



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

# Crime data integrity

## Inspection of Dyfed-Powys Police

February 2015

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## Introduction

In its 2013/14 inspection programme<sup>1</sup>, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) committed to carry out an inspection into the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales record crime data. All 43 forces were inspected by mid August 2014, with a full thematic report published in autumn 2014. The central question of this inspection programme is:

*“To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?”*

Accurate crime recording underlines the police service's commitment to public accountability, ensures that local policing bodies<sup>2</sup> can match resources to the risks identified in communities and enables the police to provide a proper service to victims of crime.

Recent HMIC inspections have revealed weaknesses in police crime recording, particularly the under-recording of crimes. In our interim report of 1 May 2014 we said that “we are seriously concerned at the picture which is emerging”.<sup>3</sup>

We strongly recommend our findings in this report are read alongside the interim report, *Crime recording: A matter of fact - An interim report of the inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales*, available at [www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic](http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmic)

The interim report sets out the full context of this inspection programme including the rules and standards governing crime data integrity: the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS)<sup>4</sup> and Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2013/14 inspection programme was approved by the Home Secretary under section 54 of the Police Act 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Police and crime commissioners for police areas outside London: the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime for the Metropolitan Police Service; and the City of London Corporation for the City of London Police.

<sup>3</sup> *Crime recording: A matter of fact – An interim report of the inspection of crime data integrity in police forces in England and Wales*, paragraph 1.20.

<sup>4</sup> NCRS is a standard of crime-recording introduced in 2002 and published as part of the Home Office Counting Rules; it has the twin objectives of ensuring the police focus more on victims of crime and ensuring consistency in crime-recording in all police forces.

<sup>5</sup> HOCR are rules in accordance with which crime data – required to be submitted to the Home Secretary under sections 44 and 45 of the Police Act 1996 – must be collected. They set down how the police service in England and Wales must record crime, how crimes must be classified according to crime type and categories, whether and when to record crime, how many crimes to record in respect of a single incident and the regime for the re-classification of crimes as no-crimes.

## Methodology

Each force inspection involves:

- an examination of crime records for the period 1 November 2012 to 31 October 2013;
- a dip-sample of out-of-court disposals (cautions, Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND), cannabis warnings, and community resolutions) and no-crime decisions for rape, robbery and violence;
- visits to forces where inspectors assess local crime-recording arrangements under three headings: leadership and governance; systems and processes; and people and skills; and
- a peer review of audit findings by an NCRS expert from outside HMIC.

The audit examined for compliance a small sample of crime records from each force. Taken together, these samples are sufficient to provide a reliable national estimate, but are too small to produce a force estimate of compliance. Force compliance rates typically result in a margin of error of around +/- 10 percent and, therefore, a range of 20 percent. This range of uncertainty means that few, if any, conclusions can be drawn from individual force compliance rates or comparisons of rates between forces based on the data alone. (Samples large enough to make more reliable force judgments, while desirable, were not affordable.) Our conclusions and recommendations are, therefore, based upon the evidence drawn from our inspection of the force's crime-recording arrangements.

## Scope and structure of report

This report is divided into the following sections:

1. Part A: A summary of our findings and recommendations.
2. Part B: Our findings in numbers.
3. Part C: Additional detailed inspection findings.

This report, undertaken at a force level, allows a qualitative assessment of the force's crime-recording arrangements and to make recommendations for improvement.

## Part A: Summary of inspection findings, and recommendations

### Leadership and governance

The leadership from the chief officer at Dyfed-Powys Police is strong and committed to crime data integrity; providing clear and consistent guidance and taking action when necessary. The deputy chief constable (DCC) is the force lead for crime data.

Force policies on the management of crime refer to the need to record crime accurately although there are few explicit references to the need for an ethical approach. The force is shortly to change its process on how crime is recorded; force crime policies will need to be revised to ensure the new process guidance reflects the need for accurate and ethical crime recording.

The force has an anonymous reporting process that officers can use to report any improper or inappropriate crime recording practices. This consists of a confidential telephone reporting line called 'safe call'; staff can also email the Professional Standards Department (PSD), although this is not anonymous.

The force is currently undergoing a change programme known as 'public first' which includes a comprehensive review of force structures that will have a substantial impact on crime recording. Apart from the force crime registrar (FCR)<sup>6</sup> and crime recording bureau (CRB) supervisor, the proposed structure will place crime recording within the resources business area, along with other support functions. Staff are expected to be multi-skilled in order to carry out all the tasks within the unit. While there is a transition plan in place, most staff are unaware of the detail and there is concern about how the new structure will work. Some staff believe that crime-recording standards will be worse than they are under existing processes.

**Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should assess which skills are required, within the proposed new structure by the staff involved at each stage of the crime recording process, and ensure that any identified gaps are overcome so that the new structure, and the skills of those involved are directed at securing accurate crime records in accordance with the HO CR and NCRS.

