



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Strategic Policing Requirement

Cheshire Constabulary

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Introduction

The *Strategic Policing Requirement* (SPR) was issued in July 2012.¹ This document sets out the Home Secretary's view of the national threats that the police must prepare for and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter those threats. The SPR respects the operational independence of the police service, advising what, in strategic terms, it needs to achieve, but not how it should achieve it.

The particular threats specified in Part A of the SPR, and referred to as the national threats in this report, are:

- terrorism;
- civil emergencies;
- organised crime;
- public order threats; and
- large-scale cyber incidents.

Part B specifies the policing response that is required nationally, in conjunction with other national agencies, to counter these threats. This policing response is described in the SPR as follows:

*“the combined national **capacity** of all police forces to respond to these threats, expressed in terms of the outcomes sought – these are drawn, wherever possible, from publicly available national government strategies. Police and crime commissioners and chief constables must have regard to this aggregate capacity when considering the respective **contributions** they will make to it;*

*the **capabilities** that police forces, often working collaboratively, need to maintain in order to achieve these outcomes; the requirement for **consistency** among forces for certain key specialist capabilities where the resources from more than one police force need to be integrated with, or work effectively alongside, each other. In some instances this requirement for consistency may need to involve other key emergency services and agencies; and*

*the **connectivity** arrangements by which resources from several police forces may effectively be co-ordinated or mobilised, together and with those of other agencies – such as the Security Service and, from 2013, the National Crime Agency. The combination of consistency and*

¹ In accordance with section 37A Police Act 1996. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-policing-requirement>

connectivity forms the basis for interoperability between police forces and with other partners.”

We report the findings from this inspection of Cheshire Constabulary which took place during September 2013 against each of these requirements.

The breadth of requirements that are set out in the strategic policing requirement are outside the scope of a single inspection. Therefore, it has been necessary to plan a series of inspections over three years so that the police response to all the national threats can be examined individually and in-depth over that period.

This year, HMIC has examined how well police forces have established arrangements to respond to strategic policing requirement threats and has conducted in-depth examinations of the police response to two of the national threats: the threat to public order; and the threat of a large-scale cyber incident.

We have produced the following three national reports, available at www.hmic.gov.uk:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of the arrangements that police forces have in place to meet the requirement;
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats to public order; and
- The Strategic Policing Requirement: An inspection of how police forces in England and Wales deal with threats of a large-scale cyber incident (including criminal attack).

This report sets out what we found when we examined the arrangements that Cheshire Constabulary has in place to meet the strategic policing requirement and follows the format of the first of the national reports listed above.

Capacity and contribution

Terrorism

The chief constable understands his role in tackling the threat of terrorism. The constabulary, together with the counter-terrorism network, has the capacity it needs to contribute to the national counter-terrorism effort.

Cheshire Constabulary does not have a specific assessment of the threats that it faces from terrorism but applies the national risk assessment.

The constabulary is linked to the national counter-terrorism network through the regional counter-terrorism unit located in the Greater Manchester Police area. Counter-terrorism leaders recognise that, as a small constabulary facing a low level of threat from terrorism, they would not be able to deal with serious threats. The regional counter-terrorism unit provides most of the constabulary's counter-terrorism capacity and contribution and has demonstrated its commitment to assist the constabulary by investigating potential terrorist conspiracies.

Cheshire Constabulary has sufficient special branch officers to deal with intelligence and provide a link between the national counter-terrorism network and constabulary staff. A significant number of sites identified by the Control of Major Accident Hazards regulations are located within the constabulary area. Counter-terrorism security advisors, who provide advice to these sites about their security, are based within the constabulary, but their activities are co-ordinated by the counter-terrorism unit.

Civil emergencies

The constabulary, together with the Cheshire local resilience forum, has the capacity to respond to local civil emergencies and to contribute to national emergencies.

The constabulary is an active participant in the local resilience forum which is chaired by an assistant chief constable who leads the constabulary's response to civil emergencies. This is supported by a risk assessment group, chaired by a representative of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. This group considers the nature of the incidents that the local resilience forum could be expected to deal with.

The constabulary has considered likely threats that it may face from civil emergencies, but has not produced a strategic threat and risk assessment. Instead, the local resilience forum has prepared the Cheshire community risk register, which is published on the forum's website and describes risks that the partnership may have to deal with. It is dated November 2011.

Representatives of the constabulary emergency planning department attend the local resilience forum and meet regularly with the emergency planning team.

