Osman warnings are linked to domestic abuse electronic care plans, which will identify who has received a warning, the date and background. This information will be accessible on a read-only basis to specified staff, for example operational officers, call-management staff and 24/7

intelligence staff.

Areas for improvement

- Knowledge of warnings outside specialist units was poor – a clear implementation plan, including a communication plan, should be instigated to support the introduction of the threat-to-life policy.
- The threat-to-life policy advises the divisional DCI to liaise with the on-call SIO in all cases where the risk has been assessed as high, and the DCI is required to declare a critical incident, to inform a superintendent and to notify the on-call ACPO officer. The ACPO officer is then responsible for dealing with the incident. There is potential for confusion about who is responsible for which decisions, due to the requirement to notify a superintendent and advice to liaise with the SIO. This should be monitored for effectiveness prior to full implementation of the policy.

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Summary – The force has a witness protection capability that is supported by dedicated covert resources. The force operates to a policy that is promulgated to and understood by dedicated and crime support staff. The force collaborates with others where appropriate.

Strengths

- Members of the WPU have all received nationally accredited training. The unit has sufficient capacity to deal with the anticipated workload.
- All officers appointed to the WPU are required to endorse a working practices document that sets out all aspects of their work relating to performance, maintenance of records (including personnel procedures), client contact, actions raised in respect of client issues and banking. It also includes expectations in respect of officer integrity and the confidential aspect of their work.
- A structured mandatory welfare support programme is in place for all members of the WPU.
- A well-established memorandum of understanding details who is a suitable candidate for the witness protection programme and sets out the 'client agreement' arrangements. The force policy is compliant with the ACPO witness support policy.
- Robust arrangements exist to ensure confidentiality and protect witness protection assets.
- The director of intelligence monitors the WPU on a weekly basis, checking policy logs and holding staff to account for decisions made. Officers in HQ crime roles expressed confidence in witness protection arrangements, resilience and working practices.
- Good relationships exist with other forces, and training is undertaken in collaboration with West Midlands Police.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Area for improvement

- The role of the WPU is not well understood outside HQ crime. The WPU intends to develop a site on the intranet to help communicate the programme and the key issues, in particular to ensure that protection is not offered as an inducement by operational officers.

July 2008

Summary – The force has a limited system to monitor the impact of preventative and enforcement activity. There is evidence that the broad range of community policing assets are partially used to help understand levels of harm in the community.

Strengths

- CIAs are routinely completed following major crimes and critical incidents. Officers and supervisors on LPTs are often involved in the completion of the assessments, and they are circulated by email when completed. CIAs are regularly reviewed and disseminated to community members and partners as appropriate.
- The TTCG and tasking processes have continued to improve, while decision making and prioritisation are informed by a risk/harm matrix that is used to score all potential and current operations. PIER are considered at the TTCG and updates provided on all operations.
- The ACPO harm matrix is used to assist with prioritisation of resources and to support decision making at the performance group and TTCG meetings.
- An impact analysis was conducted to determine the effect of a SOCU drugs operation on both the local community and the market. Data was obtained from partners, CCTV and intelligence reports and demonstrated that the operation had an overall positive impact. The introduction of an additional analyst in SOCU should afford an opportunity to assess the impact of disrupting and dismantling OCGs.

Work in progress

- The 'rich picture' database links to the local policing website and has been in place since summer 2007. In excess of 3,200 addresses have been entered and work is ongoing to improve the quality of the data recorded. The information gathered has identified some significant differences in the demographic composition of the force area when compared with census data.

Area for improvement

- The impact of major crime activity and the police response to it is not routinely monitored in terms of confidence and satisfaction or harm in communities. Greater analysis of the impact of activity through a suite of indicators, together with feedback from partners, would help the force to monitor and understand the impact of preventative and enforcement activity.

July 2008

Summary – The inspection found evidence that the force sometimes considers relevant professional standards issues in the operational planning for major crime work. There is a policy in development that will ensure that staff are appropriately vetted, commensurate with exposure.

Strengths

- An independently operated confidential reporting line, Safecall, is available for staff to report concerns or integrity issues; these are subsequently passed to the PSD.
- A dedicated ACU – consisting of a DI, two DSs, two DCs, an analyst and administrative staff – operates as an integral part of the PSD. The department is also responsible for data quality and information security.
- In order to protect sensitive information, access is granted to force systems based on officers' roles. A secure drive is used by the MIU and analysts that has the facility for password protection on an individual or shared basis.
- The HOLMES team and the MIU operate clear desk policies and physical security is effective.
- Robust arrangements are in place to protect covert assets.