The force has a well-developed and flexible audit programme that examines compliance and quality issues for incident and crime reporting. There is a link

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<sup>6</sup> The person in a police force who is responsible for ensuring compliance with crime-recording rules. HO CR require that he is ultimately responsible for all decisions as to whether to record a crime or to make a no-crime decision, as the final arbiter. The force crime registrar's responsibilities include training staff in the crime-recording process and carrying out audits to check that the force is complying with all applicable rules.

between the audits and management action to improve standards, although some middle managers did not know what key themes or trends the audit programme was revealing. We found that the scale and scope of the general audit allows for the identification of patterns and trends in individuals or teams of officers who repeatedly make crime recording or classification errors. These errors are scrutinised by the assistant chief constable (ACC) at force performance events. However, with the implementation of the 'public first' change project there is, as yet, no complimentary audit plan and staff are unclear as to what form audits will take under the new structure, or who will be responsible for what.

**Recommendation:** Within three months, and prior to the implementation of the 'public first' change programme, the force should develop and publish a proposed crime recording audit programme, ensuring that the force has a clear understanding of how the audit programme will be undertaken within the new operating structure, and how it will be used to identify trends and patterns to support continuous performance improvement.

## **Systems and processes**

### **Accuracy of crime recording**

We examined 109 incident records<sup>7</sup> and found that 73 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 73 crimes that should have been recorded, 50 were. Of the 50, four were wrongly classified and three were recorded outside the 72-hour limit allowed under the HOCR. This is of serious concern as it means that some victims' crimes are not being recorded and that these victims are not receiving the service they deserve (because, for example, certain victim support services are only triggered once a crime is recorded).

We found that some crime incidents closed by the incident resolution team (IRT) should have resulted in a crime report. This is partly because the IRT is responsible for closing all crime-related incidents, but staff have had little training on the NCRS and HOCR. We found no evidence, however, that the failure to identify crimes was due to any implicit or explicit performance pressure. It is therefore imperative that adequate training is put in place to provide improvements in the proposed new structure, where all incidents will be closed by the new business support unit.

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<sup>7</sup> An incident in this context is a report of events received by the police, recorded on the electronic incident systems, that requires police attention. Whether or not an incident report becomes a crime record is determined on the balance of probability that a notifiable offence has occurred as set out in the Home Office Counting Rules. If an incident does not turn out to be a crime, it must still be logged in an auditable form on the force's incident-recording system or some other accessible or auditable means.

**Recommendation:** Within six months and as an integral part of its 'public first' restructure, the force should conduct a NCRS and HOCR training needs analysis, and immediately thereafter introduce a tiered, co-ordinated training programme on the NCRS and HOCR, prioritising staff in those roles which have an impact on the quality and timeliness of records, and improving services for victims.

We examined 50 reports that had been referred directly to the force's public protection teams from other agencies, and found that 30 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 30 crimes that should have been recorded, 24 were. Of those 24, all were correctly classified and all were recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed by NCRS and HOCR. As some of these records related to sexual offences and assaults on vulnerable adults, this is a significant cause for concern.

The force has recognised the risk of poor compliance with NCRS and HOCR, in the handling of internal and external referrals of crime, and has actively sought ways to improve the process within the public protection area. New procedures have been introduced to improve compliance that include the early creation of an incident log. However, the process has yet to become fully embedded and evaluated. The identification of crime from referrals made and recorded on the database called CATS<sup>8</sup>, used by public protection teams, continues to present a significant risk in such a vital area as public protection.

**Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should take steps to ensure that reports recorded separately on other force systems (e.g., those used by the public protection teams) are recorded as crimes. The force should put in place proportionate and effective audit arrangements through the FCR as assurance that reports held on these systems are properly recorded as crimes, with particular attention being directed to those involving vulnerable adults and children.

There are no clear instructions within force policy or guidance on how any report of crime received from, or requiring transfer to, another force should be managed. We found that officers were confused as to the correct procedure.

**Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should introduce a policy and procedure for dealing with reports of crimes which have occurred in another force area, or which are transferred for investigation from another force area, to ensure that officers have clear guidance on how to manage incidents and associated evidence and documentation.

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<sup>8</sup> Case Administration and Tracking System

## Out-of-court disposals

Out-of-court disposals include cautions, Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND),<sup>9</sup> cannabis warnings<sup>10</sup> and community resolutions.<sup>11</sup> The HOCR (section H) states that national guidance must be followed.<sup>12</sup>

**Cautions** – Out of the 21 cautions we dip-sampled, we found that in 20 cases the offender’s previous history made them suitable to receive a caution. In all 21 cases we found evidence that the offender was made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the caution. Out of the 11 cases where there was a victim to consult, 7 cases showed that the victims’ views had been considered.

**Penalty Notices for Disorder** – We dip-sampled 20 PND and found that the offender was suitable to receive a penalty notice in all 20 cases. In none of the cases did we find evidence that the offender had been made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the penalty notice. Out of the seven cases where there was a victim to consult, we found that six victims had had their views considered when the police decided to issue a penalty notice.

**Cannabis warnings** – We dip-sampled 20 cannabis warnings and found that the offender was suitable to receive a warning in 18 cases. In none of the cases did we find evidence that the offender had been made aware of the nature and implications of accepting the warning.