The constabulary has sufficient staff to meet its obligations for the provision of police officers trained to deal with chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents. Also, it has a casualty bureau facility that deals with enquiries from concerned relatives and friends of people who may have become casualties as a result of civil accidents. The constabulary has staff trained in the identification of victims from incidents involving large numbers of casualties.

Cheshire Constabulary is the lead police force for public order mobilisation within the North West region and it hosts the regional information and co-ordination centre. Arrangements are in place to mobilise specialist resources from the other police forces within the North West region. Other specialist staff, such as disaster victim identification resources, that would be required to respond to civil emergencies can be called upon from other constabularies within the region. The constabulary has reduced the number of its staff trained to deal with chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents, but there is still regional capacity to meet the national requirements.

Serious organised crime

The constabulary has appropriate capacity to meet threats from serious organised crime, either with its own trained staff, or through the regional organised crime unit.

An assistant chief constable provides clear leadership of the constabulary's response to serious organised crime. Staff work closely with others in the region to develop and take forward the region's response to serious organised crime.

The constabulary applies nationally approved methods to disrupt organised crime groups. The constabulary has developed an organised crime strategy that outlines how the constabulary will respond to threats within Cheshire.

There are task-allocation and co-ordination arrangements which support the constabulary in making sure that resources are allocated to tackling the most significant crime groups, and that those beyond its capability are referred to the regional organised crime unit.

Public order

The chief constable understands his role to provide police support units² to deal with public order incidents across constabulary boundaries and to make a contribution to the national requirement.

The constabulary has assessed the nature of events that it would reasonably be expected to deal with and the likelihood of disorder. The public order strategic threat and risk assessment, provided by the constabulary to HMIC, was dated March 2013 and covered the period January to December 2013. The constabulary has also led on the development of this type of assessment for the North West region.

Cheshire Constabulary has sufficient trained staff and equipment, including transport, for ten police support units. They can provide the five police support units that they are required to contribute towards national mobilisation. For each police force, HMIC compared the number of units they declared they had, with the number that they told us they needed to respond to local outbreaks of disorder. The constabulary assessed that it needed ten to respond to local threats and therefore had sufficient units.

The constabulary has sufficient specialist public order staff³ and senior officers to command responses to major events and public disorder.

The use of mutual aid – the provision of support between police forces – is another indicator of the extent to which police forces either have or do not have sufficient trained public order resources. Data provided by forces on their provision and receipt of mutual aid for 2011/12 and 2012/13 show that Cheshire was one of 31 police forces that were net providers for public order policing mutual aid.

² Police support units are the basic formation used by the police service for the policing of major events. The composition of a PSU is standardised across all of the 43 police constabularies in England and Wales and consists of one Inspector, three Sergeants and 18 Police Constables, plus three drivers trained and equipped to carry out public order tactics to national standards, with three suitably equipped personnel carriers. Formations of a sergeant and six constables are referred to as serials.

³ In addition to public order trained police officers, constabularies have specialists who are trained in a number of capabilities. These include liaison with protestors to facilitate peaceful protest and the removal of uncooperative protestors causing obstructions.

Large-scale cyber incident

The constabulary's plans to respond to the threat of a large-scale cyber incident are still under development.

The response to cyber threats is led by an assistant chief constable, who also leads the constabulary's response to serious organised crime and the *Pursue*⁴ strand of the government's *Contest* counter-terrorism strategy.

The constabulary has not assessed the threats or the potential impact of a denial of service attack,⁵ but was confident that it had staff that appreciated the threat to constabulary systems. Business continuity plans⁶ have been prepared to enable the constabulary to continue functioning in the event of disruptions to services, including the impact on its IT systems.

The constabulary has limited numbers of staff within its high-tech crime unit and, like most constabularies, cyber capabilities were limited to the investigation of crimes linked to the use of computers.

The constabulary has prepared a high-level cyber strategy that details its intentions, which go beyond investigation. The four main aims within the strategy are to ensure a co-ordinated response for the prevention and investigation of cyber-crime, support the public and businesses to protect them from the threat of cyber-crime and improve awareness through education, make Cheshire a hostile environment for cyber criminals, and ensure access to specialist capabilities to investigate and gather intelligence on cyber-crime. At the time of our inspection, it had not implemented all of the details of this plan.

⁴ CONTEST – The government's counter-terrorism strategy. The four strands are: pursue, prevent, protect and prepare.

