Crime data integrity

Inspection of Humberside Police

Contents

Introduction

In its 2013/14 inspection programme[1], 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 will be 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[2] 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"*.[3]

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.hmic.gov.uk.

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)[4] and Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR)[5].

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

[2] 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.

[3] *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.

[4] 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.

[5] 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:

1. An examination of crime records for the period 1 November 2012 to 31 October 2013;

2. A dip-sample of out-of-court disposals (cautions, Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND), cannabis warnings, community resolutions) and no-crime decisions for rape, robbery and violence;

3. Visits to forces where inspectors assess local crime recording arrangements under three headings: leadership and governance; systems and processes; and people and skills; and

4. 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 judgements, 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.

The scope and structure of the 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

Chief officers in Humberside Police promote the importance of data integrity throughout the force. The force has two assistant chief constables, one of whom is the named officer responsible for crime data integrity.

Chief officers' messaging is consistent and clearly expressed; however, there is some way to go before the importance of the message penetrates every level of the organisation. There is evidence that the impact of a target-based performance culture has lessened over the last 12 months; however, we found evidence that the legacy is still present with an attitude of 'investigate-to-record'[6] in existence in Hull and Grimsby.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should take steps to communicate to all staff that an ethical approach to crime recording, done in accordance with the HOCR and NCRS is expected, and that crime recording decisions should not be based on local performance concerns or undertaken through an investigate to record approach.

The force has a confidential internal reporting route to the professional standards department that officers can use to raise concerns over unethical practices of whatever kind. Officers were aware of the route but those interviewed stated that they would use their line managers to raise any crime recording concerns.

The force has developed procedures and strategies on crime recording and these make some reference to an ethical approach; however, there is no overarching crime-recording policy, and the force defers to the HOCR and NCRS.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should develop a crime-recording policy which accords with the HOCR and NCRS and aligns standards of recording to assessments of victim need. Policy and standards on incident and crime recording need to be clearly communicated throughout the organisation in a manner which enables the force to hold people to account for poor performance in relation to those standards.

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[6] This means that the police do not record the incident as a crime at first, but instead investigate the matter in order to establish whether a crime has been committed.

Humberside Police was a pilot site for the Home Office Crime Recording Outcomes project. Guidance and checklists for use by members of the organisation outline the aims of the project, which are broadly to improve the accuracy and integrity of recording practices while also improving the level of service to victims of crime. These documents also make explicit references to the need for adherence to the NCRS and HOCR.

The force currently is restructuring and in support of this, a map of the flow of information through force systems has been produced; however, there is no crime data integrity risk profile with which to provide an evidence-based understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the system. This is a significant issue as the force moves forward with the re-modelling programme.

The force adopts a clear and proportionate approach to the level of detail included in crime records. The customer service crime centre (CSCC) and crime management units (CMU) in particular have a crime data administration role which ensures that required standards for levels of detail are maintained.

A comprehensive and flexible audit regime is in place, however there is little evidence that the results of crime-recording audits are routinely taken into account during crime performance management and review processes. The absence of cross-referencing between the force crime recording system (CIS4) and the public protection units standalone case management system (CATS) makes auditing more difficult.

The assistant chief constable lead officer has commissioned follow up audits in areas that force audits have identified as requiring attention.

Systems and processes

Accuracy of crime recording

We examined 168 incident records[7] and found that 129 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 129 crimes that should have been recorded, 94 were. Of the 94, three were wrongly classified and four were recorded outside the 72-hour limit allowed under the HOCR. There is a need for significant improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of crime recording decisions.

We have estimated that the CSCC records approximately 22% of the total of the force's recorded crime. This unit records reports of crime directly from members of the public which do not require the creation of an incident record. Our

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[7] 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.

inspection of this unit (a review of 25 calls from the public) found that of the 25 crimes that should have been recorded, all 25 were recorded correctly. This is an effective approach to crime recording for the force.