**Community resolutions** – We dip-sampled 20 community resolutions and found that in all 20 cases, the offender either had no previous offending history or the offender’s past history still justified the use of the community resolution. In 18 cases there was evidence that the agreed outcome was meaningful and

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<sup>9</sup> A PND is a form of immediate financial punishment used by police to deal with low-level offending such as being drunk and disorderly, retail theft, and minor criminal damage.

<sup>10</sup> A cannabis warning is a non-statutory disposal for cases of possession of cannabis for personal use. It constitutes a warning to the offender and confiscation of the cannabis.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution of a minor offence or anti-social behaviour incident through informal agreement between the parties involved, for example involving the offender making good the loss or damage caused.

<sup>12</sup> National guidance for the use of out-of-court disposals is detailed in a number of documents:

- *Home Office Circular 016/2008: Simple Cautioning – Adult Offenders*. Available from [http://www.xact.org.uk/information/downloads/Pace/HOC\\_16-2008.pdf](http://www.xact.org.uk/information/downloads/Pace/HOC_16-2008.pdf)
- *Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders*, 14 November 2013. Available from [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)
- *Code of Practice for Adult Conditional Cautions*, 8 April 2000. Available from [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)
- *Home Office Police Operational Guidance for penalty Notices for Disorder*, March 2005. Available from [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)
- *ACPO Guidance on Cannabis Possession for Personal Use*, 28 January 2009. Available from [www.acpo.police.uk](http://www.acpo.police.uk)



appropriate.<sup>13</sup> Out of the 20 resolutions where there was a victim, 2 cases showed that the wishes and personal circumstances of the victim had been properly considered.

Community resolutions should only be used if both the victim and offender agree to the resolution; it is, therefore, disappointing to see that in a large majority of cases our audit could not establish if the victims' wishes and personal circumstances had been considered. In addition, while there was evidence of supervision of the crime, there was none evident in the process leading to the community resolution. Community resolutions are only used by the force in cases involving youths, but there was no evidence that youth offending teams (YOT) were notified. This should always occur when officers are dealing with youth offenders.

**Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should develop and implement a plan to ensure officers consult with the youth offending team and victims of crime before agreeing community resolutions.

We found that few compliance checks of out-of-court disposals are completed and that frontline supervisors do not rigorously supervise the process.

**Recommendation:** Within three months, the force should improve the supervision of its use of out-of-court disposals to ensure that these are only used in appropriate circumstances, that there is a record of the offender being informed of the nature and implications of accepting the disposal and, in particular, that the views of victims are taken into account. This approach should be supported by the FCR audit programme.

## **No-crime**

No-crime refers to an incident that was initially recorded as a crime but has subsequently been found not to be a crime on the basis of additional verifiable information. We examined 47 no-crime records and found 44 records to be compliant with NCRS and HOCR. This suggests that the processes applied by the force, to ensure no-crime decisions are correct and robust.

The FCR and CRB supervisor are the force's dedicated decision makers(DDM).<sup>14</sup> As such, they are the only individuals who are authorised to

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<sup>13</sup> National guidance for community resolution directs that at the point the community resolution is administered an officer will need to: confirm the offender admits the offence and explain the process to the offender – including how the offender will make good the harm caused. The implications of receiving a community resolution need to be explained to the offender – it does not form part of a criminal record but may be disclosed as part of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. The community resolution is to be recorded appropriately, in accordance with the NCRS and HOCR.

<sup>14</sup> The DDM role is to provide practical advice, guidance and act as arbiter at a local level to ensure the accurate recording of crime and crime-related incidents in accordance with national standards.

determine whether or not a recorded crime should be categorised as a no-crime. This is good practice.

### **Victim-centred approach**

There is a strong drive from the leadership of the force to promote and demonstrate a victim-centred approach. All officers we spoke to during the inspection confirmed this and were clear on the importance placed, at both a force and individual level, on keeping the victim at the centre of the service. There is a real drive to 'do the right thing' for victims. Our inspection of call handling found that call-handlers were polite, helpful and professional.

The force has identified its migrant and emerging communities and introduced the 'Pegasus' scheme, targeted at members of the public who find it hard to speak to the police on the telephone or in person. The scheme enables anyone to register and provide relevant personal information. It assists police staff in having a greater understanding of the person's needs or disability so that they can be supported and provided with the appropriate response.

The force carries out the surveys of victims of crime and makes use of the data gathered, although this is not used to improve crime-recording standards.

### **Rape**

All reports of rape must be recorded on the crime management system (CMS) at the earliest opportunity and, in any case, within 24 hours of being reported. In some instances, case management information will also be held on other systems, such as the CATS database and reference should be made to this on the CMS record. When a rape is reported, by whatever means, the divisional detective inspector must be informed as quickly as possible to ensure management oversight of the investigation.

The decision making for rape no-crimes is the responsibility of the FCR; of the 12 rape no-crimes reviewed, 11 complied with NCRS and HOCR.

### **IT systems**

The force uses a single computer system for its incident and crime recording. The computer system used by staff from the public protection unit is a standalone system (CATS). Data from this needs to be re-entered onto the crime system which results in some inefficiencies.