⁵ A denial of service attack is an attempt to make a computer or network of computers unavailable to its users.

⁶ Business continuity plans set out how the constabulary will operate following an incident and how it expects to return to normal business in the quickest possible time afterwards.

Capability

Terrorism

Cheshire Constabulary has, or has access to, the necessary capability to conduct complex investigations and systems in place to manage the training of special branch officers to maintain the necessary skills to provide specific counter-terrorism capability.

The special branch is part of the constabulary's intelligence branch. A counter-terrorism analyst has been attached to the constabulary analytical team to ensure that sensitive intelligence is properly assessed and contributes to the constabulary's understanding of threats and risks. The regional counter-terrorism unit provides most of the capabilities that the constabulary requires to tackle, investigate, prosecute and disrupt terrorist activity.

The constabulary recognises the importance of preventing people from becoming radicalised for violent extremism. It has staff within its highest-risk geographical areas who can work with communities in identifying vulnerable people and taking steps to prevent them becoming motivated to commit acts of extreme violence. A board, led by the assistant chief constable, co-ordinates the constabulary's measures to prevent people being radicalised for involvement in terrorism.

Staff who deal with counter-terrorism are all trained to national standards and have been provided a range of training products, including a data communications course.

Cheshire Constabulary has sufficient trained staff locally to support all four strands of the counter-terrorism CONTEST strategy.

Civil emergencies

The constabulary is meeting the strategic policing requirement to provide capability to meet civil emergencies which span the borders between Cheshire and surrounding forces.

Cheshire Constabulary has, with other emergency services, considered the assessment of threat detailed within the national strategic risk assessment, how it aligns with regional and local threats, and decided upon what resources are required. The local resilience forum, within a structured review of its arrangements, identified that there was a need for local threats to be recognised more effectively and linked to resourcing decisions and exercise planning.

The strategic local resilience forum is supported by a general working group that co-ordinates the working level activity undertaken by 15 task groups. Constabulary emergency planners and all staff who support the constabulary in

preparing to deal with civil emergencies are trained to national standards. Skills and accreditations held by staff are recorded on a database.

The local resilience forum recognises that it needs to be prepared to respond to incidents at the identified control of major accident hazards sites in Cheshire.

The constabulary has identified a shortage in the number of senior police officers trained to lead chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear responses and the constabulary has plans to deliver two training courses to rectify this.

Cheshire Constabulary and the Cheshire local resilience forum ensure that they draw learning from experience elsewhere. The M6 motorway runs through the constabulary area and is a major concern in terms of emergency planning. To ensure that it had the most up-to-date information to plan for incidents on the M6, the local resilience forum sought information about the responses to a recent major road traffic collision in Kent.

Serious organised crime

Cheshire Constabulary has the capabilities required, either internally or through officers provided by the regional organised crime unit, to meet threats from serious organised crime.

Constabulary leaders are part of the regional arrangements for tackling serious organised crime and attend quarterly governance meetings for the regional organised crime unit.

The constabulary has not included considerations about serious organised crime in its strategic threat and risk assessment. However, senior leaders recognise the potential consequences of serious organised crime, like violence between gangs, and the need to further develop its understanding of the threats. Its approach to tackling organised crime is based on the principle that it prioritises activity against crime affecting Cheshire communities.

Cheshire Constabulary has some advanced covert policing capabilities that the regional organised crime unit also uses. Constabulary leaders understand that, as a small constabulary, it will need the assistance of larger neighbouring police forces to provide all of the capabilities needed to tackle organised crime groups. They have identified the areas where they may need help and have reached agreements to obtain assistance if required.

Public order

Cheshire Constabulary has the capabilities required to respond to public order threats.

The constabulary has completed a self-assessment of its public order capability using the College of Policing capability framework. This assessed how the constabulary meets ten capabilities that are sub-divided into 32 definitions. The constabulary reported that they fully complied with 31 of the 32 definitions.

Cheshire Constabulary trains its staff in accordance with national standards, including the use of tactics to end incidents of disorder before they escalate. The same training lesson plans, which have been reviewed by the College of Policing, are used by all of the five police forces in the North West region.

The constabulary has reviewed the way that it provides public order training for its staff and identified how improvements can be achieved. These training improvements have been recognised and included within a national database recording good practice. Command level training is provided by Greater Manchester Police.