Work in progress

- Vetting is currently conducted in 12 different sites across the force. The vetting unit is responsible for vetting police officer recruits, while local human resources teams are responsible for all other recruits, resulting in inconsistent decision making. The risks associated with the current arrangements have been identified, and in November 2007 chief officers supported the creation of a single, independent and resilient force-wide vetting unit. A business plan has been prepared, with incremental stages of migration to the central unit. Additional resources have been secured to effect these changes. While the developments are welcomed, police staff recruitment vetting will not be completely centralised until April 2009 at the earliest and is dependent on new posts, yet to be agreed. To reduce the risks from implementation delay, an audit regime should be introduced to dip sample proactively those decisions made across the force area.
- A consultation paper on vetting has been prepared, which is currently awaiting feedback from stakeholders, including union and staff association representatives; this proposes that management vetting for designated posts should be introduced and the process managed by the vetting unit. 'Designated posts' are those where the potential for compromise of sensitive police assets is highest and where there could be the greatest risk of serious damage to the force. Responses were requested by March 2008. Staff working in the serious and organised crime arena would require additional vetting, to be reviewed annually, should this proposal be agreed.
- The service confidence policy is not widely known or understood. It is currently being amended to include the implications of the introduction of improved vetting, including management vetting. When the amendments have been approved, the policy should be clearly communicated to all staff.

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- A training package on the GPMS has been prepared but is yet to be delivered; awareness of the requirements of the system is not widespread.
- Basic vetting of members of the IAGs and police authority members is currently being undertaken.

Areas for improvement

- The PSD and ACU do not routinely or proactively target major crime investigation in anti-corruption initiatives, nor are there established links with major crime SIOs.
- The vetting unit has moved to the IMTD but currently its offices remain adjacent to the PSD to facilitate liaison and access. Senior managers in the IMTD are clear about the importance of co-operation between the two departments, but there are no written procedures to ensure continued effective liaison and feedback between the vetting unit and the PSD, the need for which will be increased when the unit moves into new accommodation.

Enforcement

Summary – Governance arrangements for major crime investigations are partially effective, with appropriate use made of IAGs and community membership of gold command support groups.

Strengths

- The ACC (specialist operations) is the lead for major crime and has experience in criminal investigation as an SIO and in the management of crime.
- The lead police authority member receives briefings on major crime and the progress of investigations from the Chief Constable and the head of crime support. The briefings provide sufficient information for the authority to fulfil its functions. Authority members do not routinely sit on gold groups and do not consider such representation to be appropriate, but would consider their position in exceptional circumstances.
- Gold groups have been set up appropriately in major crime cases. The lead ACPO officer usually liaises with the SIO to determine the need to do so, other than in clear-cut cases where gold groups are set up immediately (for example, following the death of an on-duty officer). Membership of gold groups is bespoke to specific circumstances and includes independent membership when applicable. Examples where IAG members have contributed to gold groups include the investigation into the death of a gay man, a serious and organised crime investigation where key subjects were from the Asian community, the unexplained deaths of two black males, and the murder of an Asian male. IAG members are also helpful in providing advice to proactive and reactive major crime operations where there is potential for significant impact on communities. For example, advice was given during an operation focusing on a series of distraction burglaries where the offenders were members of the travelling community and the victims were elderly.
- The MCRT proactively searches operational incidents to identify major crime and critical incidents. Records are kept and after 21 days an email is sent to the divisional DCI to ascertain whether the case remains undetected; a full report on progress must be submitted within seven days. This report is used as the basis on which a decision is made on whether to implement a review by the MCRT. This process has identified new lines of enquiry and accountability for divisionally managed serious crime. In addition, the team provides a weekly update of the brief *modus operandi* and offence details for all undetected major and serious crime to the detective superintendents.

Work in progress

- Performance data and indicators are being developed for major crime, and HQ crime was in the spotlight at the FPG in February 2008. Following the FPG, an action was raised to develop protective services data further, for which the department will be held accountable. There will be a further spotlight on performance in May 2008. Major crime performance data presented included data on such crimes since April 2007, time spent on MIU cases per division, numbers of staff precepted to the MIU from divisions, and SCAS submissions.

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- A monthly HQ crime performance group will be introduced from April 2008, chaired by the head of crime. Progress against performance measures will be monitored and unit heads held to account.

Area for improvement

- The weekly information update circulated by the MCRT acts as a backup to divisional daily tasking and reactive policing, ensuring that major crime and critical incidents are robustly managed and resourced, but current arrangements do not capture opportunities in real time. It is intended to introduce a daily tasking and co-ordination process to ensure strategic grip by April 2008.