We examined 50 reports that were referred from other agencies directly to the force's specialist departments. Of the 19 crimes that should have been recorded, 13 were, and all were correctly classified and recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the HOCR.

Our audit of incident logs revealed that supervisors conduct some monitoring of calls and incidents; however, this was only evident on a small proportion of the incidents we reviewed. There is no systematic auditing to ensure accurate crime recording although there was evidence that supervision is more likely to occur with higher-risk crime. The lack of auditing of victim contact and the absence of supervisory oversight in the contact centre to oversee the closure of incidents or carry out authorisation or validation of incident closure codes is a risk to crime data integrity.

Reality testing revealed evidence of call handlers taking a minimum of detail from callers, making an early decision on the incident opening code and then making a deployment decision as quickly as possible. In these circumstances it isn't clear how an effective assessment of victim needs can take place.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should review quality assurance processes in the contact centres, and within three months begin the implementation of a regime designed to deliver a victim-centred approach and support crime data integrity.

The force does not have a policy or procedure for detailing how officers and staff should deal with reports of crime which have occurred in another force area laying out how they should manage the transfer of documentation. This is an area of potential risk in terms of crime recording and victim service.

Out-of-court disposals

Out-of-court disposals include cautions, Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND),[8] cannabis warnings[9] and community resolutions.[10] The HOCR (section H) states that national guidance must be followed[11].

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[8] 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.

[9] 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.

[10] Resolution of a minor offence or anti-social behaviour incident through informal agreement between the parties involved, for example often involving the offender making good the loss or damage caused.

[11] National guidance for the use of out-of-court disposals is detailed in a number of documents:

Cautions – Out of the 25 cautions we dip-sampled, we found that in all 25 cases the offender's previous history made them suitable to receive a caution. In all 25 cases we found evidence that the offender was made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the caution. Out of the 23 cases where there was a victim to consult, 9 cases showed that the victim's views had been considered.

Penalty Notices for Disorder – We dip-sampled 22 PND and found that the offender was suitable to receive a penalty notice in 17 cases. In 20 cases we found evidence that showed the offender had been made aware of the future implications of accepting the penalty notice. Out of the 15 cases where there was a victim to consult, we found three where the victims had their views considered when the police decided to issue a penalty notice.

Cannabis warnings – We dip-sampled 22 cannabis warnings and found that the offender was suitable to receive a warning in 20 cases. We found that all 22 cases showed that the offender had been made aware of the implications of accepting the warning.

Community resolutions – We took a dip-sample of 24 community resolutions and found that in all 24 cases the offender either had no previous offending history or that the offender's past history still justified the use of the community resolution. All 24 cases showed that the wishes and personal circumstances of the victim had been properly considered. 21 cases showed that the agreed outcome was meaningful and appropriate[12].

Feedback from the force suggests that the Home Office Crime Recording Outcomes project has had a positive impact on crime recording behaviours. All frontline members of staff were trained and our reality testing revealed a consistent and balanced victim focus among members of staff; however, it is

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• *Home Office Circular 016/2008: Simple Cautioning – Adult Offenders.* Available from www.xact.org.uk

• *Simple Cautions for Adult Offenders*, 14 November 2013. Available from www.justice.gov.uk

• *Code of Practice for Adult Conditional Cautions*, 8 April 2000. Available from www.justice.gov.uk

• *Home Office Police Operational Guidance for Penalty Notices for Disorder*, March 2005. Available from www.justice.gov.uk

• *ACPO Guidance on Cannabis Possession for Personal Use*, 28 January 2009. Available from www.acpo.police.uk

[12] 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.

evident from our inspection that when deciding to use cautions and penalty notices for disorder, due consideration is not always being given to the views of the victim.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should take steps to ensure that the oversight of the decision to use out-of-court disposals is sufficiently robust so that the decision is made with due consideration for the views of the victim.

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 reviewed 74 no-crime records and found 61 records to be compliant with HOCR and NCRS. This is a concern as the no-crime records we reviewed were for offences of rape, robbery and violence.