HMIC tested, without notice, the constabulary's capability to mobilise a response to outbreaks of public disorder. Constabulary control room staff were able to identify who was on duty, their relevant skills and availability to respond. An officer trained to command the police response was available for deployment and could have attended within ten minutes. A fully equipped personnel carrier was available to convey police officers to the scene. Senior officers were also available to take command of the immediate and longer-term responses. Relevant contingency plans within the constabulary's command and control system were also available for staff to refer to. It was recognised that a second incident would challenge the constabulary but control room staff were aware of arrangements for obtaining assistance from other forces within the region and nationally.

We inspected one of the constabulary's police support unit carriers and found it to be fully functioning and equipped to national standards.

Large-scale cyber incident

Cheshire Constabulary, like most police forces, is not yet able to effectively identify or understand the threat risk and harm posed by cyber-crime. The constabulary is not yet taking full advantage of opportunities being made available to train its staff to deal with cyber-crime.

The constabulary's leaders have recognised the importance of dealing with cyber threats and the increasing levels of cyber-crime. Cyber threats are considered within the constabulary's strategic threat and risk document.

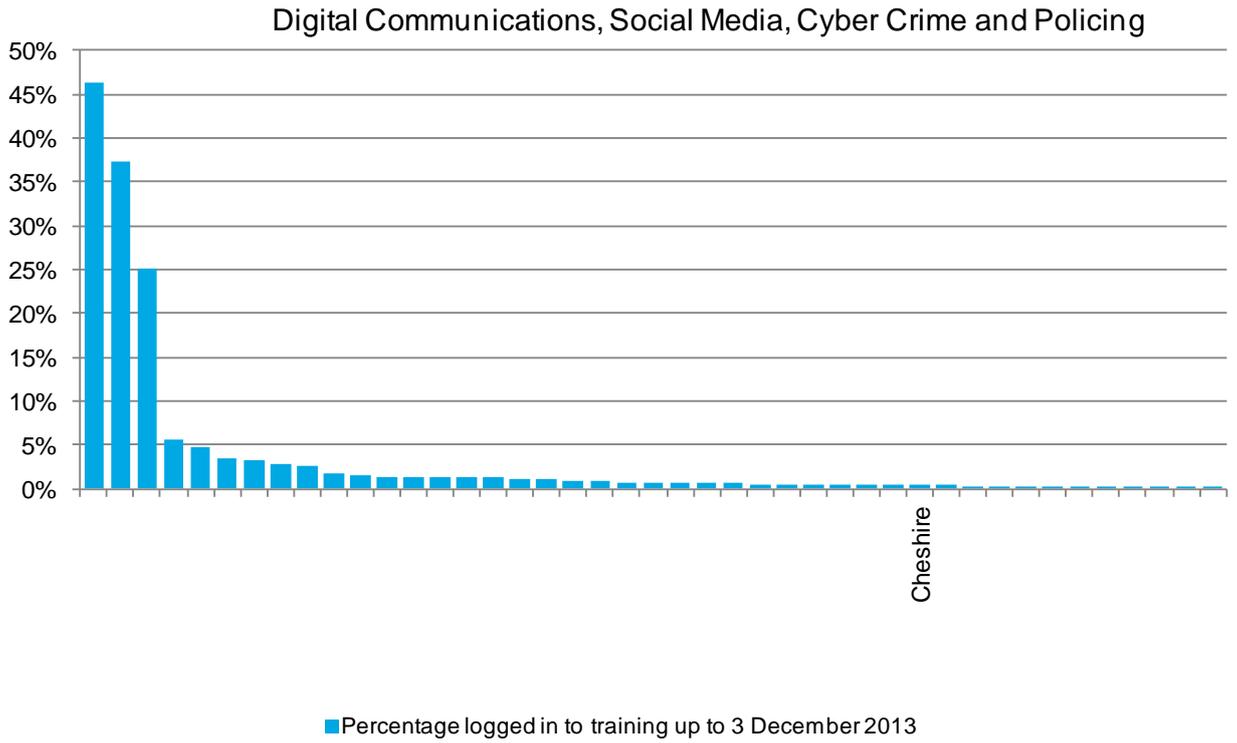
There is some lack of understanding, among senior leaders, about what is meant by a large-scale cyber incident as described by the *Strategic Policing Requirement*, or what capabilities the constabulary was expected to have in place. The constabulary's cyber investigators are trained to national standards and there are arrangements for 24-hour, seven-days-a-week availability. In the event of a serious cyber-crime or threat, a senior detective would be appointed to co-ordinate the investigation.