July 2008

Summary – The ACPO lead is not yet trained and competent in the management of linked and series crime (MLSC). This officer is supported by staff who have undergone adequate training and have experience in critical incident command, CIAs and policing in partnership.

Strengths

- Three SIOs have attended the MLSC and SCIMITAR (serious crime, intelligence management, information technology and resources) courses. Accredited force SIOs have significant experience, training and support. In addition, the detective chief superintendent (head of crime) was an experienced homicide SIO and attended both MLSC and SCIMITAR courses.
- Some 40 officers have attended the senior leadership development programme course in critical incident command at level 1, and 12 have attended the level 2 course. In addition, 36 officers have attended the emergency procedures in command course.
- Operation Haul – a protracted five-force, cross-border investigation – demonstrated the ability to work effectively to combat criminality beyond regional boundaries if effective governance arrangements are in place. Operation Talrin – a murder inquiry – spanned two forces; the gold commander was from WMC and had two deputies, one from each force, and the arrangements proved effective. A joint force gold group was operated.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Areas for improvement

- The ACPO lead has yet to attend the MLSC or SCIMITAR courses but it is acknowledged that he is an experienced SIO and ex-head of crime in his previous force, has chaired a number of gold groups and has an understanding of the role of an officer in overall command in linked crimes.
- Although SIOs have received training in linked series crimes, there has been limited exposure to or experience of such investigations for major crime. Consideration should be given to how training can be refreshed or exercises designed to ensure readiness to tackle serial offenders and series crimes. Should opportunities arise, officers might be seconded or attached to another force's response to a series crime.

July 2008

Summary – The force’s performance in the investigation of major crime is monitored through a regime that reviews each operation in terms of outcomes, costs, inputs and outputs.

Strengths

- A full post-trial debrief was held for a recent category B homicide and lessons learnt were shared with SIOs and other key staff.
- The deputy principal analyst is a key contributor to all 28-day reviews.
- To ensure that links are formalised between MIU investigations and the divisional commander of the area in which the crime occurred, a member of the senior management team from the division sits on the SIO’s management team.
- A performance regime has been introduced for RIPA authorities; this examines the numbers of new authorities granted per division and HQ, oral authorities, timeliness of reviews and cancellations month on month. This has been extended to include telecoms and other sensitive applications.
- A ‘learning the lessons’ seminar was held in April 2007, looking at the implications of a homicide case in another force to identify actions that needed to be taken locally to prevent a similar incident occurring. A detailed review of force procedures was undertaken against the lessons learnt and the DCC has taken responsibility for ensuring that the necessary actions identified are implemented.
- Reviews undertaken by the MCRT into three undetected homicides included 100% of all statements, documentation and exhibits.
- The HOLMES finance package is used in all HOLMES cases and provides accurate information on costing.

Work in progress

- The review team is currently examining all undetected rape investigations to determine whether detection opportunities have been missed or new developments in forensic science open new investigative avenues.
- The MCRT has devised a debrief questionnaire for completion by all officers involved in major crime investigation to determine good practice, challenges and areas for improvement. The MCRT will collate the responses to ensure that learning is promulgated.
- A member of the MIU has been tasked with finding best practice to inform the approach to improving performance management in the MIU.

Areas for improvement

- Processes are not in place to ensure that learning from judicial hearings, inquests, appeals, public inquiries and Part 8 reviews are shared across the force area.
- The forensic science and overtime budgets for the MIU have both been

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overspent at the end of each recent year. Costs do not drive or inhibit operational activity, as resources are allocated centrally to major crime. SIOs were unable to recall an instance where financial restrictions had prevented a line of investigation being followed robustly. The allocation of budgets should be reviewed and subjected to rigorous governance, oversight and management.

- Debriefs do not routinely involve partners such as the CPS and the Forensic Science Service. Consideration should be given to including other agencies in the debrief process.
- Current formal review processes as required by the MIM are rigorous, but outside this there is minimal performance scrutiny. A recent independent review conducted into the resilience of WMC (to conduct major criminal inquiries) recommended that long-term investigations be reviewed to ensure that they provide value for money in relation to force priorities.

Performance Management and Resilience

Summary – The inspection teams found insufficient investigative capability in the force MIU to meet the predictable major crime investigation demands without the need to precept staff from divisions. Informal arrangements with neighbouring forces exist and are deployed as appropriate. These arrangements are considered adequate to counter normal and extraordinary levels of need. Force procedures to manage human resources provide limited protection for the investigative capability.