The force has a clear framework for no-crime decision-making involving a small number of trained officers called designated decision-makers (DDM). There is evidence that regular monitoring of DDM no-crime decisions takes place in the form of dip-sampling by the force crime and incident registrar[13] (FCIR). The FCIR, who is independent of the force performance management regime, conducts additional monitoring and auditing for high-risk crimes such as rape.

Despite the structure described our audit results revealed that there is room for improvement in the interpretation of what amounts to additional verifiable information when making a no-crime decision.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should ensure guidance is provided to officers and staff who are engaged in requesting or making no-crime decisions which clearly describes the standard of additional verifiable information required in order to authorise a no-crime in accordance with the NCRS.

Victim-centred approach

The force mostly promotes and displays a victim-centred approach to crime recording, crime outcomes and no-crime decisions. The work on the Home Office Outcomes pilot has reinforced this approach.

Call-takers understand the victim-centred approach, display it in practice, and are polite, professional and helpful. However, among other frontline members of staff there remains strong evidence of an attitude of 'investigate-to-record', and

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[13] The person in a police force who is responsible for ensuring compliance with crime and incident-recording rules. The HOCR provide that he is ultimately responsible for all decisions to record a crime or to make a no-crime decision, as the final arbiter. The force crime and incident 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.

a reluctance to record certain offences. Officers spoke openly of a reluctance to record crimes where there is a presence of alcohol, drugs, dementia or mental health issues. In these instances, the victim is less likely to be believed. The force has made improvements in this area in the previous 12 months; however, there is some way to go before it can say that a victim-centred approach is consistently applied.

The force routinely carries out customer satisfaction surveys of people who report incidents and crime. The data gathered is used to as part of the performance review process; however there is little evidence that this information is used to inform an understanding of risk in the crime recording process.

> **Recommendation:** Immediately, the force should improve arrangements for the end-to-end management of incident records including; initial assessments of threat risk and harm to victims; supervision; quality assurance including the use of survey data; authorisation of incident closure and the auditing of the first point of contact with victims.

Rape crimes

The force procedures on the investigation of rape and serious sexual assault clearly state that officers will comply with the NCRS when recording rape crimes. Our inspection showed that most officers and staff have a clear understanding of the procedure, and how and when reports of rape should be recorded onto force crime recording systems.

The force is able to demonstrate effective oversight of the routes by which rapes are reported to ensure accurate crime recording. The FCIR continuously monitors the classification of sexual offences and carries out regular audits. Despite this not all rapes are accurately recorded, the lack of integration of recording systems means that despite rigorous audits and continuous monitoring, it is difficult to be absolutely sure that every report of rape is recorded accurately.

There has been significant progress made by the force on the recording, classification and investigation of rape and serious sexual offences resulting from a leadership focus on this issue together with investment in resources and process improvement. Nevertheless there is still some way to go before the force can be confident that all reports of rape are correctly recorded and classified.

We audited 30 rape crime records where a no-crime decision had been made and found 28 cases to be correct.

The force does not have a policy to deal with reports of rape which occur in other force areas. However, our reality testing revealed that there were good practices in place for recording, victim support, appropriate initial investigation and transfer of evidence and relevant material.

IT systems

The force uses a single computer system for each of its incident and crime recording functions. These systems are not linked. Both of these systems are well managed, with regular system audits and information weeding. The force also maintains a standalone computer system for the management of serious sexual offences.

Significant double-keying is required and cross-referencing is inconsistent. There are manual checking processes in place in part to mitigate the risk to crime data integrity of poor system integration

People and skills

Staff and supervisors who review incidents, crimes, out-of-court disposals, and no-crimes have been trained on, and demonstrate an appropriate knowledge of, force policies, the HOCR, NCRS and the National Standard of Incident Recording. Our inspection found knowledge of the HOCR, NCRS and NSIR among specialist investigators to be patchy, and that DDMs require further training and direction on the interpretation of additional verifiable information.