The constabulary has taken steps to improve its cyber skills by working with academic institutions. These include student placements and an internship programme that involves students who are undertaking relevant study being placed within the hi-tech and cyber-crime units. HMIC considers this to be an effective way of securing highly technical capabilities to deal with this emerging challenge. The constabulary currently has four students on placement from three different universities. They assist investigators and also research new technologies, software and techniques for the constabulary – tasks that the unit would normally be too busy to deal with. The constabulary has developed arrangements with John Moores University and helps deliver their CCTV and forensic computing courses.

The College of Policing has developed eight computer-based training courses to improve the police service's knowledge and skills to deal with cyber-crime. Data have been provided and analysed to understand the proportion of staff who have sought the training up to the beginning of December 2013.⁷ Tables that show the proportion of staff, for each force, who have enrolled for the training are included in our national report on the police service's response to cyber threats. The following charts demonstrate how many of Cheshire's workforce took three of the eight e-learning courses designed to improve awareness. The courses were selected to be representative of the constabulary's commitment to this aim for both general front-line policing (Digital Communications, Social Media, Cyber Crime and Policing introduced in April 2013 and Cyber Crime and Digital Policing – Introduction introduced in August 2013) and for investigators (Introduction to Communications Data and Cybercrime introduced in July 2011).

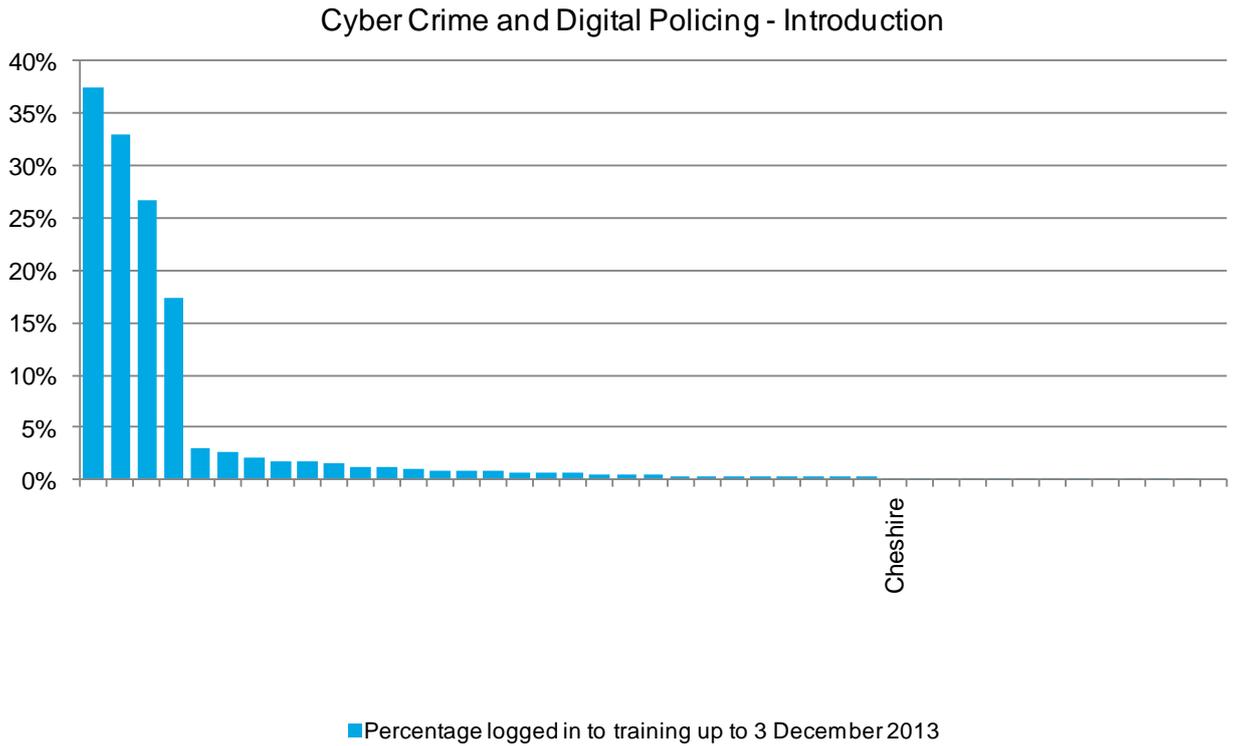
⁷ Information provided by the College of Policing dated 10 February 2014 – completion figures for Communication Data and Cyber Crime Modules (period ending 31 January 2014).