Strengths

- A dedicated incident unit (MIU) was established in 2005, which has since grown by 21 posts. The unit consists of a detective superintendent, three DCIs, six DIs, 12 DSs, 24 DCs, and 23 police staff performing analytical, typing, HOLMES and support functions. Some 15 officers are tier 5 trained interviewers, six of whom are on the MIU; of the 90 tier 3 officers, 16 are on the MIU. All SIOs are also trained to perform the role of senior identification manager for mass fatalities. WMC supported the Sharm el-Sheik bombings response by sending a DCI trained as a senior identification manager to perform this role in Egypt.
- The MIU has a dedicated training budget, and access to training to meet predictable demands is well managed. A skills audit has recently been undertaken that did not identify any significant gaps.
- Each division has a DI or DCI on call for critical incidents and major crime, supported by an all-call command team member. In addition, a 24/7 SIO on-call rota operates, which includes the nominated force SIOs and other trained senior detectives and an MIU DS and three DCs on duty each weekend and bank holiday. These arrangements have been frequently tested and provide a resilient response. The initial response to such an incident is controlled by the FDI, who arranges for additional support and call-outs as required; between 8 am and 1 am daily the FDI is supplemented by the force silver car. A senior police constable provides additional resilience to call-takers and dispatchers and is available for advice and support in addition to the FDI. These arrangements ensure that access to specialist services and staff with specialist skills to provide the initial response and advice for predicted levels of major crime demand is good.
- In the initial hours following the report of an unexplained death or murder there is good access to specialist advice and equipment. A uniformed supervisor attends the scene of all unexplained deaths as a minimum level of response. Where specialist advice is required, a DS is called. Access to further specialist advice is good.
- An MIU DCI co-ordinates all FLO deployments. For resilience, a deputy from the MIU has been appointed and each division has at least one local co-ordinator, who supports the trained officers. Clear guidelines are in place for the deployment and protection of FLOs and WMC takes the regional lead role. Deployments and welfare are monitored through an IT application, and each is risk assessed. SIOs are required to meet with the FLO at least on a weekly basis during their involvement in a major investigation.

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- The MIU has an officer nominated as the liaison officer for work-related deaths and liaison with the Health and Safety Executive. All SIOs have attended a seminar on dealing with deaths in medical settings and there is confidence in the ability to respond to unexplained deaths in communities and establishments.
- MIRWEB, a web based application that enables the distribution of a high volume of calls between forces, was used effectively in a category A murder inquiry, linking WMC and two neighbouring force systems, and a regional protocol exists for CASWEB collaboration. CASWEB enables other forces to create, search and update records in support of large enquiries and record messages on the host forces casualty bureau system. Both systems were effectively tested in November 2007 and a seminar was held in February 2008 to feed back the findings.
- To deal with a large quantity of CCTV and video evidence in a category A murder inquiry, a system was developed to index, search and retrieve information. The details of this are expanded upon in the developing practice section of this report.
- Decisions to deploy staff to other force areas or to support international critical incidents are always made at chief officer level.

Work in progress

- Resilience to conduct major criminal inquiries has been the subject of a recent independent review conducted by an ex-West Midlands Police detective superintendent into:
 - the establishment and composition of the MIU, its capability and capacity and its relationship with divisions;
 - force resilience in relation to major crime, particularly around the HOLMES disciplines and the number of deployable accredited SIOs and other specialist officers and staff;
 - ownership of major crime and the responsibilities of ACPO, divisions and HQ CID;
 - force arrangements regarding the effectiveness of precepts (the deployment of staff from divisions and HQ departments in support of major crime);
 - MIR accommodation and its suitability;
 - compliance with MIRSAP and MIM in relation to managing and staffing major investigations;
 - force policy in relation to the investigation of major crime; and
 - the perception of divisions regarding the capacity and capability of the MIU and their expectations of what the unit should deliver.The report was received in early 2008 and contains 17 recommendations that are currently the subject of consideration.
- The findings of the above-mentioned external review into the MIU are currently under review, together with a comprehensive internal review of criminal investigation, which reported in December 2007 and contained 114 recommendations. The recommendations from these reviews have been collated for consideration by the ACC (specialist operations), but six 'quick wins' have been identified for early adoption:
 - the introduction of a force crime manager;
 - the development of standard operating procedures for 14 priority crimes;