We found that more work needs to be done to ensure that frontline officers on incident response and initial investigation teams are consistently making well-informed crime recording decisions. There is evidence that frontline officers' knowledge of standards and force policy is not to the same level as elsewhere in the recording process and this represents a significant threat to accurate recording at the initial stage of the process.

> **Recommendation:** Within six months, the force should establish and begin operation of an adequate system of training in crime-recording for all police officers and police staff who are required to make crime-recording decisions, and ensure those who require such training receive it as soon as reasonably practicable.

Senior managers are encouraged to secure accurate crime recording and in this inspection we did not find any evidence of performance pressures leading to failures in crime recording, whether under-recording or misclassification of crimes.

Force crime and incident registrar

The force FCIR has specific responsibility and capacity for ensuring the NCRS, HOCR and NSIR are consistently applied, and is able to act objectively and impartially to ensure the force records crime correctly. The FCIR has sufficient resources to carry out the role effectively, and all crime-recording disputes are suitably referred to them as the final arbiter.

The FCR has the full support of, and access to, the chief officer with lead responsibility for crime data quality.

Recommendations

Immediately

1. The force should take steps to communicate to all staff that an ethical approach to crime recording, done in accordance with the HOCR and NCRS is expected and that crime-recording decisions should not be based on local performance concerns or undertaken through an 'investigate-to-record' approach.

2. The force should develop a crime-recording policy which accords with the HOCR and NCRS and aligns standards of recording to assessments of victim need. Policy and standards on incident and crime recording need to be clearly communicated throughout the organisation in a manner which enables the force to hold people to account for poor performance in relation to those standards.

3. The force should review quality assurance processes in the contact centres, and within three months begin the implementation of a regime designed to deliver a victim-centred approach and support crime data integrity.

4. The force should take steps to ensure that the oversight of the decision to use out-of-court disposals is sufficiently robust so that the decision is made with due consideration for the views of the victim.

5. The force should ensure guidance is provided to officers and staff who are engaged in requesting or making no-crime decisions which clearly describes the standard of additional verifiable information required in order to authorise a no-crime in accordance with the NCRS.

6. The force should improve arrangements for the end-to-end management of incident records including; initial assessments of threat risk and harm to victims; supervision; quality assurance including the use of survey data; authorisation of incident closure and the auditing of the first point of contact with victims.

Within six months

7. The force should establish and begin operation of an adequate system of training in crime recording for all police officers and police staff, and ensure those who require such training receive it as soon as reasonably practicable.

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.

Crimes reported as part of an incident record		
Incidents reviewed	**Crimes identified**	**Crimes recorded**
HMIC reviewed the following number of incident records in Humberside Police. These include reported incidents of burglary, violence, robbery, criminal damage and sexual offences.	From these incidents HMIC identified the following number of crimes.	From these identified crimes Humberside Police recorded the following number of crimes.
168	**129**	**94**
Crimes reported directly from the victim		
HMIC reviewed the following number of reports of crimes that were reported directly by telephone to the Humberside Police centralised crime recording unit. These include reported incidents of burglary, violence, robbery, criminal damage and sexual offences.	From these reports received directly by telephone from the victim by the centralised crime recording unit HMIC identified the following number of crimes that Humberside Police should have recorded.	From these identified crimes Humberside Police recorded the following number of crimes.
25	**25**	**25**
Crimes referred from other agencies directly to Humberside Police specialist departments		
Referrals	**Crimes identified**	**Crimes recorded**
HMIC reviewed the following number of referrals reported directly to Humberside 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 Humberside Police should have recorded.	From these identified crimes Humberside Police recorded the following number of crimes.
50	**19**	**13**
No-crimes		
HMIC reviewed the following number of recorded crimes of rape, violence and robbery which Humberside Police had subsequently recorded as no-crime.		From these HMIC assessed the following number of no-crime decisions as being correct.
74		**61**

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 Humberside Police ensuring that leadership responsibilities and expectations for crime data integrity are clearly defined and unambiguously communicated to staff?