At the time of inspection, a mobile data pilot involving 50 hand-held devices was nearing conclusion. Frontline response and roads policing unit officers participating in the pilot were very positive about the devices. A further 300 devices will be issued by autumn 2015 to form part of a force-wide roll out. A technical interface with the crime recording system is being developed, enabling

officers to input crimes directly to the crime recording system from the mobile data device. This initiative, together with the integration of the CRB into the new business support structure, is a risk as it removes the current layer of quality assurance. The force will therefore need to build in a process that ensures crime recording standards are not compromised (see recommendation 5 below)

## **People and skills**

Staff and supervisors responsible for managing crime, out-of-court disposals, no-crimes and those working in specialist departments were found to have an appropriate knowledge of NCRS and the HOCR. What was not so apparent was the extent of supervision. Every member of staff we spoke to, however, was well motivated, professional and enjoyed working for Dyfed-Powys Police.

Most staff, including those trialling mobile data devices, stated they had received no training on NCRS, HOCR or the force policies and procedures. The force is, therefore, urged to improve understanding of the national crime-recording standards by targeting training for roles in which key decisions are taken, including frontline staff. This will need to reflect any repositioning of responsibilities that arise from the 'public first' initiative and the introduction of mobile data devices (see recommendation 8 below).

The FCR and her staff already engage with student officers to develop an early knowledge of NCRS and HOCR; this could usefully be extended to existing frontline officers who use the mobile data devices and staff within the new business support structure.

The chief officer drive to achieve good crime data standards has been understood widely through the organisation. We found no evidence of pressure, explicit or implied, to under-record or mis-record crime, to go against NCRS or HOCR, or to work outside national guidelines for the use of out-of-court disposals. Senior managers are encouraged to ensure accurate crime recording and pass on the strategic messages from their chief officers.

### **Force crime registrar (FCR)**

The FCR has extensive knowledge and experience in the management of crime data and compliance with the NCRS and the HOCR. She is supported by chief officers in her drive to ensure accurate crime recording but there is no named deputy FCR. This is a risk for the force should she become incapacitated or otherwise unavailable. If she is to assume responsibility for the required NCRS and HOCR training, this could lead to added pressure.

**Recommendation:** Within three months, the force should review the resources allocated to support the FCR and introduce arrangements that ensure an appropriate level of resilience is maintained, taking into account the auditing

requirements as well as the FCR's role in delivering training on NCRS and HOOCR.

All crime-recording disputes are appropriately referred to the FCR who is seen as the final arbiter in any disputes.

## **Recommendations**

### **Immediately**

1. The force should assess which skills are required, within the proposed new structure by the staff involved at each stage of the crime recording process, and ensure that any identified gaps are overcome so that the new structure, and the skills of those involved are directed at securing accurate crime records in accordance with the HOOCR and NCRS.
2. The force should take steps to ensure that reports recorded separately on other force systems (e.g., those used by the public protection teams) are recorded as crimes. The force should put in place proportionate and effective audit arrangements through the FCR as assurance that reports held on these systems are properly recorded as crimes, with particular attention being directed to those involving vulnerable adults and children.
3. The force should introduce a policy and procedure for dealing with reports of crimes which have occurred in another force area, or which are transferred for investigation from another force area, to ensure that officers have clear guidance on how to manage incidents and associated evidence and documentation.
4. The force should develop and implement a plan to ensure officers consult with the youth offending team and victims of crime before agreeing community resolutions.

### **Within three months**

5. Within three months, and prior to the implementation of the 'public first' change programme, the force should develop and publish a proposed crime recording audit programme, ensuring that the force has a clear understanding of how the audit programme will be undertaken within the new operating structure, and how it will be used to identify trends and patterns to support continuous performance improvement.
6. The force should improve the supervision of its use of out-of-court disposals to ensure that these are only used in appropriate circumstances, that there is a record of the offender being informed of the nature and implications of accepting the disposal and, in particular, that the views of victims are taken into account. This approach should be supported by the FCR audit programme.

7. The force should review the resources allocated to support the FCR and introduce arrangements that ensure an appropriate level of resilience is maintained, taking into account the auditing requirements as well as the FCR's role in delivering training on NCRS and HOCR.

**Within six months**

8. As an integral part of its 'public first' restructure, the force should conduct a NCRS and HOCR training needs analysis, and immediately thereafter introduce a tiered, co-ordinated training programme on the NCRS and HOCR, prioritising staff in those roles which have an impact on the quality and timeliness of records, and improving services for victims.

## Part B: Audit findings in numbers

Our examination of records will be used as part of a statistically robust national audit to allow HMIC to report a figure for national crime recording accuracy across the 43 Home Office forces within our final report, to be published in autumn 2014. The audit undertaken at a force level is not of a sufficient size to be statistically robust and is therefore used alongside our fieldwork interviews to form qualitative judgments only.