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- a cohesive daily management process;
 - the creation of a suite of level 2 performance indicators;
 - a project management approach to change; and
 - consideration of the implementation of a night crime car.
- The ACC (specialist operations) recognises the need to improve the response to rape investigations and has set up a steering group to address the shortcomings identified. A dedicated DS has been appointed to lead on this work and an action plan is being prepared. The priority is to address the lack of availability of trained staff to respond to allegations of rape and serious sexual assault. Support has been given to the steering group by the ACPO national lead for rape.
 - Two SIOs are currently accredited to professionalising the investigative process (PIP) level 3; DIs are collating evidence for the completion of portfolios; and all operational DSs and DCs are trained to PIP level 2. A PIP project is led at superintendent level and a new member of staff has been employed to develop this further. The policy for level 3 has been written but is yet to be implemented.
 - A 24/7 call-out rota for DSs is under development in order to provide additional resilience to the senior call-out arrangements already in place. This requirement may be replaced by the introduction of the night crime car.

Areas for improvement

- Out-of-hours access to trained SOLOs is extremely poor and means that many victims of such offences are not allocated an officer who has received specialist training. Many first responders to such crimes are inexperienced and untrained to perform this vital role. This situation has developed over a number of years as the majority of trained and experienced officers have moved to specialist units that do not work 24-hour shifts; also, training courses have not been filled or were subsequently cancelled. Analysis shows that most rape offences occur at weekends and, across the five divisions, only seven of the 59 trained officers are currently in response roles. The role of a SOLO is not widely understood; there is no co-ordination or specialist supervision of SOLOs, no welfare support and no refresher training. Current practice is for CID officers to be used as hybrid SOLOs in some cases, but this presents a significant risk. It is acknowledged that a rape steering group has been set up under the chair of the force crime manager, with a dedicated DS appointed, but urgent steps should be taken to redress this situation and ensure that victims have acceptable access to trained officers at the time of reporting a sexual assault, to secure and preserve evidence and to provide the specialist advice necessary to the victim and investigating officers. Each recommendation in the action plan should have clear milestones, and implementation should be rigorously monitored and prioritised against risk.
- The roles of deputy SIO, file officer, disclosure officer and exhibits officer are usually supplied by the host division to support investigations led by the MIU. Additional staff, if required, are requested from divisions and departments, using the precept model after discussions between the divisional commander and the SIO, and with the approval of the ACC (specialist operations). Research reveals that, on average, 46 to 50 FTE members of staff are working in support of major investigations each year in addition to the full-time MIU staff. The procedure for the investigation of crime states that it is “the divisional commander’s role to ensure the SIO has the required logistical and welfare support and resources to

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complete the task in hand”, although arrangements to provide the MIU with staff with the required skills and training do not work as well as intended. As a result, the MIU experiences delays in secondments and staff are not always ‘fit for purpose’ due to skill shortages or limited availability. Widespread dissatisfaction is expressed with the current arrangements. The recent independent review examined the precept model and acknowledged the imperfections of the current arrangements; it recommended that dedicated police staff disclosure officers be appointed to the MIU. A further recommendation to end precepting from divisions and to amalgamate the MIU and SOCU was not supported. However, an alternative sustainable solution should be sought that reduces the requirement to precept for extended periods, balances abstractions in the long and short term from divisions and provides a quick response to meet investigative demand.

- Medium- to long-term major crime SIO resilience should be reviewed, as the only accredited SIOs are already assigned to the MIU. At the time of writing, internal movement had created an SIO vacancy on the MIU, and while an experienced detective has been identified to fill the post, the accreditation process will begin only on appointment. DCI posts on the MIU are not considered attractive postings and an acting DCI filled one such post for over 12 months as, despite internal and external adverts, no suitably qualified officer applied. In addition, divisional DCIs have not investigated a homicide since 2003. Consideration should be given to developing career pathways to create future capability and to enhance the role of the divisional DCI.
- Despite the experience represented in a number of senior detectives, the current position is that only MIU SIOs will be accredited to PIP level 3. The rationale supporting this includes the fact that divisional DCIs largely perform the role of performance managers and they, together with other DCIs and detective superintendents, may not get the necessary exposure to investigations to meet the full PIP criteria. Consideration should be given to broadening the exposure of those working towards accreditation to provide additional resilience, succession planning and career development opportunities.
- Accommodation provision for the MIU to run MIRs has improved with the provision of refurbished facilities at Stourport, which were described in a recent independent review as ‘ideal’. There are also offices in the north at Shrewsbury and Telford and a satellite base at Redditch that are used as MIRs, but the facilities here are limited and in one location they are used by other officers as a working base. The requirement for MIR premises for the south west has been identified but potential sites have been allocated to other departments. While the rationale for decisions may be sound, they have not been effectively communicated to the MIU or HQ crime support, nor have alternative short-to medium-term solutions been proposed. A longer-term estates plan is under development but will not deliver improvements until 2009/10 at the earliest.
- MIR accommodation does not provide effective firewalls to protect intelligence or systems; an independent review into a category B murder investigation described the arrangements as ‘wholly inadequate’.
- Victim care suites in Hereford and Telford are not used consistently for all medical examinations of victims, as some are conducted at GP surgeries or other medical establishments. Arrangements should be reviewed urgently to guarantee the forensic integrity of evidence collection.