There are two assistant chief constables, one of whom is now in charge of the ongoing force re-modelling programme; the other leads on operations, operational support and crime data integrity. The deputy chief constable has responsibility for force performance. The majority of messages on recording standards are delivered to the force through the force crime and incident registrar (FCIR); however the chief officer lead is instrumental in identifying risk and shaping the audit programme. There is evidence that the current assistant chief constable's lead for crime data integrity has been consistent and influential on recording standards relating to sexual offences.

Chief officers communicate an approach to crime recording which is consistent and clearly expressed; however, there is some way to go before this penetrates every level of the organisation. Some messages are circulated directly to all members of staff but in the main, communications are disseminated through the force meetings structure and cascaded via the chain of command. There is evidence that the impact of a target-based performance culture has lessened over the last 12 months; however, we found evidence that the legacy is still present with an attitude of 'investigate-to-record' in existence in Hull and Grimsby.

There is no specific route for crime data concerns to be recorded and monitored however there is a general confidential reporting mechanism called Bad Apple, which is well-known by members of the force. During reality testing members of staff consistently expressed confidence in available routes for dealing with concerns about crime-recording matters either through their supervisors, the crime management unit or alternatively direct to the FCIR. Identified concerns are acted upon by the force as appropriate and there is evidence that concerns expressed on behalf of its members by the local branch of the Police Federation were acted upon by the force and a specific audit was commissioned in response.

The force has developed procedures and strategies on crime recording and these make some reference to an ethical approach; however, there is no overarching crime recording policy, and the force defers to the NCRS and the HOCR. There are, however, several policies in which requirements for ethical standards and accurate crime recording are included, and these relate to the management of vulnerability and safeguarding issues.

Chief officers volunteered the force to be the pilot site for the Home Office Crime Recording Outcomes project. Guidance and checklists for use by members of the organisation outline the aims of the project which are broadly to improve the accuracy and integrity of recording practices while also improving the level of service to victims of crime. These documents also make explicit references to the adherence to the NCRS and HOCR.

There is limited reference to the need for accurate crime data in the policing and crime plan. However, under the information management heading, the plan does state that *"Improving and making better use of sometimes complex data, turning [them] into meaningful information, is often the key to a better understanding of the nature of police and crime problems facing communities"*[14].

1.2   How does Humberside Police ensure it has a proportionate approach to managing the strategic and organisational risk of recording crime data?

The force has analysed and understands some of its risks in relation to inaccurate crime recording at an organisational level, and has assessed its key crime categories and understands recording risks in those areas. This understanding extends to those incidents which are closed with a non-crime code where there is a higher risk of unrecorded crime. The current appreciation of risk is based largely on professional intuition and judgment and the analysis/auditing of issues as they emerge. There is an annual audit plan which reflects this understanding and encompasses primary categories such as violent crime and crime-related incidents, and there is a clear mechanism for subsequent management intervention.

In support of the force re-modelling programme there is a map of the flow of information through force systems. However, there is no crime data integrity risk profile with which to provide an evidence-based understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the system. This is a significant issue as the force moves forward with the programme.

The force adopts a clear and proportionate approach to the level of detail included in crime records. The customer service crime centre (CSCC), and

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[14] *Humberside police and crime plan April 2013 – March 2017,* Information management, p20, para 2

crime management units (CMU) in particular have a crime data administration role which ensures that required standards for levels of detail are maintained. The more complex, higher profile and more serious cases tend to carry more detail by virtue of the level of resources devoted to these and consequently the amount of information gathered.

1.3 How does Humberside Police use HOCR, NCRS, and NSIR to ensure there is confidence that crime is recorded accurately?

The force understands most of the channels through which crime is reported. Most of the proportions reported are known and measures are in place to check the quality of crime recording for each channel through strong processes managed by the CSCC and CMUs. However, there are still areas which rely heavily on auditing rather than continuous monitoring to ensure recording accuracy, in particular the case administration and tracking system (CATS) used by the public protection area of business.