<b>Crimes reported as part of an incident record</b>		
<b>Incidents reviewed</b>	<b>Crimes identified</b>	<b>Crimes recorded</b>
HMIC reviewed the following number of incident records in Dyfed-Powys Police. These include reported incidents of burglary, violence, robbery, criminal damage and sexual offences.	From these incidents HMIC identified the following number of crimes that Dyfed-Powys Police should have recorded.	From these incidents Dyfed-Powys Police recorded the following number of crimes.
<b>109</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Crimes reported directly from the victim</b>		
HMIC reviewed the following number of referrals reported directly to Dyfed-Powys Police specialist departments from other agencies which contained reports of crime.	From these referrals to specialist departments HMIC identified the following number of crimes that Dyfed-Powys Police should have recorded.	From these incidents Dyfed-Powys Police recorded the following number of crimes.
<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>No-crime</b>		
HMIC reviewed the following number of recorded crimes of rape, violence and robbery which Dyfed-Powys Police had subsequently recorded as no-crime.	From these HMIC assessed the following number of no-crime decisions as being correct.	
<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	

## Part C: Additional detailed inspection findings

Our detailed findings are set out against three headings: leadership and governance, systems and processes, and people and skills.

### Leadership and governance

**1 Does the force have arrangements at a senior level to ensure there is confidence in recorded crime figures and all aspects of the HOCR?**

**1.1. How is Dyfed-Powys Police ensuring that leadership responsibilities and expectations for crime data integrity are clearly defined and unambiguously communicated to staff?**

The deputy chief constable (DCC) is the lead for crime data integrity within Dyfed-Powys Police. He has led a regular and sustained focus on making improvements to the force's collective ability to accurately record crime. This focus has been embedded through scrutiny at the force tasking group, force performance events and by the creation of a data quality assurance board. In the last 18 months the entire chief officer team has changed; this has acted as a catalyst to move away from the previous performance culture. The assistant chief constable (ACC) has responsibility for holding officers to account for the delivery of local policing, but her emphasis is on supporting senior managers to resolve policing problems without compromising accurate crime recording.

The chief constable has regularly, and for some considerable time, reinforced the critical importance of the ethical recording of crime. He is willing to engage with all staff on the matter and communicates this message in a way that is readily understood by all. The DCC and ACC have assisted him positively in doing this. We viewed the podcast 'ethical crime recording – victim orientated approach' delivered by the chief constable, which was located on the force intranet. In the podcast, reference is made to the code of ethics setting out clear expectations of both staff and supervisors. It explains that the force does not have numerical targets for crime, but emphasises the importance of putting the citizen at the heart of everything it does. It also highlights the consequences of under-recording crimes, such as failing victims and presenting a misleading profile of recorded crime.

Within the professional standards department (PSD), there is a mechanism for the anonymous reporting of any improper or inappropriate use of NCRS or HOCR. This consists of a confidential telephone reporting line called 'safe call'. Although there were examples of its use, there is a degree of mistrust in its confidentiality and some staff were unaware of its existence or reluctant to use it. Staff can also contact PSD by email, although this is not an anonymous, untraceable email facility.

Force policy on the management of crime refers to the need to record crimes accurately, but there are few explicit references to the need for an ethical approach. The force is soon to change its process on how crime is to be recorded as part of its 'public first' programme and mobile data project. Force crime policies will need to be revised to ensure guidance on the new process reflects the need for accurate and ethical crime recording and compliance with NCRS and HOOCR.

The change programme, 'public first', includes a comprehensive review of force structures and will have a considerable impact on crime recording. Apart from the FCR and CRB supervisor, the proposed structure will place crime recording within the resources area along with other business support functions. Staff will be expected to be multi-skilled in order to carry out all the tasks within the unit. While there is a transition plan in place, most staff are not aware of its detail and there is concern about how the new structure will work. Some staff believe that crime recording standards will be worse than they are under existing processes. The force should, therefore, develop a communications strategy to help staff to manage the change while ensuring that crime recording standards are not compromised.

The policing and crime plan does not make a direct reference to the need for accurate crime data. The plan contains a number of aims which include enhancing access to policing services and ensuring high standards of professionalism, but there is no direct reference to the need for ethical crime recording in compliance with NCRS and HOOCR.

### **1.2. How does Dyfed-Powys Police ensure it has a proportionate approach to managing the strategic and organisational risk of recording crime data?**

New audits, such as the one that involves child abuse and other sensitive investigations held on CATS, demonstrate the flexibility of the force audit regime.

The force has analysed and assessed risk around inaccurate crime recording with the main risk identified as the recording of sexual offences on CATS; specifically where referrals are received from other agencies. Force audits show a previous compliance rate with NCRS of just 60 percent. The identification of crime from internal and external referrals made and recorded on CATS continues to present a risk to the force. We audited 50 records on CATS and found 30 crimes should have been recorded of which 24 had been. The force has recognised this risk and has issued an instruction that an incident record on the incident, command and control system (STORM) must also be created when a report is entered on the CATS system. This change will not automatically ensure compliance, as a decision to record this crime is still required by the specialist officers dealing with the referral, but the new and



independently positioned business support unit will be responsible for closing incidents.

The quality of incident and crime reports varied considerably. We found good examples where incident records contained the detail necessary for the effective deployment of resources. We also saw crime reports where clear and well-ordered narratives explained the various stages of investigation. More detail was generally found on reports of more serious crime. However, we also found incidents that did not contain anything other than basic information and, in some crime reports, important information was missing, particularly on the level of injury sustained by victims of violence. This is particularly relevant as crimes are currently recorded by staff from the crime recording bureau (CRB) using details supplied by officers.