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- Force policy requires undetected rapes to be submitted to the detective chief superintendent for operational review, but this is not currently complied with and a recent sampling of rape investigations found an example where the officer in charge of one investigation was not a trained detective. The rape steering group should address allocation, supervision and review as a matter of urgency.
- All HOLMES and casualty bureau trained staff are required to attend six-monthly refresher training, while initial training is four weeks for indexers, three weeks for document managers and one week for both disclosure and exhibits officers. The requirement is for each division to have three document managers, three exhibits officers, four disclosure officers, six HOLMES indexers and two police staff administrative officers, trained and available at all times. In addition, each division is expected to have a minimum SIO capacity of a DCI, a DI, a sergeant trained in house-to-house enquiries, a sergeant file builder, two FLO co-ordinators, one crime analyst, one intelligence sergeant and one intelligence development officer to support major investigations. Only one division currently has sufficient disclosure and exhibits officers trained to the force standard. The training requirements and cost efficiency of initial and refresher training should be reviewed against the use made of such staff, some of whom have received initial and refresher training but have not been used operationally.
- The FSA includes analysis of murder and manslaughter but records are not kept to monitor the number of unexplained or sudden deaths and the percentage undertaken as inquiries or investigations by the MIU or on divisions.

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Summary – Specialist and covert investigations are resourced through a robust infrastructure that has proved effective. Elements of intelligence are delivered through written collaborative agreements with the RIU that are sound. The inspection found evidence of the proactive use of these assets across a widening range of offences.

Strengths

- Significant investment has been provided by the police authority to build the protective services capacity and capability, amounting in total to some £2.9 million. The two-year programme to recruit 93.5 (FTE) additional specialist staff and to increase the fleet by 44 vehicles commenced on 1 April 2006 and is on track to deliver on schedule. This growth has been supplemented by a capital investment of £3.4 million to upgrade facilities; the upgrade was completed in July 2007. The direct growth in the MIU consisted of an additional DCI SIO, one DI, three DSs, nine DCs and an additional analyst.
- There is sufficient capacity to deliver against predictable demand in support of major crime investigations by specialist disciplines, including hi-tech crime, surveillance – technical, armed and rural covert capability with two full surveillance teams – a stand-alone armed capability and special branch surveillance capability, the source handling unit, ECU, ANPR resources, forensic investigators, witness protection, FLOs, HOLMES, negotiators and TSU staff. In the event of a major crime, all the resources of the SOCU are made available during the initial investigative phase and the senior management of HQ crime support ensures that resource deployment is adjusted to meet demand.
- Robust arrangements operate for the attendance of crime scene managers and scene co-ordinators at major crimes and the use of a SAFELO (scientific and forensic evidence liaison officer) has been trialled. This post is designed to support the forensic co-ordinator and SIO in an administrative and technical role. A senior member of the scientific department attends SIO management meetings, assists in preparing the forensic strategy, in order to determine priorities, and is the conduit for the provision of specialists.
- Resources have been provided to support national and international critical incidents and operations, such as the London and Egyptian bombings and the Indian Ocean tsunami. Chief and senior officers perform key functions in national kidnap and extortion exercises and feedback from such activity is fed into WMC's policy and procedures.
- Officers from the task force are experienced in house-to-house enquiries and undertake this role in major crime investigations. The task force supervisor prepares the house-to-house strategy, in conjunction with the SIO.
- An agreement has been signed to use a large sporting venue as a media briefing centre, as emergency accommodation or for other such purposes as required, should there be a significant critical incident.

Work in progress

- Confidential product is managed through the FIB, with a DS and two accredited DCs forming an embryonic confidential unit; its longer-term contribution to the

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regional confidential unit is being considered. It is intended that all intelligence products will be handled through the confidential unit in the future. Recommendations relating to the structure and management of the unit were made in a recent independent review into major crime investigative capacity; these are currently under consideration.

- Apart from those for senior staff, no formalised call-out or out-of-hours procedures are in place. When they have been required, the DI has contacted members of the MIU and sufficient officers have always been available. While this arrangement has been effective in the past, a degree of vulnerability is recognised and weekend and bank holiday coverage will commence in February 2008.