As stated, the force routinely audits incident and crime records to assess crime recording accuracy and the application of the HOCR, NCRS and NSIR. However, the force should consider strengthening the role of control room supervisors in closing incidents. This would improve incident closure and ensure more accurate crime recording. The absence of cross referencing between the crime recording system (CIS4) and CATS makes auditing more difficult.

The audit regime is flexible and chief officers use it to provide an evidence base to deal with emerging understanding of vulnerability around violent crime and CATS management. However, there is little evidence that the results of crime recording audits are routinely taken into account during crime performance management and review processes. This is despite an action schedule being compiled following each audit which is communicated to divisional command teams by the FCIR, supported by the assistant chief constable, and further reinforced by briefings delivered by the FCIR to the CSCC and CMUs. The force is currently reviewing performance management processes in line with work to re-structure the organisation.

The assistant chief constable has commissioned follow-up audits in areas identified in the action schedule to assess the effectiveness of action plans. The processes to determine the accuracy of initial crime recording and the appropriate conversion of incidents to crime records should, however, be improved.

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 Humberside Police effectively manage and supervise incidents, other reporting routes and crime records in order to ensure that crimes are correctly recorded?

We examined 168 incident records and found that 129 crimes should have been recorded. Of the 129 crimes that should have been recorded, 94 were. Of the 94, three were wrongly classified and four were recorded outside the 72-hour limit allowed under the HOCR. There is a need for significant improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of crime-recording decisions.

The force's CSCC, we have estimated, record approximately 22% of the total of their recorded crime. This unit records reports of crime directly from members of the public which do not require the creation of an incident record. Our inspection of this unit (a review of 25 calls from the public) found that of the 25 crimes that should have been recorded, all 25 were recorded correctly. This is an effective approach to crime recording for the force.

We examined 50 reports that were referred from other agencies directly to the force's specialist departments. Of the 19 crimes that should have been recorded, 13 were and all were correctly classified and recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the HOCR.

Our audit of incident logs revealed that supervisors conduct some monitoring of calls and incidents. However, this was only evident on a small proportion of the incidents we reviewed; there is no systematic auditing to ensure accurate crime recording although there was evidence that supervision is more likely to occur with higher-risk crime. The lack of auditing of victim contact and the absence of supervisory oversight in the contact centre to oversee the closure of incidents or carry out authorisation or validation of incident closure codes is a risk to crime data integrity.

Reality testing revealed evidence of call-handlers taking a minimum of detail from callers, making an early decision on the incident opening code and then making a deployment decision as quickly as possible. In these circumstances it isn't clear how an effective assessment of victim needs can take place.

The force does not have a bespoke crime recording policy as the NCRS and HOCR have been adopted as the force standard. In crimes to be sent on to another force, appropriate initial investigation and transfer of evidence and documentation were found to be good. However, there was some evidence of

crimes that were perceived to be low-risk where the caller was asked to contact the force covering the area where the crime occurred.

2.2 How does Humberside Police ensure that out-of-court disposals suit the needs of victims, offenders and the criminal justice system?

Humberside Police has been the pilot for the Home Office Crime Recording Outcomes project since May 2013, and the use of out-of-court disposals falls within the scope of this work.

Cautions – Out of the 25 cautions we dip-sampled we found that in all 25 cases the offender's previous history made them suitable to receive a caution. In all 25 cases we found evidence that the offender was made aware of the nature and future implications of accepting the caution. Out of the 23 cases where there was a victim to consult, 9 cases showed that the victims' views had been considered.

Penalty Notices for Disorder – We dip-sampled 22 PNDs and found that the offender was suitable to receive a penalty notice in 17 cases. In 20 cases we found evidence that showed the offender had been made aware of the future implications of accepting the penalty notice. Out of the 15 cases where there was a victim to consult we found three where the victims had their views considered when the police decided to issue a penalty notice.

Cannabis warning – We dip-sampled 22 cannabis warnings and found that the offender was suitable to receive a warning in 20 cases. We found that all 22 cases showed that the offender had been made aware of the implications of accepting the warning.