The force currently sends a police officer to every crime scene. Information is then passed on to the CRB, who input the data onto the force crime reporting system. Crime incidents opened on STORM are finalised and closed by the incident resolution team (IRT), whereas non-crime incidents are finalised in the CRB. The reason why crime-related incidents are not closed in the CRB, where the greatest knowledge of HOCR and NCRS lies, is not clear.

### **1.3. How does Dyfed-Powys Police use HOCR, NCRS, and NSIR<sup>15</sup> to ensure there is confidence that crime is recorded accurately?**

Crimes are reported through a number of different routes with the majority being routed through the call handling and incident system. In time, it is hoped to broaden this to include online reports. Some crimes are transferred from other forces or reported to staff working in local areas or specialist units such as child abuse investigation teams, but there is no current facility to enter reports directly onto the crime system. At present, all crime reports are created by the CRB, although there is an IT interface being developed that will enable crimes to be directly input by any officer issued with the new mobile data devices.

The force is working hard to ensure that crimes and incidents are recorded in compliance with HOCR, NCRS and NSIR but still has further work to do. It is acknowledged that the way incidents are currently converted to crimes could be improved.

The force has a well-developed audit regime which assesses both compliance and the quality of incidents and crime reporting. However, with the implementation of the 'public first' change project there is, as yet, no audit plan for 2014. Staff were unclear what form crime-recording audits will take under the new structure or who will be responsible for managing them.

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<sup>15</sup> National Standards for Incident Recording

The force closely monitors every single crime-related incident of rape and tracks compliance with NCRS and HOCR together with the progress of investigations.

## **Systems and processes**

**2 Does the force have systems and processes in place to ensure that: crime is correctly recorded in accordance with HOCR and NCRS; standards of out-of-court disposals are maintained; and no-crime decisions are correct?**

**2.1. How does Dyfed-Powys Police effectively manage and supervise incidents, other reporting routes and crime records in order to ensure that crimes are correctly recorded?**

The great majority of incidents are accurately recorded on STORM, which enables accurate crime recording in the main. We checked 109 incidents in the course of the audit and found that 96 incidents were closed on STORM with the correct closing code

Operators in the force control room use STORM; it is generally perceived to work satisfactorily. It enables operators to identify repeat victims by location and contact number, and vulnerability is assessed using drop down checklists that are associated with incident opening codes.

We examined 109 incident records and found that 73 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 73 crimes that should have been recorded, 50 were. Of the 50, four were wrongly classified and three were recorded outside the 72-hour limit allowed by HOCR. This is of serious concern as it means that some victims' crimes are not being recorded and these victims are not getting the service that they deserve (because, for example, certain victim support services are only triggered when a crime is recorded).

The crime numbering system ensures that unique crime reference numbers are created for every crime. These numbers should not change when a new officer in charge is assigned to the crime, but may change if initially categorised in the wrong geographical area. We have examined this process and it works.

There is a lack of clarity on the way incidents of making off without payment are handled and staff would benefit from clearer guidance. The guidance could be interpreted by staff as recommending an 'investigate to record' approach to crime recording instead of recording the crime immediately.

There is also uncertainty and inconsistency in the way reports of lost or stolen mobile phones are managed. In some circumstances, mobile phones are entered onto the lost property database, but only if the informant can provide the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number. Callers are advised to contact their network provider to obtain the relevant number and then re-contact the force with the details for the loss to be recorded on the electronic

property system. The NCRS do not place any pre-conditions on the victim providing property identification numbers before the police record a report of a crime, nor should the police make an assumption that the property is lost if the victim believes it to be stolen. Clear guidance, compliant with HOCR and NCRS, should be provided to officers and staff to ensure that such crimes are recorded as soon as they are reported, in accordance with HOCR and NCRS.

We examined 50 reports that were referred from other agencies directly to the force's public protection teams and found that of the 30 crimes that should have been recorded, 24 were. Of the 24, all were correctly classified and all were recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed by HOCR. These cases relate to internal and external referrals that concern child and vulnerable adult protection issues.

The force has actively sought ways to improve crime recording within the public protection area and has introduced new guidance to improve compliance with NCRS and HOCR. This includes the early creation of an incident log for such cases. However, the process is yet to become fully embedded and has yet to be evaluated. The identification of crime from referrals made and recorded on the database used by public protection teams continues to present a significant risk in the vital area of public protection.

There are no clear instructions within force policy or guidance on how any report of crime received from, or requiring transfer to, another force should be managed. We found that officers were confused about the correct procedure.

## **2.2. How does Dyfed-Powys Police ensure that out-of-court disposals suit the needs of victims, offenders and the criminal justice system?**

**Cautions** – Out of the 21 cautions we dip-sampled, we found that in 20 cases, the offender's previous history made them suitable to receive a caution. In all 21 cases we found evidence that the offender was made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the caution. Out of the 11 cases where there was a victim to consult, 7 cases showed that the victims' views had been considered.