Figure 1: Digital Communications, Social Media, Cyber Crime and policing⁸



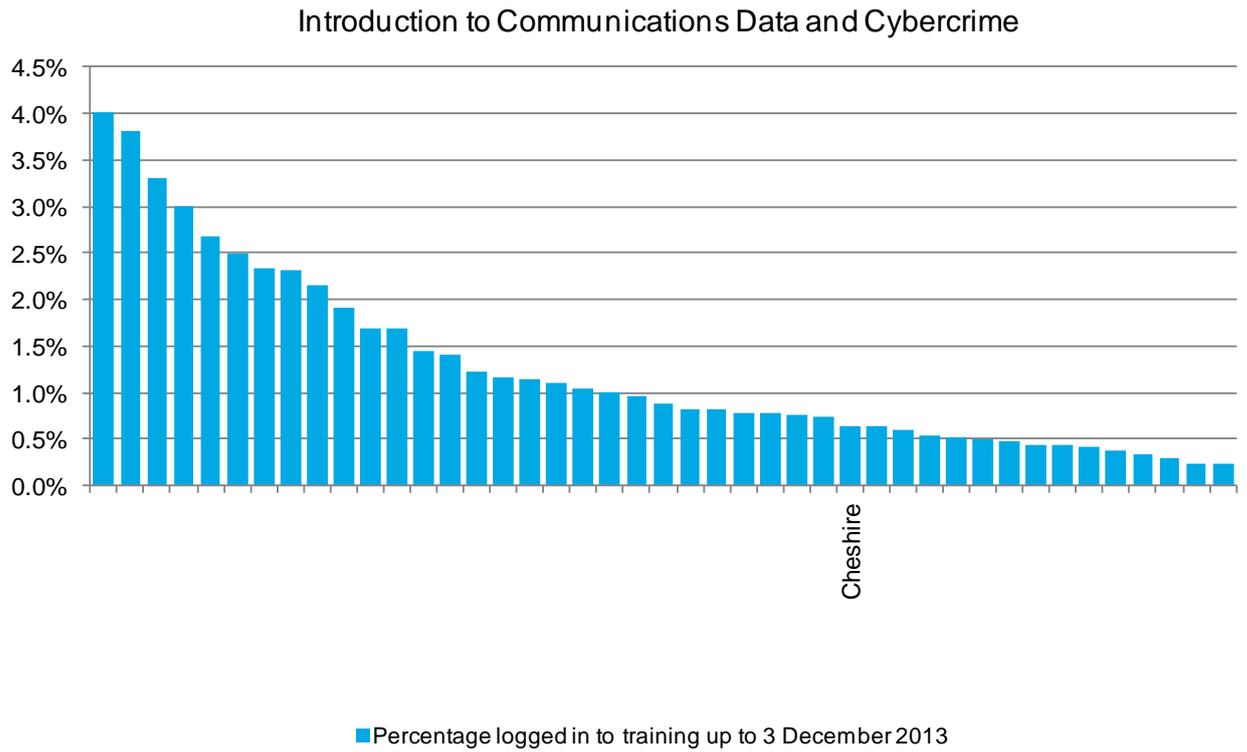
⁸ This course, designed for all staff, aims to develop awareness of digital communications technology and how it affects different areas of cybercrime, social media, law enforcement and policing.

Figure 2: Cybercrime and Digital Policing – an Introduction⁹



⁹ This course is designed for all police officers, special constables and other individuals in a law enforcement community. It is aimed at helping them develop a general awareness of the types of emerging threats and risks from criminals exploiting technology. The training is linked to relevant legislation and also covers cybercrime prevention

Figure 3: Introduction to Communication Data and Cybercrime¹⁰



¹⁰ This course is aimed at investigators and demonstrates the skills needed for a basic level of understanding of the uses of communications data within law enforcement including guidance on cybercrime prevention.

Consistency

Public order

All officers across the North West region are trained to the same standard, with the same lesson plans and are working towards regional procurement for equipment.

The constabulary purchases public order protective equipment in accordance with national standards. Constabulary staff, however, identified inconsistencies across police forces, in the provision of skills and use of equipment, that still exist within these standards. For example, while Cheshire trains medics – staff who provide medical assistance to colleagues and members of the public injured during disorder – other forces do not. Interviewees also described inconsistencies in equipment used by different forces that affected their abilities to use the same tactics.