Community resolutions – We took a dip-sample of 24 community resolutions and found that in all 24 cases, the offender either had no previous offending history or that the offender's past history still justified the use of the community resolution. All 24 cases showed that the wishes and personal circumstances of the victim had been properly considered. 21 cases showed that the agreed outcome was meaningful and appropriate.

Feedback from the force suggests that the Home Office Crime Recording Outcomes project has had a positive impact on crime recording behaviours. All frontline members of staff were trained and our reality testing revealed a consistent and balanced victim focus among members of staff. However, it is evident from our inspection that when deciding to use cautions and penalty notices for disorder, due consideration is not always being given to the views of the victim.

Designated decision-makers (DDM) within the crime management unit monitor out-of-court disposals, and there is a SPOC[15] arrangement in place for each type of disposal. There is evidence that audits have been carried out by the FCIR and a further audit is due to take place in line with evaluation of the outcomes pilot.

2.3 Are no-crime decisions for high-risk crime categories correct, and is there robust oversight and quality control in Humberside Police?

The force has processes in place to ensure that incidents recorded as crimes are only reclassified as no-crimes when it is correct to do this. We reviewed 74 no-crime records and found 61 records to be compliant with HOCR and NCRS.

The force has a clear framework for no-crime decision-making involving a small number of DDM. There is evidence that regular monitoring of DDM no-crime decisions takes place in the form of dip-sampling by the FCIR. The FCIR, who is independent of the force performance management regime, conducts additional monitoring and auditing for high-risk crimes such as rape.

Whilst the force has set out to comply with the requirements of the HOCR and has processes designed to achieve this aim, our audit results, as above, revealed that there is room for improvement.

2.4 How does Humberside Police promote a victim-centred approach to crime recording and associated outcomes?

The force mostly promotes and displays a victim-centred approach to crime recording, crime outcomes and no-crime decisions. The work on the Home Office, Crime Recording Outcomes pilot has reinforced this approach.

Call-takers understand the victim-centred approach, display it in practice, and are polite, professional and helpful. However, among other frontline members of staff there remains strong evidence of an attitude of 'investigate-to-record', and a reluctance to record certain offences. Officers spoke openly of a reluctance to record crimes where there is a presence of alcohol, drugs, dementia or mental health issues. In these instances the victim is less likely to be believed. The force has made improvement in this area in the previous 12 months; however, there is some way to go before it can say that a victim-centred approach is consistently applied.

The force routinely carries out customer satisfaction surveys of people who report incidents and crime. Victim telephone call-backs are carried out which informed the force about the quality of victim updates on crime investigation

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[15] Single Point of Contact – this means that there is a single person to whom all discussions/ correspondence on the particular subject are directed. They are the sole person responsible for the management of correspondence on the subject, and may answer any questions themselves or pass the matter onto another person to answer.

outcomes. There are no audits of victims initial contact with police (listening to calls) to determine the accuracy of incident recording. The data gathered are monitored by the force and used as part of the performance review process. There is little evidence that this information is used to inform an understanding of risk in the crime recording process.

2.5 How does the Humberside Police ensure systems for receiving, recording and managing reported crimes of rape are robust?

The force procedure on the investigation of rape and serious sexual assault clearly states that it *"will accept reports of serious sexual assault made by victims/third parties as being true. All allegations will be thoroughly and ethically investigated and recorded as per NCRS".* Reality testing during our inspection showed that most officers and staff have a clear understanding of the procedure, and how and when reports of rape should be recorded onto force crime recording systems.

The force is able to demonstrate effective oversight of the routes by which rapes are reported to ensure accurate crime recording. The timely recording of rape offences is driven personally by the assistant chief constable, and the FCIR continuously monitors the classification of sexual offences and carries out regular audits. DDM in the crime management units (CMU) carry out local BCU[16] based audits. The force understands the areas of risk and has also carried out system audits of standalone systems such as the case administration and tracking system (CATS) used by the public protection unit. There has been a recent move to centralise the public protection units to improve standards and consistency.