We found limited evidence of an assessment being applied to determine whether or not the offence was suitable for a caution. Most police cautions are authorised by a sergeant although some must be agreed by an inspector, such as those for domestic abuse or knife crime. Public protection officers have used them for low-level indecent images and for some sexual offences, but not for rape.

**Penalty Notices for Disorder** – We dip-sampled 20 PND and found that the offender was suitable to receive a penalty notice in all 20 cases. In none of the cases did we find evidence that the offender had been made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the penalty notice. Out of the seven

cases where there was a victim to consult, we found that six victims had their views considered when the police decided to issue a penalty notice.

**Cannabis warnings** – We dip-sampled 20 cannabis warnings and found that the offender was suitable to receive a warning in 18 cases. In none of the cases did we find evidence that the offender had been made aware of the nature and implications of accepting the warning.

**Community resolutions** – We dip-sampled 20 community resolutions and found that in all 20 cases, the offender either had no previous offending history or the offender's past history still justified the use of the community resolution. In 18 cases there was evidence that the agreed outcome was meaningful and appropriate. Out of the 20 resolutions where there was a victim, 2 cases showed that the wishes and personal circumstances of the victim had been properly considered.

Community resolutions should only be used if both the victim and offender agree to the resolution; it is, therefore, disappointing to see that in a great majority of cases our audit could not establish if the victims' wishes and personal circumstances had been considered. In addition, while there was evidence of supervision of crime recording there was no evidence of supervision of the process leading to the community resolution. Community resolutions are only used by the force for youth restorative purposes, but there was no evidence that youth offending teams (YOT) were notified, this should always occur when officers are dealing with youth offenders.

A sizeable number of out-of-court disposals were found to lack sufficient information to conform to the requirements of HOCR and national guidance. This was largely attributable to the way that a number of forms had been designed. The forms for cannabis warnings and PND do not adequately record an offender's admission of guilt or understanding of the implications of accepting such disposals. In many cases there was no record that a clear statement was made to the offender about the fact that the police can disclose such outcomes in certain future checks of offending history. New purpose-designed forms should be introduced to improve compliance in this area.

There is often no record of any consultation of the victim's views on the use of out-of-court disposals. Given the chief constable's strong stance on raising victim satisfaction levels, the force could look for ways to ensure officers understand the need for such consultation, as well as the need to record it.

We found that few checks of out-of-court disposals are completed within the existing auditing regime and frontline supervisors do not rigorously supervise the process.

### **2.3. Are no-crime decisions for high-risk crime categories correct and is there is robust oversight and quality control in Dyfed-Powys Police?**

No-crime refers to an incident that was initially recorded as a crime but has subsequently been found not to be a crime on the basis of additional verifiable information. We examined 47 no-crime records and found 44 records to be compliant with NCRS and HOCR. This suggests that the processes applied by the force to ensure no-crime decisions are correct are sufficiently robust.

The FCR and CRB supervisor are the force's dedicated decision makers (DDM). As such, they are the only individuals who are authorised to determine whether a recorded crime should be categorised as a no-crime. This is good practice.

All officers we spoke to during reality testing were able to explain the process for achieving a no-crime outcome. They stated that the victim would be required to provide a statement or sign a pocket book entry; that a submission would be made on the crime management system. This would then go to a supervisor for consideration and onward transmission to the CRB for a no-crime decision to be approved by the DDM, who the final decision maker.

### **2.4. How does Dyfed-Powys Police promote a victim-centred approach to crime recording and associated outcomes?**

Visits to the force control room and operational stations, together with evidence from calls evaluated during our audit, demonstrated that staff understand the victim-centred approach. From the incidents examined and public telephone calls we reviewed, we found that call-handlers were polite, helpful and professional in all cases monitored. The force currently has a policy whereby police officers attend all calls for attendance.

All officers spoken to during reality testing were able to state that the force took a victim-centred approach and were clear about the importance both they and the force placed on keeping the victim at the centre of the service. The victim should always be believed and there is a real drive to do the right thing for the victim.

The force has carried out work to map and understand its migrant and emerging communities and has introduced the 'Pegasus' scheme targeted at members of the public who find it hard to speak to the police on the telephone or in person. The scheme enables anyone to register and provide the force with relevant personal information, which enables staff to check the database and have a greater understanding of the needs or disability of an individual to ensure they are supported and provided with the appropriate response.

'Confidence and Equality' meetings are held in the four counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys. Their main purpose

is to improve engagement between the police and specific minority communities. They include local representation from disabled people, faith communities, transgender people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, young people, gypsies and travellers, and black and minority ethnic communities. The purpose of engagement is to build trust and confidence in the police service, so that particular communities who are traditionally reluctant to engage gain confidence to report crime to the force.

The force carries out surveys of victims of crime as required by the Home Office user satisfaction programme, although this is not used effectively to improve crime-recording standards. The force does not conduct any scheduled work outside this activity.