Areas for improvement

- No memoranda of understanding or written agreements are in place with surrounding forces to share resources in times of exceptional demand. Chief officers and senior detectives are confident that support would be forthcoming from neighbouring forces in times of need and there are many examples where mutual assistance has been provided through informal agreements.
- Crime scene examiners are deployed in each division but recently line management responsibility has moved to HQ, and communication channels and opportunities for personal professional development are evolving. The deployment of crime scene examiners to major crime scenes should be reviewed, as some staff have had significant exposure while others have had limited or no exposure. A more equitable distribution would increase resilience. In addition, consideration should be given to improving feedback from SIOs to crime scene examiners and fingerprint staff, in particular when their work has proved significant to the investigation.
- There are formalised call-out arrangements in place for search advisors and there is always a task force on standby that is specially trained in this role.
- While WMC ultimately benefits from secondments to support national and international critical incidents, long-term absences of specialists can have an adverse impact on local performance. A process of review should be introduced in such circumstances.
- Some 210 officers have been trained as FLOs since 2000 and there are 21 family liaison co-ordinators. While records indicate these numbers, it is not clear how many are currently deployable. Regular audits should be undertaken to ensure that the list reflects those actually available for deployment.

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Summary – The force has a full-time and dedicated case review team that is always deployed when current and historical major crime cases are reviewed, in accordance with ACPO guidance. Case review work is efficient. (Refers to impact on cases.)

Strengths

- The dedicated MCRT consists of a DI, a DS and two DCs, who operate to a clear policy and procedure document. Current practice is that 100% of statements, documents and exhibits are examined in every case. Line management is by the force crime manager (a detective superintendent), thus ensuring independence from the MIU. The team is responsible for reviewing all undetected offences of murder and stranger rape after 28 days, in line with the MIM, and other cases as directed by the ACC (specialist operations). Reviews are conducted according to written terms of reference.
- An independent review was conducted in 2007 of a significant investigation into the murder of two women by an unknown person. Although the offender was arrested and charged before the end of the 28-day period that would trigger the commission of such a review, the resources dedicated to the investigation and the nature of the offences justified the scale of the review.
- A quarterly major crime review panel is chaired by the ACC (specialist operations), comprising the force crime manager, detective superintendent MIU, head of MCRT, SIO, force solicitor and the divisional commander for the relevant area. The panel considers recommendations from reviews and monitors the implementation of changes. The chair is cognisant of parallels to the PSD review panel chaired by the DCC, but is satisfied that current arrangements are both effective and manageable.
- Reviews are conducted for crimes other than homicides. The MCRT actively scans incidents each day and sends divisional DCIs an email seeking an update on all major and serious crimes at 21 days to ascertain whether the crime remains undetected; it requires a full report at 28 days. This is then used as the background for a review conducted by the team after 28 days. Reviews of ongoing murder and stranger rape cases are completed at 28 days, bi-annually and annually in accordance with the MIM.
- Officers from South Wales Police have conducted peer reviews on work led by the head of the MCRT. They provide a support and mentoring role to the review team, which retains independence, and the head of the MCRT is a member of the Southern Wales review group.

Work in progress

- Two further full-time and two part-time posts have been identified for the MCRT and these will be in place by April 2008. It is anticipated that these posts will be converted to police staff investigator posts in the following year

Area for improvement

- As the MCRT develops, there is scope for greater involvement in the review of current and historic unsolved fatal road traffic collisions.

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MC25 Summary – The inspection found evidence that the force is predominantly compliant with relevant ACPO standards in the MIM and MIRSAP.

Strengths

- SIOs have a good awareness of the requirements of MIRSAP and MIM and a recent independent review made a number of positive comments about compliance.
- NPIA and ACPO guidance and doctrine are managed through a project board chaired by the detective chief superintendent. Comprehensive action plans for integrating guidance with force policy and procedures are prepared, and implementation is monitored using a traffic light system. Practices have been reviewed by the NPIA and were considered robust.
- SIOs have received training in the use of sensitive policy files in reactive investigations and these are routinely completed. Policy files are used in all MIU and MCRT cases. SIOs provide informal mentor peer support to each other, an aspect of which is reviewing colleagues' policy books and decisions in the first few days of an investigation.

Work in progress

- None identified.

Areas for improvement

- SIO policy decisions are shared with those officers on major inquiries in briefings; however, the policy files are not routinely entered onto HOLMES, as recommended by MIRSAP (paragraph 3.11.3).
- Policy books are not routinely used for rape investigations.