Allegations of rape are mostly recorded accurately but not on every occasion. The lack of integration of recording systems means that despite rigorous audits and continuous monitoring, it is difficult to be absolutely sure that every report of rape is recorded accurately. Home Office information shows that the recording of rape offences by Humberside Police is relatively high when compared to other forces.

We audited 30 rape crime records where a no-crime decision had been made; 28 cases were correct. The FCIR monitors the classification of serious sexual offences and the accuracy of rape no-crime decisions, and there have been recent audits of no-crimes and the classification of rape and serious sexual offences.

The force does not have a policy to deal with reports of rape which occur in other force areas. However, our reality testing revealed that there were good practices in place for recording, victim support, appropriate initial investigation and transfer of evidence and relevant material.

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[16] Basic command unit – a geographical area under the command of one senior officer.

2.6 How do Humberside Police IT systems allow for efficient and effective management of crime recording?

The force has a clear understanding of the IT systems it uses which may contain reports of crime; however information is not automatically shared across systems which contain reports of crime. There are issues with lack of system integration between the incident management system (NSPIS) and crime recording system (CIS4) and CATS. Significant double-keying is required and the cross-referencing of CATS and CIS4 is inconsistent. There are manual checking processes in place in part to mitigate the risk to crime data integrity of poor system integration.

These systems are all well-managed, with regular system audits and information weeding.

People and skills

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

3.1 What arrangements does Humberside Police have in place to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to ensure accurate crime recording?

The force has an effective infrastructure to manage incident and crime recording processes. The relationship between the incident handling units in the contact centres, the crime recording bureau, the divisional CMU and the public service centres are the key to this. All of these functions have a role in supervising and monitoring different stages of the incident and crime management process and there is evidence that appropriate training has been provided to members of staff in these roles.

Our reality testing found knowledge of the HOCR, NCRS and NSIR among specialist investigators to be patchy and that DDM require further training and direction on the interpretation of additional verifiable information. However, there was also evidence that there was ready access to specialist advice when needed, either through the CMU or the FCIR.

3.2 How do the behaviours of Humberside Police staff reflect a culture of integrity for crime recording practice and decision-making?

Some staff acknowledge chief officer messages and have a clear understanding of the expected standards of behaviour and conduct with regard to crime recording; however, this is not evident across the force. Our reality testing revealed that more work needs to be done to ensure that frontline officers on incident response and initial investigation teams are consistently making well-informed crime-recording decisions. There is evidence that frontline officers' knowledge of standards and force policy is not to the same level as elsewhere

in the recording process and this represents a significant threat to accurate recording at the initial stage of the process.

Senior managers are encouraged to secure accurate crime recording and there is no explicit or overt pressure under-record or mis-record crime reports. The force has reviewed the impact of performance challenge meetings which had the potential for skewing resource allocation to particular areas, sometimes away from force priorities. The force understands that there is implied performance pressure which could affect crime recording practices in these meetings and is reviewing the structure of them as a consequence.

Training and development processes relevant to crime recording are managed effectively by the FCIR and are informed by the results of audits. The selection of appropriate and credible members of staff at important points of the recording process reflects an understanding of the risk to accurate recording.

3.3   How is the accuracy of crime recording in Humberside Police actively overseen and governed by the force crime registrar (FCR)?

The FCIR has specific responsibility and capacity for ensuring the NCRS, HOCR and National Standard of Incident Recording are consistently applied, and is able to act objectively and impartially to ensure the force records crime correctly. The FCIR has sufficient resources to carry out the role effectively, and all crime-recording disputes are suitably referred to them as the final arbiter.

The FCIR has the full support of, and access to, the chief officer with lead responsibility for crime data quality.

The FCIR has responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of crime recording and outcome policies and subsequent audit programmes to ensure high standards of data integrity. We found that local policies regarding crime recording are compliant with the NCRS and HOCR; however, there is evidence that the application of policy varies across different divisions.