In an example of inconsistency, interviews with officers in Cheshire Constabulary revealed that the communication system in their protective helmet, unlike those in other forces, were not equipped with in-ear speakers. This meant where there were high levels of background noise and officers found that they could not clearly hear instructions from commanders through their headsets.

Police forces within the North West region exercise their abilities to mobilise resources to respond to outbreaks of public disorder. The most recent mobilisation exercise took place in August 2013.

Responding to chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents

Cheshire Constabulary is able to operate effectively together with other emergency services to respond to chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents.

For its chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear capability, HMIC found that interoperability between Cheshire Constabulary and other emergency services is effective.

Cheshire Constabulary has reviewed its training and constabulary leaders are confident that a new three-day course is appropriate. There are, however, inconsistencies in the way that chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear training is delivered, and the standards of staff between the North West region police forces. The inconsistencies did not, however, affect the ability of Cheshire officers to work with local resilience forum members.

Connectivity

Terrorism

The constabulary and its neighbouring forces in the North West region have effective ways to co-ordinate and mobilise resources to deal with incidents of terrorism. These are supported by secure information technology and radio communications.

Cheshire Constabulary participates in daily national counter-terrorism network meetings at which threats are discussed and the police service's response is determined. The counter-terrorism intelligence unit also co-ordinates regional daily meetings, where representatives from forces in the region discuss threats that are developing and agree actions to respond to them.

The constabulary has clear arrangements to ask for assistance from the counter-terrorism network. There have been a number of examples where the counter-terrorism unit has dealt with investigations that were beyond the capability of the constabulary.

Civil emergencies

Cheshire Constabulary is able to communicate with other Cheshire local resilience forum members in the planning of, and responding to, civil emergencies.

As the regional lead constabulary for co-ordinating responses to public disorder and civil emergencies, the national police coordination centre makes contact daily with Cheshire Constabulary to share information about potential requirements and the availability of resources.

Cheshire emergency services have established links with the national joint emergency services interoperability programme that has been created to improve joint working between emergency services. The local resilience forum has a group which co-ordinates the emergency services' strategic response to civil emergencies. Arrangements have been established within which services are able to agree joint action in response to immediate incidents. The services together have conducted a number of exercises to test how it would respond to an emergency and lessons have been drawn about the availability of emergency centres that provide points of contact.

The constabulary makes use of a secure website, the National Resilience Extranet, which enables those responding to incidents to have access to important information that assists multi-agency working and communication.

Serious organised crime

Cheshire Constabulary communicates effectively with other police forces in the region and with the regional organised crime unit about the mobilisation of resources, sharing of equipment and tactics, and communication with other partners. Also, it is participating actively, through the regional organised crime unit, in the national tasking arrangements.

The region has an effective task-allocation and co-ordination procedure where priorities are agreed at local, force and regional levels. Regional meetings, where organised crime group threats are discussed, are well attended by representatives from each police force. Senior staff are confident that resources are deployed against the most serious organised crime groups and that the constabulary receives support from the regional organised crime unit.

The constabulary is able to share intelligence securely with the regional organised crime unit.

Public order

We found that the chief constable of Cheshire Constabulary is co-operating with the arrangements for cross-boundary mobilisation of officers to deal with public order incidents.

The constabulary understands accurately what resources it needs to fulfil initial mobilisation requirements through its duties management system.

The North West regional information and co-ordination centre, within Cheshire Constabulary, co-ordinates regional mobilisation of public order resources.

Cheshire Constabulary has contributed resources to police major events on a number of occasions and has well-rehearsed plans to do so. During the past two years the constabulary has not required support from other forces to police major events or deal with public disorder, but has provided eight¹¹ police support units to other police forces.

¹¹ This analysis excluded three major policing operations – the 2011 widespread disorder experienced in England in August 2011, the London Olympics 2012 and the removal of the residents at Dale Farm, Essex in 2012 (Operation Cabinet) – as they were exceptional incidents that skewed the results.

Cyber connectivity

Cheshire Constabulary has not been faced with a large-scale cyber incident that would require a joint response. Staff in the constabulary were aware, however, of where they could get help if it was needed.

The constabulary has not had to investigate or deal with the consequences of a serious cyber attack. Senior management in the constabulary recognise that, if they were faced with such a challenge, they would ask for to national expertise from the National Cyber Crime Unit of the National Crime Agency.