Recommendations

Major Crime

Recommendation 1

Urgent steps should be taken to ensure that victims of rape and serious sexual assault have acceptable and timely access to trained officers at the time of initial reporting, and effective co-ordination and supervision of SOLOs should be implemented.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A

ACC	assistant chief constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ACU	anti-corruption unit
ANPR	automatic number plate recognition
ATM	automatic teller machine

B

BCU	basic command unit
BME	black and minority ethnic
BPS	Building Protective Services
BSIA	British Security Industry Association

C

CAB	covert authorities bureau
CDRP	crime and disorder reduction partnership
CIA	community impact assessment
CID	criminal investigation department
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CROP	covert rural observation point

D

DC	detective constable
DCC	deputy chief constable
DCI	detective chief inspector
DI	detective inspector
DS	detective sergeant

E

ECU economic crime unit

F

FDI [force duty inspector

FIB force intelligence bureau

FLO family liaison officer

FPG force performance group

FSA force strategic assessment

FTE full-time equivalent

G

GPMS government protective marking system

H

HMI Her Majesty's Inspector

HMIC Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HMRC Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

HOLMES Home Office Large Major Enquiry System

HQ headquarters

I

IAG independent advisory group

IMTD information management and technology department

ISU intelligence support unit

L

LPT local policing team

M

MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MCRT	major crime review team
MIM	murder investigation manual
MIR	major incident room
MIRSAP	major incident room standardised administrative procedures
MIU	major investigation unit
MLSC	management of linked and series crime
MoPI	management of police information
MSF	most similar force

N

NIM	National Intelligence Model
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPSAT	National Protective Services Analysis Tool

O

OCG	organised crime group
ODU	organisational development unit

P

PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PIER	prevention, intelligence, enforcement and reassurance
PIP	professionalising the investigative process
POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
PSD	professional standards department
PURE	police use of resources evaluation

R

RART	regional asset recovery team
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RIG	regional intelligence group
RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
RIU	regional intelligence unit
RSO	registered sex offender

S

SCAS	serious crime analysis system
SCIMITAR	serious crime, intelligence management, information technology and resources
SGC	specific grading criteria
SIO	senior investigating officer
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency
SOCU	serious and organised crime unit
SOLO	sexual offences liaison officer
SPI	statutory performance indicator

T

TTCG	tactical tasking and co-ordination group
TSU	technical support unit

W

WMC	West Mercia Constabulary
WPU	witness protection unit

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Appendix 2: Developing Practice

Developing Practice

TITLE: intelligence-led CCTV analysis system

PROBLEM:

Following a category B murder a significant quantity of CCTV footage needed to be filtered, categorised, searched, exhibited and stored effectively.

SOLUTION:

The force have developed ILCAS (intelligence-led CCTV analysis system). This development was an essential tool in the detection and subsequent conviction of the offender, providing significant images without the need to view stored information repeatedly. Still images of nominals and vehicles were categorised, using specific descriptors in order that they could be searched and filtered as the investigation progressed. Times and dates were adjusted to provide a real-time sequence of events and a comprehensive report – containing all the relevant imagery, associated notes and an event timeline – was subsequently converted automatically into Word documents or statements as required.

OUTCOME(S) :

The system has since been shared with the ACPO Homicide Working Group.

Developing Practice

TITLE: Multi-media interactive system to present evidence to court

PROBLEM:

An effective and cost efficient solution was sought to enable evidence to be presented in court.

SOLUTION:

A multi-media interactive system has been developed using expertise of WMC staff to present evidence at court. Suffolk Constabulary has used this system in the trial of an individual for five murders in Ipswich, and the Metropolitan Police has used it in the investigation into the London bombings. WMC is supporting Warwickshire Police in a forthcoming trial and makes this facility available to other forces at minimal cost. It has received positive acclaim.

OUTCOME:

The system has been used effectively at minimal cost to forces in large scale complex criminal proceedings.

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Developing Practice

TITLE: Voice Recognition Software

PROBLEM:

A solution is being progressed with a commercial company to facilitate the automatic transcription of interviews with multiple persons present, recording more than one voice at a time. This could be of significant benefit in major crime investigations and has a potential use in interviews of significant witnesses and suspects and in legal and court proceedings, prison interviews, fraud investigations, etc.

SOLUTION:

A prototype of voice recognition software has been produced that is currently being refined. The system supports a number of applications and a link to HOLMES is under development.

OUTCOME(S) :

The system is in development.

FORCE CONTACT:

Further details of each developing practice are available from WMC MIU. Telephone 08457 444 888.