## **2.5. How does Dyfed-Powys Police ensure systems for receiving, recording and managing reported crimes of rape are robust?**

The Dyfed-Powys crime management system (CMS) is used to manage all rape enquiries; the information contained within the crime report informs the investigation process and local crime pattern analysis. It is examined to ensure compliance with the requirements of NCRS and HOCR. All reports of rape must be recorded on CMS at the earliest opportunity and in any case within 24 hours of reporting. In some instances, case management information will also be held on other systems such as CATS and Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES) and reference should be made to this on the CMS. When a rape is reported, by whatever means, the divisional detective inspector must be informed as quickly as possible.

All 'no crime' reports including rape must be submitted to the force DDM for authorisation and, of the 12 rape no-crimes we reviewed, 11 complied with NCRS and HOCR. The FCR and CRB supervisor are the only staff authorised to record rape no-crimes.

Reports of rape sent to Dyfed-Powys Police from another force, or generated in Dyfed-Powys Police and transferred elsewhere, are not dealt with under bespoke policies or guidance. There is no policy or guidance that staff can refer to when dealing with such reports.

## **2.6. How do Dyfed-Powys Police IT systems allow for efficient and effective management of crime recording?**

The force has a strong commitment to increasing its use of mobile data technology. There are 50 mobile data devices currently being piloted by the Brecon response teams and the Carmarthen Roads Policing Unit. A further 300 devices will follow in 2014 and another 300 are planned for distribution early 2015. Force applications that are currently able to work on mobile data devices include pocket note book, STORM update and search, person and vehicle checks, PNC, DVLA and CIS, property seizure, and standard forms (such as Cannabis Warnings, PND, FPNs, intelligence submissions and stop and

search). Forms may be printed on a bluetooth-enabled printer. Having conducted a check of an individual, their details can be automatically transferred onto the requisite form for completion and printing. Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honor-based Violence (DASH) submissions and collision reports can also be completed. The fact that officers will soon be able to record crime directly from these devices should provide real opportunities to release capacity, provided they are given clear guidance on the crime-recording standards, as set out in HOCR and NCRS.

There is an understanding of the IT systems used by the force that may contain reports of crime. Data can be shared between the incident recording system (STORM) and the force crime management system (CMS). The crime system and CATS, used by the public protection units to manage adult and child abuse cases, have no interface and data needs to be re-entered onto CMS.

## **People and skills**

### **3 Does the force have staff whose conduct and skills ensure accurate crime recording?**

#### **3.1. What arrangements does Dyfed-Powys Police have in place to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to ensure accurate crime recording?**

Staff and supervisors in the crime recording bureau (CRB) were generally found to have an appropriate knowledge of NCRS and HOCR. However, frontline officers and staff in other departments have not received structured training on NCRS or HOCR. The roll out of mobile data devices will allow officers to input crimes directly onto CMS; multi-functional staff in the new resources department will oversee crime recording. There is no suitable training in place and there is a pressing need for further training for staff on NCRS and HOCR.

The incident resolution team operates between the hours of 7am and 11pm and currently there are three teams located across the force. However, as part of the 'public first' programme these teams will soon be centralised into one which will be based at the force headquarters. We found issues with staff shortages in the IRT, with some finding it difficult to keep up with demand. It is anticipated that the new business support structure will provide greater resilience to cope with the predicted workload.

#### **3.2. How do the behaviours of Dyfed-Powys Police staff reflect a culture of integrity for crime recording practice and decision making?**

The chief officer drive to improve crime standards has been widely understood throughout the force. These important messages are reinforced in the everyday environment of police such as at some daily management meetings.



The force has introduced a number of measures to build a wider awareness of NCRS and HOCR across the force. This message has been communicated through performance events, an intranet video podcast by the chief constable, all-user emails, personal briefings by the DCC and the FCR.

The need for ethical crime recording is reflected in the views expressed by most staff with one operational supervisor emphasising how important it was to 'crime at the time'.

Staff all acknowledged that the force has moved away from a culture focused on targets and performance to one of pursuing appropriate outcomes and meeting the needs of the victim. Most officers and staff stated they had seen the chief constable's podcast about the standards expected of them and the need for ethical crime recording.

We found no evidence of pressure, explicit or implied, to under-record or mis-record crime, to go against NCRS or HOCR, or to work outside national guidelines on the use of out-of-court outcomes. Senior managers are encouraged to secure accurate crime recording and pass on the strategic messages from their chief officers.

### **3.3. How is the accuracy of crime recording in Dyfed-Powys Police actively overseen and governed by the force crime registrar (FCR)?**

The force maintains a dedicated FCR, responsible for ensuring that NCRS and HOCR are consistently applied but she has no official deputy. The FCR is an experienced individual who has a strong commitment to maintaining standards of compliance with NCRS and HOCR. Most officers know the FCR to be the person responsible for making sure crime is recorded correctly and they have no hesitation in contacting her, or the CRB supervisor, for advice.

The FCR divides her resources between active monitoring, recording and routine auditing of crime systems. She depends on a small number of capable staff to fulfil these functions. The CRB team receives and manages all crime-recording issues and initially deals with any associated disputes. Unresolved issues are referred to the FCR for a decision and she is respected by all as the final arbiter on such matters.

Many of the force policies and procedures are taken to the FCR for an opinion on whether they are compliant with NCRS and HOCR and she provides independent advice accordingly.